

# School Food Policy

Guidance on incorporating the Nutritional Regulations for school food into a school food policy

## Creating a school food policy

A good diet is essential for good health. It is important that children and young people are provided with a solid foundation for establishing healthy, life-long eating habits. Schools alone cannot be expected to address poor eating habit. They can however make a valuable contribution to improving the nutritional quality of diets and promoting consistent messages about healthy eating within a health promoting school environment. By working together, school communities can support children and young people to develop the skills, knowledge and experience they need to make positive dietary choices.

A school food policy can be an effective tool to connect different areas relating to food, to ensure these consistent messages for children and young people, as well as staff and parents. Creating a bespoke food policy will allow you to demonstrate the relationship between food provision, food as a context for learning and the statutory Nutritional Regulations that apply to food across the day in your school.

Your local authority may have guidance in place about writing a school food policy which will provide the building blocks to create your own. Organisations such as the British Nutrition Foundation also provide useful information that can help you create a policy bespoke to your school. This document offers guidance on aligning your school food policy with the required [Nutritional Regulations](#) 2020.

A collaborative, whole school approach will help everyone understand their individual and collective responsibilities to support children and young people develop the knowledge and skills required in making food choices which support their health, now, and in the future.

A starting point for creating or updating a food policy could be to map out all the areas across the life of the school that your policy will relate to. A school food policy is not a standalone document. This activity can help to identify what to include, highlight connections to other related policies or guidance, and identify who to involve in creating a truly inclusive and collaborative policy. The sketchnotes below may help initiate conversations.

[Food in Schools sketchnote: Connections](#)

[Food in Schools sketchnote: Contributions](#)

An understanding of the Nutritional Regulations and where these apply across the school day will be useful for all stakeholders. Speak to your school catering provider about any training resources that may be available.

The following sections offer suggestions of areas to consider in creating your policy. As you consult with stakeholders you may well decide on other areas to include in your own policy, or to present your policy in a different format or order. Your policy must reflect your school and what makes it unique, so use these suggestions as a loose guide only. Remember, once written you can review your policy at any time to keep it a live and dynamic document. A sample template following the format below is available at the end of this document.

## Introduction/Context/Vision and values

Use whichever heading is most meaningful in your setting, or create one of your own.

An opening statement about the overarching vision and ambitions of the school, will let those reading it understand the scope of the policy. This might be a statement that communicates the shared ethos and values your school places on food and its positive contribution to the health and wellbeing of children, young people, families, staff, and the wider school community. You may also wish to consider how the diversity of your school population will be reflected in your policy.

Your policy should be created in collaboration with others so you might mention who was involved in its production. The process of working together to create a policy can help establish an understanding of each other's perspectives and ensure different visions align. This can build a sense of ownership of the policy, and its outcomes. Your stakeholders may include school catering providers, breakfast club providers, external food and health partners, teaching and support staff, parents, children and young people.

It may also be helpful to mention either here or as an appendix, any national policies and statutory guidance referred to in creating your policy.

A few bullet points can explain these clearly and succinctly.

For example:

In ... School:

- we provide our children/young people with nutritious food
- we build knowledge and skills enabling our children/young people to make well informed food choices in school and beyond
- we promote good food choices in an environment that supports all children and young people's health, wellbeing and participation in decision making.

We will achieve this by taking a whole school approach to food provision, food education and the food experience of children and young people attending ... School by:

- providing food choices throughout the school day that meet the requirements of the Nutritional Regulations (2020) in The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007 ('the Act')
- ensuring that everyone involved in the provision of food at school, or educating children/young people about food, is presenting a consistent whole school, health promoting approach
- working together with school food providers, pupils, families and partners
- ensuring that our approach is based on current dietary advice to support children/young people to have the knowledge and skills required to make well informed dietary choices.

Our whole school food policy is based on a partnership approach that reflects the views of children/young people, parents, school food providers and school staff.

## Responsibility for the school food policy

You might begin this section by including a general statement such as:

In ... School this policy is relevant to everyone involved with food and drink on our school premises. Everyone has a role to play in supporting our policy and ensuring compliance with the required Nutritional Regulations.

Where there are specific areas of responsibility these could be mentioned here stating who is responsible for reviewing the policy or the person or group taking responsibility to apply the policy throughout the school. It may also be helpful to mention here about how those working with food in school will be kept up to date with the most recent requirements, for example any training provided, its frequency, monitoring activities or reporting systems.

You may also wish to include examples of who should use this policy for example, parent groups organising events for pupils, staff delivering practical food activities, partners working with the school or private providers running clubs in the school.

## Where will the policy apply throughout the school day?

Include all areas where food and drink are provided, along with a statement about how the policy relates, and how it should be applied in your school. You might refer to the Nutritional Regulations to help explain the approach in your school. Examples are provided on aspects of provision you may wish to consider however, every school will be different and the level of detail you include should be based on discussions with your various stakeholders.

Examples may include:

**Breakfast** – You may wish to consider including information about who breakfast is provided for, the food and drink standards that apply, who provides the breakfast, the food and drinks provided, timings and any costs.

**Morning and other break times** – This may include food and drinks provided at school as well as those brought into school. This may include but is not limited to:

- **snack items provided by the school** for example in headteacher/pupil meetings, nurture groups, tuckshops or emergency breakfast or breaktime foods. Consider the food and drink standards, the ethos of a health promoting school, costs, frequency and the purpose of the food and drink provided.
- **snack items brought from home** – do you have suggestions or guidance in place for parents/carers you might refer, is there a need to work with parents to create suitable guidance?

**School lunches** – This may include information about school lunches such as links to online menus, compliance with nutritional regulations, advice on provision of medically prescribed diets or information on accessing free school meals. You may also wish to mention about meal selection procedures, payment systems, support for children/young people at lunchtime, mealtimes.

**Packed lunches from home** – does your school have guidance or policy on packed lunches for parents/carers that can be linked here? Would such guidance be helpful for example, suggestions for packed lunches or explaining the schools' approaches to storage of packed lunches or dealing with uneaten food from home. Some ideas for packed lunches are available via these links -

[Packed Lunch Puzzle | Food Standards Scotland](#)

and

<https://archive.nutrition.org.uk/healthyliving/helpingyoueatwell/healthypackedlunches.html>

**Food brought into school at lunchtime** – This may include your school's stance on for example, take-away food/multi packs brought into the school dining areas. These foods can often conflict with food provided by the school catering service that must comply with nutritional regulations, and conflict with the ethos of a health promoting school.

**Drinks** – It may be helpful to include the types of drinks permitted in school as per the nutritional regulations. Careful consideration will have been given to those drinks to be

provided in secondary schools. This would be an opportunity to explain the rationale for decisions made in this area. See the nutritional regulations for further information. It may also be helpful to outline the school's stance on bringing non-compliant drinks to school, including drinks in water bottles for consumption in classrooms.

**School day trips** – This may include reference to the nutritional regulations as well as any guidance your school has in place for example, availability of packed lunches from the school catering service or guidance on packed lunches from home. It may also be helpful to include reference to any guidance on food and drink provided during residential trips or meals out of school.

## Other aspects of school life

### Social, cultural or recreational events

Perhaps start with a line about what the Nutritional Regulations say, then expand on what this will look like in your school. You might refer to expectations, your vision/values statement, and a health promoting school ethos.

Mention events run by school staff and those run by parents/carers, partners or by pupils, and how the nutritional requirements apply. It can be helpful to have separate guidance available as a quick reference for anyone involved in such events outlining the school's expectation of food and drink provision.

This can be an area of potential challenge for example, food based fundraising events. Careful consideration of all viewpoints and reference to the Nutritional Regulations can help achieve a position that complies with required legislation, reflects the school values around food and meets the needs of all.

### Food Waste

Whenever food is provided or used at school there is potential for waste. There can be many reasons for this from too much food being prepared then not served, to food being thrown away uneaten because of portion sizes, taste, lack of time, a poor dining experience or a combination of all these factors.

Food waste can happen throughout the school day, at breakfast clubs, snack/break time and during lessons, for example in practical food activities.

Considering your approach to food waste as part of your whole school food policy can be an effective way to reduce waste. Your school meals providers may be able to help you by explaining the approach they take to minimising food waste. You may also find helpful information via this link [Goals Archive - The Global Goals](#).

### School clubs and activities

What do the Nutritional Regulations say? How is this reflected in your school clubs and activities? It would be helpful to include mention of activities led by partner providers, your school values around food and the health promoting school ethos.

### Rewards and celebrations

Consider your school's current position on the provision of any sweet treats as rewards in class and at school celebrations? Is practice consistent and does it meet the requirements of the Nutritional Regulations? Do all staff know the school's position? Are suggestions available for positive recognition which support a health promoting school ethos?

Perhaps start with a line about what the Nutritional Regulations say, then continue with a brief explanation about what this will look like in your school.

Primary school policies might include information on how birthdays will be celebrated. Mention should also be made about birthday cakes or treats for classmates, sent in from home, perhaps linked to information on allergens.

### Learning and teaching

You may find it useful to include mention of the connection between food and drink provided at school and the focus on food and drink as a context for learning for example, through practical food activities, in Enterprise activities, learning led by external providers, work on Children's Rights or pupil-led food-based activities. Explaining how these connections align with the Nutritional Regulations, and food and health within



Curriculum for Excellence can help demonstrate the consistent approach taken in your school.

### Consulting with stakeholders

Mention how will you consult with all your stakeholders, including children, young people and parents, to ensure they feel listened to and involved in actions and decisions that affect them around food and drink.

Consider any specific situations that relate to your school for example, your approach to food donated or provided by partners, or food used by partners as part of learning activities. How does this fit with your values and vision, the context of your school community and with the Nutritional Regulations?

## Monitoring our whole school food policy across the school day and throughout each school term

A school food policy is effective only when it is applied as intended. Consider how will you work together with stakeholders to evaluate the effectiveness of your policy, who will do this and how, what feedback will be shared and with whom? Also consider how often your policy will be reviewed.

For monitoring and review purposes include the following information.

Date written

Date review is due

Member of SLT responsible

## Reference material

You might find it helpful to include references such as:

Nutritional Regulations - [Healthy eating in schools: guidance 2020](#)

[Food in schools across Scotland: A self-evaluation resource](#)



[PDF file: Food in Schools sketchnote: Connections \(1.4 MB\)](#)



[PDF file: Food in Schools sketchnote: Contributions \(1.2 MB\)](#)

[Monitoring templates – Food in Schools across Scotland \(glowscotland.org.uk\)](#)

[https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/downloads/Dietary\\_Goals\\_for\\_Scotland.pdf](https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/downloads/Dietary_Goals_for_Scotland.pdf)

[Health Promotion Guidance: Nutritional Guidance for Children and Young People in Residential Care Settings - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

[Section 2 Ensuring appropriate food and drink choices for all children and young people - Healthy eating in schools: supplementary guidance - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

[Schools \(Health Promotion and Nutrition\) Scotland Act: Health promotion guidance for local authorities and schools - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

[Health and wellbeing: Experiences and outcomes \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

## A sample template for you to adapt for your school

<b>Heading</b> Food policy for ... School
<b>Introduction/Context/Vision and values</b>
<b>Responsibility for the school food policy</b>
<b>Where the school food policy applies throughout the school day</b> (Include any other areas identified in the mapping exercise) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ <b>Breakfast</b></li><li>➤ <b>Morning and other break times</b></li><li>➤ <b>School lunches</b></li><li>➤ <b>Packed lunches from home</b></li><li>➤ <b>Food brought into school at</b></li><li>➤ <b>Drinks</b></li><li>➤ <b>School day trips</b></li></ul>
<b>Specific dietary requirements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ <b>Medical dietary requirements</b></li><li>➤ <b>Other dietary preferences</b></li></ul>

**Other aspects of school life**

(The mapping exercise may have highlighted other areas for inclusion)

- **Social, cultural or recreational events**
  
- **School clubs and activities**
  
- **Rewards and celebrations**
  
- **Learning and teaching**
  
- **Consulting with stakeholders**

**Monitoring our whole school food policy across the school day and throughout each school term.**

Date written

Date review is due

Member of SLT responsible

**Reference material****Education Scotland**

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