**Whole school food toolkit**

#### This toolkit is a summarised version of Appendix B and C from A Practical toolkit for schools: ‘What good looks like’; A whole school food approach by Rose et al. (2023) (1). It includes evidence-based principles to meeting a whole school approach to improving dietary outcomes for pupils, a self-assessment matrix and a template food policy.

#### **Principles**

The following six principles aim to guide towards achieving improvements in pupils’ dietary outcomes by implementing a whole school approach (WSA). The school environment needs to promote positive health and wellbeing and provide opportunities for healthy behaviours to be embedded and be part of the school culture. School leadership driving a WSA to food is crucial in making sustainable effective changes. These principles guide the self-assessment matrix and can support in school short- and long-term development plans and the measuring of progress.

These principles have been informed and adapted from evidence (7, 8, 30, 31) and ‘‘What Good Children and Young People’s Health Looks Like’ (10). The self-assessment matrix is a tool that schools can use to map what they are doing well and where they can take action to achieve a WSA to food.



|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. ***Implementation of a ‘whole school food’ policy and practice***

Adopt a WSA to developing and implementing policy and practices which support healthy weight, nutritious food, physical activity and incorporating the PSHE curriculum and principles encompasses the health and wellbeing of each pupil (17, 22, 32). Develop school food policies with views of all those involved in the preparation, delivery and consumption of school food provision. This will support a shared vision and engagement in, the whole school healthy ethos and culture.  | 1. ***Take an asset-based approach***

Focus on the positive resources, skills and knowledge within the school environment and the wider community. This should create a shared positive mindset and an openness to the opportunities available in improving the health outcomes of young people, rather than focusing on what is problematic and unchangeable (33). Examples of assets that can strengthen the WSA and support the aims of establishing collaborative actions include:* skills, knowledge and commitment of leadership, governors, staff, pupils and school nurses.
* established groups: school councils, wellbeing, student nutrition action and gardening groups.
* the school environment including dining spaces, gardens, social areas.
* resources, national policy and guidance e.g., School Food Standards (34) gardens/allotments, local groups, businesses, local authority, public services and resources within the school including staff and student health champions, school catering staff and managers, science, PSHE, and food education resources.
 |
| 1. ***Delivering healthy school food provision***

Implement the School Food Standards.Ensure that school catering providers use the Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services (GBSF) (38) Make sure suppliers and external school catering engage with and meet the school’s own school food policy (39). The schools’ food offering over the school day should match up with the food education lessons and consistent messages about nutrition across the school (11, 40). Where there is an ‘inhouse’ school catering model, training and leadership support is recommended to ensure nutritious food is served to young people (41).  | 1. ***Positive school dining experience***

A positive dining experience is critical to supporting a healthy relationship to food whilst also addressing the importance of social time for young people. The priorities for young people should be considered when designing dining spaces and the structure of break times. Young people place a high priority on social time with friends, in addition to a feeling of autonomy, freedom to make choices, convenience, value for money and aesthetics (2). Including young people in the setting of expectations and in communicating such rules to peers, will help engage students in the collective mission of creating a positive dining experience.  |
| 1. ***A coherent approach to food and nutrition education***

Nutrition is an essential part of health and wellbeing (43). A cross curricular and school community wide approach to the sharing of evidence-based information supports a whole school ethos and culture of healthy eating (examples: [www.swindonhealthyschools.org/core-themes/healthy-weight/healthy-eating/](http://www.swindonhealthyschools.org/core-themes/healthy-weight/healthy-eating/)).Staff as role models and setting up a team of health champions including student representatives (i.e., school council, student nutrition action group) encourages a continuous focus on the promotion and embedding of healthy eating (17). Use the ‘Food Teaching in Secondary Schools: a framework of knowledge and skills’ (44): food teachers working collaboratively with colleagues can ensure that consistent messaging and key concepts are included in science, PSHE, assembly and physical education. Good practice incorporates engaging food lessons, communicating the importance of nutrition to pupils with emphasis on what is a priority for them i.e., feeling good, improved wellbeing and performance whilst also involving pupils in developing school lunch menus with catering staff. Catering staff may also be involved in developing and delivering lessons. Food teachers and leaders developing good relationships and working with catering staff and providers supports a coherent approach for young people to develop and embed a healthy relationship with food, increase skills and healthy eating habits. | 1. ***A whole school approach to staff training***

For an understanding of the importance of a healthy weight and good nutrition for a young person’s development, ability to perform well in school and for future health outcomes it is critical to engage all staff in a whole school food approach. Staff training and regular staff briefings on local and school data and policy will ensure consistent commitment to the whole school food (and health) approach. Providing guidance, drawing upon evidence based information to support school staff in how to have conversations about weight management can ensure all staff are using consistent language and messages (45).  |

**Whole School Food Matrix**

The self-assessment matrix is a tool to be used by schools to support the self-monitoring of progress for the six principles above.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Developing**  | **Delivering**  | **Strength** **School system wide approach**  |
| **Implementation of a ‘whole school food’ policy and practice (see template policy below)** | Inconsistent school food policy; exists separately for food provision and food education. No systematic approach to school food provision and education. Variable actions involving students, staff and community in food practices.  | A food policy has been developed to include food provision and food education.A collaborative process has begun to take a systematic approach with universal support to implement the whole school food policy. Evidence of young person’s voice and community involvement in taking a whole school approach. | Consistent embedded food policy across the school community.Universal support for further development of food provision and education.Systematic approach to nutrition and strong evaluation and monitoring of the school food policy. |
| **Schools taking an asset-based approach**  | A largely deficit-based approach is taken to school food approaches. Main focus on problems within the school and barriers to implementing a whole school food policy.  | Evidence of an asset-based approach in the planning and implementation of school food policy and interventions. A consistent and shared staff, student and community mindset exists with focus on the opportunities available to improving health outcomes of young people.  | Strong evidence of an asset-based approach as embedded in a whole school food policy, leadership and community languages. Universal support for continuous monitoring and further development of interventions and policy, recognising and utilising school and community assets. |
| **Delivering healthy school food provision** | Variable approach to the delivery of food which meets the School Food Standards.Limited evidence of joined up working with catering team and food teaching staff. | All food meets the School Food Standards, with catering staff involved in all staff training. Catering teams and external catering and suppliers engaged with the whole school food policy.Evidence of coherence in food education and school food provision.  | Strong evidence that all food offered in school meets the School Food Standards, with behaviour change techniques embedded in practice.Universal support and coherence evident in food education and school food provision.  |
| **Positive school dining experience** | Inconsistent approach to lunchtime and break planning or structure e.g., timings, dining spacesVariable input and actions from staff and young people.  | Young people have regular input to dining spaces and structure of lunch and break times. The social time is placed with high level of importance as part of the school day.Expectations of a calm and enjoyable dining experience are part of the school food policy and communicated in a systematic way.  | The priorities of social time of young people are embedded in the whole school food approach. The young person’s voice is valued, and students are engaged in the importance of a calm and positive dining experience. |
| **A coherent approach to food and nutrition education** | Inconsistent delivery of food education cross school messaging  | Consistent delivery of food education messaging cross curricular, following an audit process.Proportionate universal support for further development of a systematic approach to sharing consistent messages.  | Consistent delivery of food education messaging as part of wellbeing and PSHE programmes, across the school, including dining areas, assembly and form time topics. |
| **A whole school approach to staff training**  | No systematic approach or inclusion of staff training on the importance of healthy weight and nutrition outcomes. | Consistent approach to staff training and update briefings on the importance of healthy weight and the school food policy. Proportionate universal support for further development of nutrition training for all staff.  | Staff training is systematically planned, and regular staff briefings include local and school data and policy. All staff have professional development goals based on the WSFA aims, are expected role models and are provided with relevant guidance.  |

**School Food Policy Template Example**

School logo

School Food Policy

*Month Year*

Approved by Executive/SLT in: Date

Staff Consultative Group advised: Date

Board of Governors notified on: Date

Review date

Month Year

**The policy**

*This section will set out which national guidance has informed the policy*

This policy has been devised acknowledging nationally approved best practice and following consultation with *groups representative of school community e.g., parents, staff, pupils, school nurse, governors, leadership, catering teams, local authority partners)* and so represents the views of health professionals, teaching staff and pupils.

Pupils will be provided with the knowledge and skills that permit understanding of the benefits of good nutrition.

**Objectives:**

*Objectives will be set during the consultation process; examples are as follows:*

* *To provide pupils with* ***positive healthy eating experiences*** *to promote their wellbeing*
* *To respect the* ***different dietary, cultural, religious and health needs*** *of our pupils*
* *To encourage our pupils to* ***develop positive attitudes towards food*** *through learning experiences day to day*
* *To enable best practice that could* ***influence and enhance the nutrition and wellbeing*** *of our wider school community*
* *To enable* ***all*** *pupils to have opportunities to be active and have access to healthy food choices*

**A whole school/academy approach**

As an accredited Healthy School there is a responsibility to model best practice over food choice and healthy eating habits. There is equally an expectation that all aspects of academy life, from curriculum lessons, dining room standards and adult practice combines to create an environment that instils a healthy lifestyle.

*This section is where each school can provide the aims of a whole school approach to food and nutrition. Each school is unique, however here is example wording which may be used. More detail may be added to include where food is included in the curriculum and school activities e.g. PSHE and list of other curriculum subjects growing activities, assemblies, tutor/form activities, whole school campaigns etc.*

*Our children’s health matters to all of us. Families are up against a flood of unhealthy food options. We want to ensure that all our pupils have healthy food options and places where they can be active and play.*

*The research tells us that good nutrition will help our pupils to thrive, perform better in school and enjoy better health as they grow into adulthood. Therefore, we strive to embed healthy eating and nutrition throughout our school. We aim to support a healthy relationship to food for our pupil’s wellbeing.*

*We as a school have a responsibility to model best practice over food choice and healthy habits. There is equally an expectation that all aspects of school life, from lessons to school activities and the dining hall experience combine to create an environment that makes following healthy lifestyle habits easier.*

*Our aim is to provide a* ***consistent approach to nutrition*** *in the school and to enable partnership working with our families and other professionals to support our pupils in developing healthy eating practices that can carry throughout their lives.*

**The pupil dining experience**

Add details as relevant to your school’s dining/catering service. Remember to add information of the following:

* The dining room environment (procedures and efforts to make it a more pleasant experience (for example displays, queuing systems, catering staff interaction etc i.e., Nudges
* Tasting opportunities – with an aim to support pupil’s familiarity with different foods
* Allergen procedures

*Example inclusion statements:*

*The display of food and accompanying advice will be to encourage students to take the healthiest of the available options. The catering team are sensitive to the needs of students with special dietary needs including religious convention.*

*Parents are asked to communicate any special diet or food allergy for sons and daughters to INSERT RELEVANT NAME*. Catering staff are aware of the different allergens in the academy break and lunch time menus. Pupils are expected to be responsible and to seek the relevant information about the contents of any dish.

*Students bringing packed lunches are expected to adhere to the school food policy. High fat, salt and sugar snacks (e.g., crisps, chocolate, confectionery) and sugary drinks are not permitted. Students not abiding by the requirements will be identified by lunch time duty staff so that this can be handled sensitively by their teacher/tutor/head of year.*

*All food provided for students will meet the national school food standards. All desserts provided are low in sugar and include fibre, vitamins and minerals from fruit or vegetables and do not contain cream or icing.*

*Special Dietary requirements*

* *Special diets for religious and ethnic groups: the school provides food in accordance with pupils’ religious beliefs and cultural practices.*
* *Vegan options*
* *Gluten-free and other dietary requirements*

*Pupils are encouraged not to eat anywhere else on the school site unless as part of a lesson or the tutorial programme.*

*The display of food and accompanying advice will be to encourage students to take the healthiest of the extensive choices.*

*A nutritional coding system will be available for students to understand to make the most appropriate choices. Students will be encouraged to use the traffic light system before making choices.*

**Staff**The school has an expectation that all staff members will support and contribute to this food policy in their daily working practice. Staff and visitors are encouraged to follow the healthy eating standards set out in this policy and to model healthy food and drink behaviours when in the company of school pupils.

*Add any relevant information for your school:*

*An example:*

*Food prepared for staff open evenings or parents’ evenings or for governors’ meetings will be healthy options meeting national school food standards. Staff members will endeavour to model healthy lifestyle practices e.g., drinking water*

*Staff where possible will dine with pupils and encourage a pleasant social dining environment.*

**Food safety**

*Add details as relevant to the school catering model*

*Example:*

*Appropriate food safety precautions are taken when food is being prepared or stored. These vary depending on the food on offer and include:*

* *Ensuring that adequate storage and washing facilities are available*
* *Ensuring that food handlers undergo appropriate food hygiene training*
* *Providing suitable equipment and protective clothing*

*Any food safety hazards are identified and controlled. We consult our local Environmental Health Department about any legal requirements.*

**Access to water**

Drinking water is available to all pupils, every day and free of charge.

*Add the school expectations for drinks in school.*

*Pupils are encouraged to drink still water only. Water fill stations are available for pupils to fill approved containers so that they can drink regularly.*

*No canned drinks, sports drinks or energy drinks*

**Nutrition education and consistent messages**

Nutritional education is an important and valued part of our school curriculum whole school ethos.

*Add details of how you ensure nutrition is embedded across the school, including cross curricular subjects, assemblies, tutor/form activities and campaigns, health days, PSHE etc.*

*Example:*

*Our pupils are presented with opportunities to explore ways to develop a healthy diet and to learn practical skills in the safe, hygienic and creative use of food. Pupils will be taught that there are ‘often/always foods’ (vegetables, fruits and wholegrains for example) and ‘sometimes/general foods’ (lasagne) and ‘rarely’ (those containing high sugar, fat, salt).*

**Food education in the classroom**

*Provide details of key stages food education, encouraging empowerment for pupils to learn skills which will support healthy habits.*

*Example inclusions:*

*All students in Key Stage 3 receive lessons for food and nutrition. They are presented with opportunities to explore ways to develop a healthy diet and to learn practical skills in the safe, hygienic and creative use of food. In addition to growing and tasting opportunities, encouraging fun sensory experiences to widen the familiarity to a variety of healthy foods.*

**Pupil rewards**

Research highlights the use of high sugar, salt, and fat products as rewards to be detrimental to supporting a healthy attitude to healthful food options. As such the value can be increased in a child/young person’s mind as to the pleasure of one food e.g., cake and the pain of another e.g., vegetables.

To support the development of a good relationship with a variety of food choices we **will not reward pupils with confectionery**.

Further rationale to support this measure:

* Allergies and intolerances mean that rewarding with food is exclusionary to some pupils
* Rewarding with sugary/high salt/ fat options encourages comfort eating behaviour into adulthood which may lead to the development of overweight or obesity
* Food/drinks high in sugar, salt and fat can have a detrimental effect on pupil’s wellbeing and oral health

*Add details of rewards/positive reinforcement methods utilised in school.*

School nutrition action groups/Health champions

*Many schools find it beneficial to establish a ‘school nutrition action group’ either as part of the school council or a stand-alone group where staff and students can meet regularly to discuss the school food environment and develop and implement ideas for positive food and nutrition promotion across the school.*

*Add any details of staff/pupil groups which inform and support the whole school food approach.*

School events

It is important that the healthy eating behaviours outlined in this policy are reinforced not only during the school day but across all school events and occasions to which pupils are invited.

*Add any relevant details of how good nutrition/healthy eating behaviour are promoted at school events such as open evenings or charity occasions.*

This policy is approved by *(Name school leadership, governors, local authority e.g., Director of Public Health )*

It will reviewed by XXXXX annually on XXX

**References**

1. Rose K, O'Malley C, Lake A, Lally GS. ‘Doing school food!’: a practical toolkit for adopting a whole school food approach. Available from: https://foodactive.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/PPH-school-food-paper-2023.pdf

2. Rose K, O'Malley C, Eskandari F, Lake A, Brown L, Ells L. The impact of, and views on, school food intervention and policy in young people aged 11-18 years in Europe: A mixed methods systematic review. Obesity Reviews. 2021.

7. Rose K, Eskandari F, Lake A, O'Malley C, Brown L, Ells L, editors. The impact of and views on school food policy in young peopleaged 11-18 years: A mixed methods systematic review. European and International Congress on Obesity; 2020: Obesity Reviews.

8. Rose K. Understanding the factors which influence school food provision and the young persons food choice: Teesside University; 2022.

10. Pearson V, De Sousa E, Furber A, . What Good Children and Young People's Public Health Looks Like The Association of Directors of Public Health and Public Health England, (0-19) WTGoCYPsPH; 2019.

11. Nelson MJNB. The school food trust: transforming school lunches in England. 2011;36(3):381-9.

17. Dennison Nea. Promoting healthy weight in children and young people and families: A resource to support local authorities Public Health England; 2018.

22. DFE. Guidance; Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education In: Education Df, editor. 2020.

30. Fuse. Fuse brief: The role of school food policy in shaping young people's diets. In: Rose K, editor.: Fuse; 2021.

31. Rose Kea. 'Pizza every day - why?' - a survey to evaluate the impact of COVID-19 guidelines on secondary school food provision in the UK. Nutrition Bulletin. 2021;46:160-71.

32. Lavis P, Robson C. Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing In: England PH, editor. 2021.

33. PHE. Health matters: community-centred approaches for health and wellbeing In: England PH, editor. 2018.

34. DfE (2024) .School Food Standards. Available from: www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools/school-food-standards-practical-guide

38. DEFRA (2021). Government Buying Standard for Food and Catering Services. Available from: www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainable-procurement-the-gbs-for-food-and-catering-services/government-buying-standard-for-food-and-catering-services

39. Nelson M, Breda JJPhn. School food research: building the evidence base for policy. 2013;16(6):958-67.

40. Nelson M, Nicholas J, Haroun D, Harper C, Wood L, Storey C, et al. 12 The Impact of School Food Standards on Children’s Eating Habits in England. 2014:137.

41. GST. Serving up children's health. Guy's St Thomas' Charity; 2020.

43. Report GN. 2020 Global Nutrition Report. Bristol, UK: Development initiatives; 2020.

44. BNF. Food teaching in secondary schools: A fraework of knowledge and skills In: England DfEaPH, editor. 2015.

45. PHE. Child weight management: short conversations with families. In: England PH, editor. 2017.