

a checklist for head teachers from the school food plan

Consider the whole picture

Food

- Eat with the children whenever you can – that way you can make sure the food looks and tastes good
- Offer a mix of familiar and new foods and encourage the children to experiment
- Find local and seasonal suppliers – children and their parents find the idea of local produce exciting, especially if it comes from your school garden
- Guarantee children have a balanced meal by encouraging them to have a range of foods. Ensure children know that the **Eatwell guide** can help them to understand what healthy balanced diet looks like
- Make tap water the drink of choice for your school and encourage all children to keep well hydrated

Environment

- Make sure your dining hall is clean, attractive and smells good
- Try to keep queuing times short
- Use proper crockery instead of divided trays

Social life

- Let children sit together whatever lunch they're eating
- Allow enough time for eating as well as activities or clubs

Get the price right

- Think about subsidising school meals. Children who start eating school lunches often carry on
- Offer discounts for parents with more than one child at the school, or whose children eat a school lunch every day

Improve the brand

- Bring the whole school together by encouraging teachers to sit and eat with the children
- Make menus available online in advance to children and parents
- Offer samples of the food for children to taste
- Hold themed events such as international food day to get the whole school excited
- Set up a group to represent children's views on school lunch
- Involve the children in preparing, cooking or serving the food

Here are some great ideas for improving your school meals – and increasing the number of children who eat them!

Adopt a whole school approach

- Treat lunch as part of the school day and your cooks and lunchtime supervisors as key members of staff on a par with teachers and business managers
- Include your school cooks in parents' evenings to answer questions about children's eating habits
- Give children consistent messages about nutrition in lessons and at lunchtime
- Choose school rewards for children that are not sweets
- Grow food in your school and use some in the school lunch
- Use cooking and growing as an exciting way to teach subjects across the curriculum
- Offer after-school cooking lessons for parents and children

Leadership

Get the community involved

- Invite parents, carers and grandparents to taste school food and eat with the children at lunchtime and/or parents' evenings
- Encourage family members to help with cooking or gardening clubs
- Seek out community partners who can help with cooking and growing activities, such as local restaurants, food producers or allotment growers
- Get local chefs in to teach in your school

Get the right contract

- Find an expert to help you draft a new contract and embrace it as a time of opportunity for your school food service
- Ask your caterer to draw up a clear, written plan for increasing take-up over a set period

For details of organisations that can help you with contracts, cookery lessons, gardening or any other aspect of this checklist, visit www.schoolfoodplan.com





we're **SWAPPING** a
packed lunch for a
school dinner

What are you swapping?