Food Policy Guidance
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Section 1 - Background

This document aims to help implement food policies and practices to encourage schools, out of school care, children, young people and parents to embrace a healthy eating culture.

Included is a guide to:
- Incentive Schemes
- Ban on Food and Drink Items
- Food as a Reward
- Developing a Food Policy
- Useful Contacts and Resources

The diets of many children and young people in Scotland fall short of national dietary recommendations and many are consuming inadequate amounts of fruit and vegetables and eating too many foods high in fat, saturated fat, salt and sugar. Children and young people need the right balance of foods to develop and grow (Scotland, Healthier Scotland, 2008). The United Kingdom has one of the highest levels of childhood obesity among developed countries. In Scotland, in 2014, 17% of children were at risk of becoming obese, and 31% at risk of becoming overweight or obese. Being obese or overweight can increase the risk of developing a range of health problems, many of these associated with a shortened life expectancy (Obesity Action Scotland, 2014).

The Eatwell Guide provides a visual representation of the types and proportions of foods children, young people and adults need for a healthy diet. Referring to the Eatwell Guide helps to ensure everyone promotes consistent messages about the balance and variety of foods in a healthy diet.


(Food Standards Scotland, 2016)
Improving children’s diets and reducing the amount and frequency of sugary food and drinks consumed can also help to prevent tooth decay and improve oral health (NHS Health Scotland, 2012).

Schools and out of school care can make a valuable contribution to improving the nutritional quality of children’s diets within a health promoting environment.

**Better Eating Better Learning**

Better Eating Better Learning (2014) is the Scottish Government’s refresh on Hungry for Success (2002). Teacher’s, cooks and parents all have a role in food provision and food education for children and young people. Better Eating Better Learning aims to develop partnership working to improve outcomes for children and young people.

The guidance covers Food and Health; Food and Learning; School Food and Drink Provision; the Dining Experience; Sustainability through Food; Training and Support and; Communication and Engagement. The document contains examples of good practice and also a self evaluation tool to encourage reflection and inspire action.

Cults Associated School Group (ASG) are one of eight school clusters across Scotland who put themselves forward as part of a three year project implementing Better Eating Better Learning. In its first year the ASG established partnership working with the catering team, Education Scotland, pupils and parents with plans established on how to take forward the Better Eating Better Learning agenda over the next two years.


**Beyond the School Gate**

The Scottish Government developed Beyond the School Gate – improving food choices in the school community (2014) to provide guidance for associated partners on what they can do to influence the food environment around schools.

The guidance looks at four main areas:
  1. Stay on site and alternative outlet provision in schools
  2. Marketing, promotions and incentives
  3. Support and guidance for caterers and retailers
  4. Environmental Health, licensing and planning.

Section 2 - Incentive Schemes

This guidance is to give support around the sensitivities that might arise from requesting parents and carers to provide healthier snacks and packed lunches for their children.

Planning Stages

Gathering appropriate information can help to give clear aims and objectives behind the development of an incentive scheme, these could include:

- Identifying a need to encourage healthier eating through observations or surveys to staff, parents, children and young people.
- Research the local community health profile for data on oral health or child healthy weight. This can strengthen an argument towards the need for an incentive scheme. Contact your Health Improvement Officer if you need more information on how to access this information.
- If your school has a tuck shop make sure the products fit in with the Schools (Health Promotion & Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. For more information on tuck shop provision see page 11.
- Involve children, young people, staff, parents/carers and partners in discussions around development of an incentive scheme using collated evidence. Being dictatorial and prescriptive in most cases create barriers.

Top Tips for a Fair and Inclusive Incentive Scheme

- Tie incentive schemes in with any related policies.
- An incentive scheme does not have to be applied every day e.g. start off one or two days per week or include ‘free’ days. Try to encourage parents to provide modest sized snacks on ‘free’ days.
- Avoid using children to judge snacks, this may cause relationship problems in and out of school.
- Children and young people shouldn’t be singled out and made to feel they are being penalised if they do not have healthier options, instead this could be done on a class/group basis.
- Avoid any mixed messages e.g. fair trade items are not necessarily healthy options.
- Introduce a graded points system where fruit and vegetables receive the highest points awarded
- If parents insist on providing sugary snacks and drinks, emphasise the importance of encouraging children to have these with their lunch, to limit the damaging effects on teeth from constant sugar exposure.

See Appendix 1 for examples of incentive schemes.
Section 3 - Ban on food and drink items

Where there are concerns about certain food and drink items a ban may be considered.

A number of schools in Aberdeen have banned certain products e.g. high energy drinks. As part of a campaign in one secondary school, if young people brought high energy drinks into the school grounds these were confiscated and replaced with a bottle of water.

Bucksburn Academy had a campaign on the consumption of high energy drinks in school. The campaign included information shared through assemblies, posters and lessons in PSHE. A tree assembled from high energy drink cans, consumed by the young people in one day, was constructed in the foyer. Staff say the campaign has been successful in reducing the amount of fizzy and energy drinks consumed by pupils and they have also seen a reduction in litter. There must be a consistent approach from all teachers in all classes and there must be a clear message to all pupils - the aim is to educate not confiscate. To continue success it is likely the campaign will need to be revisited each year.


It is important to include children, young people, staff and parents/carers in discussions around banning food and drink items. Developing a food policy (page 8) can help to enforce a ban.
Section 4 - Food as a Reward

In line with the Schools (Health Promotion & Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007 confectionary cannot be given as a reward. Rewards and incentives can be an effective way to encourage positive behaviour, unless the foods used are considered a healthy choice it is recommended using an alternative reward.

So, what is wrong with food as a reward?

- Children need to be encouraged to make healthier choices about food.
- Giving fatty/sugary foods as a reward in class contradicts the healthy eating and oral health messages in school and is confusing for children.
- Children learn to reward themselves through eating, a habit that may continue into adulthood.
- Rewarding with fatty/sugary foods reinforces eating outside of meal or snack times, encourages children to eat when they are not hungry and interferes with healthy eating routines.
- When fatty/sugary foods are offered as a reward for daily activities, children quickly learn to prefer these foods over healthier foods.

How to make changes to reward schemes?

- To help children embrace and take ownership of the reward system, why not ask them to help develop a list of non-food rewards.
- Draw up an agreement as to how, when and what rewards will be awarded to pupils to ensure a fair system that everyone understands.
- It is good practice to involve parents in discussions around appropriate rewards; these decisions could end up being a positive influence for parents reward systems at home too. Consistent rewards in and out of school can help to facilitate positive behaviour change.

See Appendix 2 for non-food reward ideas for Nursery and Primary pupils.
Section 5 - Food Policy

Purpose of a Food Policy

The best way to make sure children and young people get access to healthy foods on a consistent basis is to set out practice, advice and guidance in a food policy.

This guidance should be used in conjunction with:

The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007, http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Schools/HLiv/foodnutrition


These documents are referenced throughout ‘Template for a Food Policy’ starting on page 9.

Developing a Food Policy

The overarching principle when developing a food policy is to consider your practice within the ethos of a health promoting environment.

A consultation process with children, young people, parents/carers, catering and all other staff ensures all parties take ownership of the policy content. Policy ownership will support schools to have the power to enforce bans on inappropriate food and drinks which do not contribute to a healthy diet.

Engagement:

- Parent/carer surveys
- Speaking with pupils through pupil council or assembly

It is recommended that your policy is shared with the wider community including all pupils, staff, parents, PTAs, parent council, visiting specialists and partner agencies so that they are aware of your food policy. It is advisable that they adopt similar practices which are in line with this policy and promote consistency in messages.
Template for a Food Policy

This guidance has been designed to provide the necessary advice and support to enable you to develop your own food policy. The following is a sample template for a food policy you could use and populate pertinent to your needs – some of the guidance may be applicable for school use only.

Food Policy

1. Introduction

For example:-
We are dedicated to providing an environment that promotes healthy eating and enables children and young people to make informed choices about the food they eat.

You may also want to:-
- Include all who was involved in the process of developing the policy and how this was done.
- State who the policy is for.
- List policies that this policy should be read in conjunction with

2. Aims and Objectives

A short statement may be appropriate for this. Describe what you want to achieve and provide a short explanation of your aims. It also provides a point to refer back to as you implement your policy. For example:-

Aims
- Enable children and young people to make healthy food choices through the provision of information and development of appropriate skills and attitudes.
- Encourage children and young people to eat a healthy, balanced and varied diet.
- Discourage sugary drinks and foods high in sugar, fat and salt.
- To provide healthy food choices at any opportunity.

Objectives
- To integrate these aims into all aspects of school life using a consistent approach by all staff members to healthy eating, food and health education and providing pupils with opportunities to make healthy choices.
- To work in partnership with children, young people, parents, staff and the wider community to ensure the policy is accepted and embraced.
3. Policy Content

School Lunch Provision

Pupil’s opinions should be considered in partnership when planning how to ensure the dining experience is a positive, inclusive environment.

Options should be considered to improve ambience, reduce queuing and make the canteen an attractive option for children.

See Better Eating Better Learning (2014) pages 42-48 for practical guidance around providing an enjoyable dining experience for all –


Food and Drink Provided Out with the School Lunch

Nursery Classes:-

Food and drink providers for children under 5 years should adhere to Setting the Table Nutritional Guidance and Food Standards (2015). Guidance on developing a food policy specific to the early years setting can be found on pages 86-91 –


Breakfast:-

Breakfast club can provide a nutritious meal for pupils before the school day.

Practical guidance on setting up a breakfast club in school can be found in:

- Grampian Health Promoting Schools – Food (pages 19-20)

For suggested food and drink items to offer for breakfast see Aberdeen City Policy on the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007(Aberdeen City Council, 2010).

You may want to insert a list of healthy breakfast foods available at your school breakfast club.
Tuck Shop:-

See Aberdeen City Policy on the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007 (Aberdeen City Council, 2010) for recommendations of food and drinks served/provided out with the school lunch.

For practical guidance around setting up a tuck shop see Grampian Health Promoting Schools – Food (page 16).

You may want to insert a list of the healthy foods available in your tuck shop.

Use of Food as a Reward:-

Confectionary must not be given as a reward in schools in line with the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007.

See Appendix 2 for examples of non-food rewards.

You may want to insert a list of positive classroom rewards that can be used in your school.

Drinks:-

To prevent tooth decay the only drinks recommended between meals are plain milk and water (SIGN, 2005). Encouraging the use of clear drinking bottles can prevent sugary drinks being brought in from home.

All children and young people should have access to free drinking water on a daily basis. See Grampian Health Promoting Schools – Food (page 17) for practical guidance on water provision throughout the day.

Cultural/Social Celebrations:-

Cultural/social celebrations are exempt from the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007 e.g. Christmas party, sports day. However, again in the ethos of a health promoting environment consideration should be given to the choice of items and portion sizes when planning such events. Key points to consider and suggestions can be found in Aberdeen City Policy on the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007 (Aberdeen City Council, 2010).

You may want to (work together with your parent fundraising body to) come up with a list of healthier food and drinks provided and/or sold at your schools fundraising events. This will help to ensure consistency of messages to children and young people.
Fair-Trade Produce:-

Some fair-trade produce falls out-with the nutritional requirements of the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007 e.g. chocolate bars, cereal bars and coated dried fruits – where possible try to consider alternative produce. However, if fair-trade events are taking place occasionally or as a one-off throughout the year they can be classed as a social/cultural celebration and therefore are exempt.

Practical Food Work/Food Tasting:-

Try to encourage pupils to participate in practical food work.

Practical food work is exempt from the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. However, in the ethos of a health promoting environment consideration should be given to such activities. It is also important to remember that tasting small quantities of food as part of a project provides valuable other experiences for pupils.

You may want to list examples of practical food work and food tasting opportunities throughout the stages.

See Appendix 4 for information on food safety and practical food work in the classroom.

Food and Drink Brought into School

Work together with parents to provide their children with healthier foods while they are in your care and this will hopefully develop positive eating habits out-with school.

You may decide it is appropriate to place a ban on certain food and drinks taken into school e.g. fizzy or high energy drinks.

Packed Lunches:-

Parents should be encouraged to provide their children with a healthy packed lunch. See ‘Healthy Lunch Box’ leaflet for parental guidance on what constitutes a healthy packed lunch (to order copies see Contacts and Resources page 16).

Following consultation with parents, guidelines could be set to encourage healthier packed lunches. You may promote a healthy packed lunch initiative to encourage children to consume healthier packed lunches.

For practical guidance on promoting healthy packed lunches see Grampian Health Promoting Schools – Food (pages 18-19).
Snacks:-

Snacks can be an important part of the diet of children and young people and can contribute positively towards a balanced diet.

A snack incentive scheme can encourage children to consume healthier snacks while at school. You may want to include details of the snack incentive scheme that your school has adopted.

Curriculum

See Education Scotland (2015) for information on the application of significant aspects of learning for Food and Health -


See Appendix 3 for examples of cross curricular approaches to food and health.

Parental/Carer Involvement

The partnership of home and school is critical in shaping how young people behave, particularly where health is concerned. Each must reinforce the other.

Examples of involving parents:

- Nursery to primary 1 transition
- New parents given a summary of the food policy and healthy eating leaflets
- Involvement with PTA’s and Parent Council to encourage consistent practice
- Leaflets around healthy eating/healthy packed lunches
- Consultation with parents around any changes to the food policy

Food Safety

You may want to include a list of rules to be followed when preparing and sampling food in the classroom.

Ensure packed lunches are stored correctly to ensure food safety.

Attendance on food hygiene training courses is considered best practice but is not a prerequisite for delivering practical food work in schools. See Appendix 4 for information on food safety and practical food work in the classroom.
Equal Opportunities

In healthy eating, there must be equal access for all. Recognise that some children require specialist diets as a result of a diagnosed health care need e.g. nut allergies, diabetes and Coeliac Disease.

Consideration should also be taken for those children with special dietary requirements as a result of religious, cultural or personal beliefs.

See Policy for Supporting Pupils with Special Dietary Requirements (2007) –

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

The policy must be monitored to ensure compliance. It is important to note who has overall responsibility of monitoring and updating the policy and agreeing how often it should be updated.

5. Review

Date policy implemented:

Review date:
Section 6 - Contacts and Resources

Health Information Resources Service

There are a range of leaflets available that support key healthy eating and oral health messages for staff, parents, children and young people. NHS Grampian Resources service can supply these leaflets free of charge to registered members of staff.

Register with: www.nhsghpcat.org or tel. (01224) 558504.

Available Resources (Resource ID and type of resource):-

- Keep your smile healthy with healthier snacks (L04167 postcard)
- Stamp out fizzy drinks for a great smile (L04166 postcard)
- Teeth TLC snappers (L04162 snapper game)
- Top Tips for looking after your children’s teeth (L04069 leaflet)
- Tell me about diet and my teeth (L04044 leaflet)
- Top Tips for Kids (L14362 leaflet)
- The good snack guide (L14338 postcard)
- Breakfast - Who needs it? We all do! (L14332 leaflet)
- I’m hungry, feed me please! (L14331 Leaflet for pre-school)
- Hand me 5 (L63021 easy read leaflet)
- Strive for 5 To stay alive (L14012 leaflet)
- Good grub (L14318 leaflet)
- Eat 5 quiz book (L14228 leaflet for upper primary)
- Healthy Happy Kids – Professional Resource (L14350 leaflet for staff)
- Healthy Lunch Box (L14375 leaflet)

Online Resources

References


Appendices

Appendix 1

Examples of snack incentive schemes:

| Swap shop, Kittybrewster Primary School (Aberdeen City) | • Fruity Friday attracts pupils interest and promotes team work in each class, where efforts to bring in and enjoy fruit as a snack in order to be awarded points for the class to compete for the Fruity Friday trophy which is presented to the winning class in a weekly assembly.  
• Pupils who do not have fruit are given the opportunity to swap their snack for a healthier option. |
| --- | --- |
| The Golden Carrot, Kintore Primary School (Aberdeenshire) | • An Incentive scheme that promotes the message ‘Everything in Moderation’.  
• The ‘Golden Carrot’ runs four days per week to encourage children to bring healthier snacks with a ‘Free Friday’ and is awarded to both lower and upper stages (P1-3 and P4-7).  
• A short, simple list of snacks has been drawn up with 2 points awarded for fruit and vegetables and 1 point awarded for a small number of healthier items. No points are awarded for snacks high in sugar, fat and salt.  
• The class with the most points are awarded the ‘Golden Carrot’ at assembly and at the end of the term the class with the most ‘Golden Carrot’ awards get a class reward. |
| Minimum Spend, Greenwards Primary School (Moray) | • A school working in collaboration with their canteen service.  
• Greenwards Primary School has set up a tuck shop providing fruit and vegetables that are encased in small greaseproof paper cones, ideal for holding chopped up fruit or grapes and avoid sticky fingers.  
• The canteen staff bake mini scones sold at 10p each.  
• The children are only allowed to spend a maximum of 20p at the tuck shop and are only allowed to purchase 1 mini scone. |
Appendix 2

Non-food reward ideas for nursery and primary pupils:

- Play favourite games
- Extra break time
- Sit with some friends
- Show and tell
- Help teacher with a job
- Teacher reads a book to the class
- Make deliveries to the school office
- Extra house points
- Name/photo on star chart
- Listen to an audio book/watch a video
- Read or have class outdoors
- Computer time
- Chat break
- Celebration assemblies
- Stickers
- Certificates
- Extra reading time
- Free time at end of class
- Sit with friends at the top table
- Listen to music while working/tidying up
- Homework pass
### Appendix 3

#### Ideas for Cross Curricular Approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Social Education</strong></td>
<td>Building healthy eating and making healthy choices into PSE curriculum throughout the school for example understanding food labelling, making healthy choices and understanding the impact on health, independent living, budgeting and preparing healthy meals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical Education</strong></td>
<td>PE teaches about ‘food as fuel’ and how our bodies depend on good food to sustain overall health and wellbeing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Design and Technology</strong></td>
<td>Design and Technology where children learn to design and make their own healthy meals and/or labels e.g. pizza.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>History</strong></td>
<td>History provides insight into changes in diet and food over time e.g. food rationing in WWII.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literacy</strong></td>
<td>Literacy provides children with the opportunity to explore poetry, persuasion, argument and narrative work using food and food-related issues as a stimulus e.g. writing to a company to persuade them to use locally grown or organic foods in children’s food and drink.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maths</strong></td>
<td>Maths can offer the possibility of understanding nutrition labelling, calculating quantities for recipes, weighing and measuring. Design charts to get pupils views on school meals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Science</strong></td>
<td>Science provides an opportunity to learn about the types of food available, their nutritional composition, digestion and the function of different nutrients in contributing to health, and how the body responds to exercise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religious Education</strong></td>
<td>RE provides the opportunity to discuss the role of certain foods in the major religions of the world. Children experience different foods associated with religious festivals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Information &amp; Communication Technology</strong></td>
<td>ICT can afford pupils the opportunity to research food issues using the internet. Pupils can design packaging and adverts to promote healthy food choices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Music</strong></td>
<td>Music can provide pupils with the knowledge about different properties of cooked and uncooked foods where pulses and grains are used in percussion instruments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geography</strong></td>
<td>Geography provides a focus on the natural world and changing environment, offering the chance to consider the impact our consumer choices have on people across the world who rely on growing food as their source of income.</td>
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</tbody>
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Appendix 4

Food Handling in the Classroom

Although it is not compulsory, it is best practice for at least one member of staff present during the food activity to hold a food handling certificate. The activity of food preparation, handling and serving of food in the classroom is distinct from the provision of school lunch by caterers and any food that is prepared to sell.

As with all activities in the classroom, a risk assessment should be completed to ensure food can be prepared and provided safely in the classroom. Prior to undertaking food preparation in the classroom, staff should also seek information about any children with food allergies or food intolerances.

Aberdeen City Council CPD Programmes run REHIS Food Hygiene Courses approximately four times a year. In addition to this, Learning and Teaching Scotland have developed CPD sessions on safe and hygienic practices; nutrition; developing practical food skills and food and the consumer. Available online via the link –