



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

**The Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Requirements)  
(Maintained Primary Schools) (Wales) Regulations 2025: Anticipated version  
of Statutory guidance for local authorities and governing bodies**

## Anticipated guidance

Anticipated guidance document no: 304/2026

Date of issue: March 2026

<b>Audience</b>	Everyone who is involved with the provision of school food and drink in maintained primary schools. This includes local authorities and governing bodies of maintained schools (including maintained nursery schools), those working in schools, e.g. headteachers and teachers, midday supervisors, teaching assistants, and private/in-house catering providers. Other stakeholders with an interest may include parents/carers, learners, health professionals, dietitians, healthy schools coordinators, etc
<b>Overview</b>	This is an anticipated version of Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities and Governing Bodies, to be read with the Healthy Eating in Schools ( <u>Nutritional Standards and Requirements</u> ) ( <u>Maintained Primary Schools</u> ) ( <u>Wales</u> ) <u>Regulations 2025</u> (“the Healthy Eating Regulations”) which will only apply to maintained primary schools (which for the purpose of these Regulations include maintained nursery schools, and maintained middle schools, special schools and PRUs that provide primary education). The Statutory Guidance will be published in its final format ahead of the 31 <sup>st</sup> October, the coming into force date of the Regulations. This anticipated Guidance does not relate to the <u>Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Requirements) (Wales) Regulations 2013</u> as they only apply to maintained secondary schools. Separate guidance to support the Healthy Eating in Schools 2013 Regulations is published separately.

**Further information** Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.

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This document is also available in Welsh.

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**Additional copies** This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at <https://www.gov.wales/healthy-eating-schools>

**Related documents** The Healthy Eating in Schools (Wales) Measure 2009  
The Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Requirements) (Maintained Primary Schools) (Wales) Regulations 2013

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.  
This document is also available in Welsh.

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## **Introduction**

The Welsh Government has reviewed the Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Requirements) (Wales) Regulations 2013, the supporting Healthy Eating in Maintained Schools Statutory Guidance, and the Promotion of Healthy Eating and Drinking Statutory Guidance. The aim of the review was to increase the availability of tasty, healthy, nutritionally balanced school food and drink, and help ensure that healthy eating is promoted in schools with the aim of reducing both health and attainment inequalities. Updated Healthy Eating Regulations will come into force in 31 October 2026. Anticipated guidance on the duty to promote healthy eating in schools is set out in a separate document.

In discharging their duties under section 1 of the Measure to promote healthy eating and drinking by registered pupils of maintained schools, local authorities and governing bodies must have regard to guidance given from time to time by Welsh Ministers on what constitutes healthy eating and drinking.

This anticipated Statutory Guidance ('this Guidance') is issued under section 1 and, along with the Healthy Eating Regulations, are designed to help children develop healthy eating habits and ensure they have the energy and nutrition they need to get the most from their whole school day.

This Guidance clarifies how the provision within the Healthy Eating Regulations should be applied. Local authorities and governing bodies are required to have regard to this Guidance. This means that they must take it into account and if they decide to depart from it have clear and justifiable reasons for doing so.

## **Who do the Healthy Eating Regulations apply to?**

The Healthy Eating Regulations apply to a local authority or governing body of a maintained primary school in Wales that provides food or drink before 6pm on a school day to registered pupils, whether on school premises or at a place other than school premises (e.g. on a school trip). Where 'maintained primary schools' is used in this Guidance this includes maintained nursery schools, and maintained middle schools, special schools and PRUs that provide primary education (the Healthy Eating Regulations will apply only to registered pupils in year 6 and below in such schools/PRUs).

## Food covered under the Healthy Eating Regulations

The Healthy Eating Regulations impose requirements and standards about the following:

Regulation / Schedule	Requirement and/or Standard
Regulation 3 and Schedule 2	<p><b>School breakfast in maintained primary schools</b> sets out the four food and drink categories permitted to be provided to registered pupils at maintained primary schools as part of breakfast provision. The requirement applies regardless of whether or not a charge is made for the breakfast. Information on Free Breakfast in Primary Schools (FBIPS) can be found in the statutory guidance<sup>1</sup>.</p>
Regulation 4 and Schedule 3	<p><b>Food and drink provided as part of a School Lunch in Maintained Primary Schools</b> states what foods must and must not be provided as part of school lunch and specifies the frequency that particular foods can be provided as part of a school lunch.</p> <p>This also states which drinks can be provided in maintained primary schools as part of a school lunch.</p>
Regulation 5 and Schedule 4	<p><b>Requirements for food and drink provided otherwise than as part of a school breakfast or a school lunch</b> sets out the requirements that apply to food provided to registered pupils at maintained primary schools before 6pm on a school day outside of breakfast and lunch provision. The Schedule specifies the type of food that must and must not be provided e.g. at mid-morning break and afterschool clubs. This is not an exhaustive list of food that can be provided.</p> <p>This also specifies what drinks can and cannot be provided outside of breakfast and lunch provision across the entire school day up to 6pm.</p>
Regulation 4 and Schedule 5	<p><b>Nutritional standards for lunch in maintained primary schools</b> sets out the amount of energy that must be provided in</p>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-12/free-breakfast-in-primary-schools-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities-and-governing-bodies.pdf>

	an average daily school lunch and the amount of energy and nutrients that must be provided in an average school lunch in a menu cycle.
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## Who is responsible for ensuring compliance?

Local authorities and governing bodies of maintained primary schools who provide food or drink (including where they arrange the provision or where they enter into an agreement for it to be provided) must comply with the Healthy Eating Regulations. Anyone else who is involved in providing food and drink in maintained primary schools in Wales should be aware of the statutory requirements if they plan menus, purchase and procure food and prepare food and drink for/in schools. This includes headteachers and teachers, midday supervisors, teaching assistants, and private/in-house catering providers. Other stakeholders with an interest may include parents/carers, learners, dietitians, health professionals and healthy schools practitioners.

## What food and drink do the Healthy Eating Regulations apply to?

The Healthy Eating Regulations apply to all food and drink provided by, or under an agreement or other arrangement made by, the local authority or governing body to learners across the whole school day before 6pm in all maintained primary schools. This includes at breakfast, all break times, and after-school-clubs. The Healthy Eating Regulations also apply to food and drink provided to learners at any outlet on school premises throughout the school day before 6pm where the food and drink is provided by, or under an agreement or other arrangement made by, the local authority or governing body, e.g. school tuck shop, vending machine, outside serving area, canteen, etc.

## Use of language in this Guidance

The term 'must' is used when there is a statutory duty to meet a requirement.

The term 'should' is used when the advice set out should be followed by local authorities and governing bodies unless there is a clear and justifiable reason not to.

The term 'recommend' is used throughout the Guidance and is used to suggest approaches that are beneficial and support best practices.

## **Breakfast in Maintained primary schools**

Only food and drinks from the following food and drink categories can be provided during breakfast on each school day, other than plain water which should also be provided.

Each registered pupil attending the breakfast session must be given the option to choose one item from each of the food and drink categories.

By 'infants' we mean registered learners in Nursery to Year 2 and by 'juniors' we mean registered learners in Year 3 to Year 6.

Within the recommended portion sizes below, these are minimum portions and overall, juniors require a larger serving than infants.

Food and drink categories	Suggested items (where 'must' is used, this is a )	Recommended portion sizes
Milk and plain plant-based drinks	Milk must be plain semi-skimmed, skimmed or 1% fat milk (or whole or semi-skimmed milk in nursery) Plain plant-based milk alternatives: Means soya, oat or other plant-based drinks (but not including rice drinks),	<b>At least</b> 125ml for infants and juniors
Cereals	Whole-wheat cereals Bran flakes Porridge Cornflakes Rice-based cereals Cereals provided must not be coated or flavoured with sugar, chocolate or cocoa powder.	<b>At least</b> 20g for one whole-wheat cereal biscuit <b>At least</b> 30g for all other cereals
Fruit and vegetables	Fresh fruit (whole or cut into pieces) Vegetable sticks Canned fruit in natural fruit juice Dried fruit to add to cereals.  <b>Baked beans should not be provided</b>	Fruit – <b>At least</b> 40g for infants and <b>at least</b> 60g for juniors  Vegetables - <b>At least</b> 40g for infants and <b>at least</b> 60g for juniors  Dried fruit – <b>At least</b> 15g for infants and <b>at least</b> 20g for juniors
Bread and reduced fat spreads	All bread provided must be at least 50% wholemeal. This relates to the percentage of wholemeal flour within the bread (as a percentage of total flour) Unsaturated spreads, including vegetable, olive, rapeseed and sunflower varieties.	<b>At least</b> 1 slice for infants and juniors

## Nursery learners

Milk served to pupils in a nursery school or a nursery class must be semi-skimmed or full fat milk.

## Primary schools

In addition to the breakfast requirements under the Healthy Eating Regulations, where free breakfasts are provided to learners in any maintained primary school, local authorities and governing bodies are also required to have regard to the statutory guidance for [Free breakfast in primary schools \(FBIPS\)](#).<sup>2</sup>

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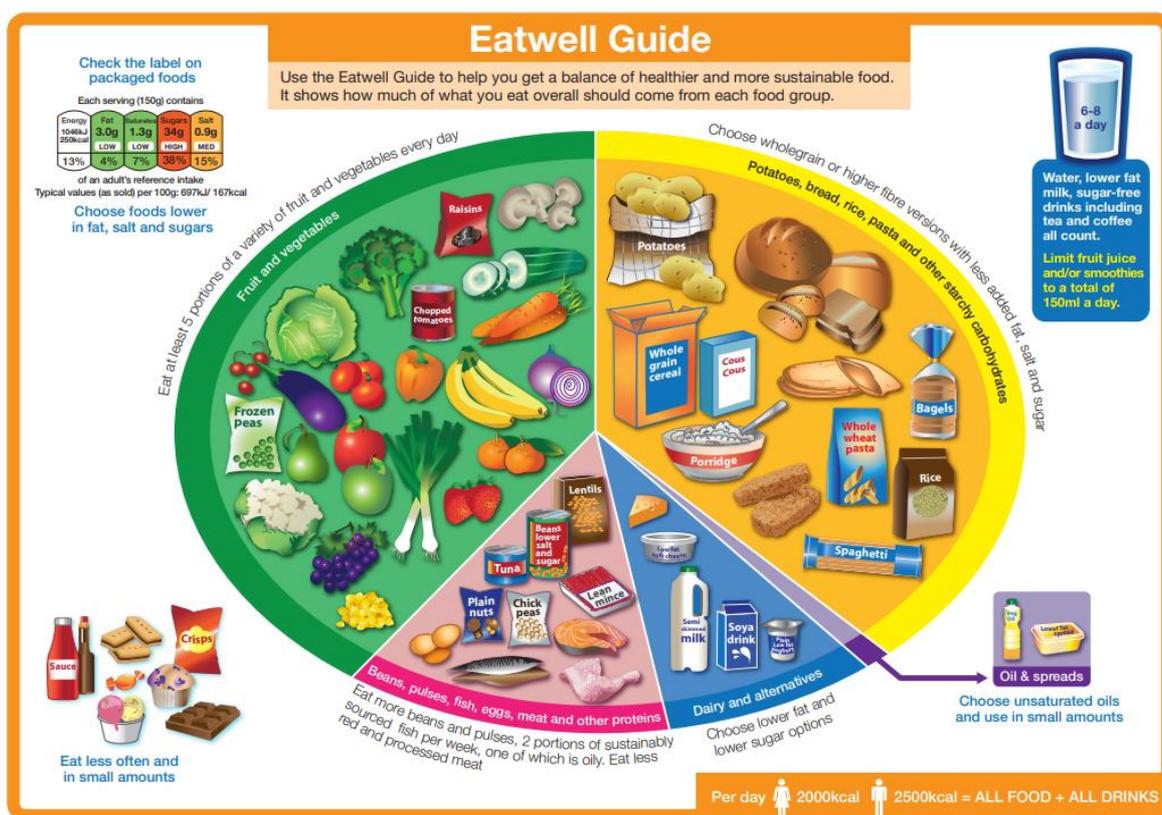
<sup>2</sup> [Free breakfast in primary schools: statutory guidance | GOV.WALES](#)

# Lunch in Maintained Primary Schools (applicable to nursery learners where lunch is provided)

The Healthy Eating Regulations and anticipated guidance have been informed by the Eatwell Guide - the guide is a policy tool used to show UK government advice on eating healthily and achieving a balanced diet.

The proposed food and drink requirements for primary school lunches within the Healthy Eating Regulations and in this Guidance have been organised under the sections of the Eatwell Guide (see below) and are more closely aligned with UK healthy eating advice.

The grey sections throughout this Guidance are foods that are encouraged to be eaten less often and in small amounts.



For each section below, the Eatwell guide advice is included, followed by the requirements in the Healthy Eating Regulations.

'Requirements' in this section are the requirements set out in Schedule 3 to the Healthy Eating Regulations relating to food which must and must not be provided as part of school lunches in maintained primary schools. The requirements must be complied with.

The requirements relate to 'provision'. **This means the offer of food and drink, at the point of ordering or service, that learners *could* take up.** Please note however that Fruit and/or Vegetables within or with desserts must be served.

Requirements relating to food and drink that is to be promoted is described in this Guidance as "must be provided". For example, '**at least** 2 portions of vegetables must be provided each day'. This means that **at least** 2 portions of vegetables should be offered to learners for them to take up as part of their school lunch each day.

Requirements relating to food and drink that is limited is described in this Guidance as "must not be provided more than X times a week". For example, 'a portion of deep-fried or flash fried food must not be provided more than once each week'. This means that **no more than** 1 portion of deep-fried or flash-fried foods can be offered to learners for them to take up as part of their school lunch each week. Alternative deep-fried or flash fried foods (such as a non-meat alternative) can be offered at the same time, on the same day because learners can only take up 1 of these options.

Requirements relating to food and drink that is prohibited is described in this Guidance as food that 'must not be provided' For example, 'Confectionery **must not be provided.**'

## Portion sizes

There are two portion sizes set out within this Guidance – infants and juniors. By 'infants' we mean registered learners in Nursery (maintained settings) to Year 2 and by 'juniors' we mean registered learners in Year 3 to Year 6.

The portion sizes are set out in detail for specific food items/categories below on page 29. Throughout this Guidance, all portions are the **cooked weight**, unless stated otherwise. Where there are requirements to promote certain food categories, there is a minimum weight specified - where food categories are limited, there is a maximum weight. A weight range is provided as a guide, where food is restricted. The minimum and maximum portion sizes should be adhered to unless there is a clear justification why they cannot or should not be adhered to.

**Learners should be encouraged to take up all elements of the school lunch provided to them, particularly the promoted food and drink.** This will provide a balanced meal in line with the nutritional standards for an average school lunch.

It is recommended that taster portions are offered to introduce learners to dishes they may not have tried before.

<b>Eatwell Guide</b>	<b>Fruit and vegetables</b>
	Eat at least 5 portions of a variety of these each day.
	These are a good source of vitamins, minerals and fibre.

<b>Vegetables</b>
<p><b>Requirement (must do)</b></p> <p><b>At least</b> 2 portions of vegetables must be provided each day.</p> <p><b>At least</b> 6 varieties of vegetables must be provided each week.</p> <p>Vegetables include salad but excludes potatoes</p> <p>Different vegetables (mixed) provided as a single portion count as one vegetable portion.</p>
<p><b>Interpretation</b></p> <p>Can be fresh, frozen, canned or vacuum-packed.</p> <p>Includes beans and pulses which count towards 1 portion of your 5 a day.</p> <p>Mixed vegetables and mixed salad provided as a single portion count as 1 portion and as 1 variety</p> <p>Portions can be provided separately and/or within a recipe</p>
<p><b>Guidance (should do, unless there are clear and justifiable reasons not to)</b></p> <p>Vegetables must be offered and should be promoted and encouraged.</p> <p>Canned vegetables should be in plain water</p> <p>Beans and pulses should be encouraged throughout the menu</p> <p><b>Recommendations (could do, as best practice)</b></p> <p>It is recommended that Baked beans in tomato sauce be reduced sugar and salt varieties. It is recommended that baked beans are not provided more than 3 days per week.</p> <p>Provide at least 1 portion of vegetables alongside the portion/s of vegetables included within a meal.</p> <p>Provide a variety of seasonal, locally produced vegetables</p> <p>Encourage take up of vegetables. This could include offering tasting sessions and considering how vegetables are displayed on the counter or plate.</p>
Portion sizes

**At least** 40g for infants  
**At least** 60g for juniors

## Fruit

### Requirements (must do)

**At least** 1 portion of fruit must be provided each day.

**At least** 4 different types of fruit must be provided each week.  
Different fruits provided as a single portion count as one fruit.

Fruit does not include fruit juice.

### Interpretation

Can be fresh, dried, frozen or, canned

Portions can be provided separately and/or within a recipe.

Fruit salad and fruit cocktail provided as a single portion will count as 1 portion and as 1 variety

Fruit juice is not permitted as a portion of fruit.

### Guidance (should do, unless there are clear and justifiable reasons not to)

Canned fruit should be in fruit juice only (not canned in syrup) and should not contain added sugar

Fruit must be offered and should be promoted and encouraged.

### Recommendations (could do, as best practice)

Provide taster sessions to familiarise learners with different varieties of fruit.

Provide a variety of seasonal, locally produced fruit.

Keep the structure intact for fruit that is stewed to help limit the increase of free sugars.

Encourage take up of Fruit. This could include offering tasting sessions and considering how fruits are displayed on the counter or plate.

### Portion sizes

**At least** 40g (fruit) or at least 15g and **no more than** 20g (dried fruit) for infants.

**At least** 60g (fruit) or at least 15g and **no more than** 20g (dried fruit) for juniors.

## Dessert portion of Fruit or Vegetable

### Requirements (must do)

All sweetened baked products and desserts, yoghurt and cheese (with or without plain unflavoured crackers) provided must contain or be accompanied by a dessert portion of fruit or vegetables

A dessert portion of fruit or vegetables is **at least** 20g (infants) or 40g (juniors) of fruit (other than dried fruit) and/or vegetables

**At least** 10g for infants and **at least** 15g for juniors of dried fruit

### Interpretation

This means that the fruit or vegetables must be provided.

This includes fruit and/or vegetables incorporated into desserts (for example, apple in crumble) or provided as an accompaniment to desserts (for example, a yogurt and sliced fruit.)

A combination of fruit and/or vegetables can be provided (for example, beetroot and orange brownie.)

### Recommendation (could do, as best practice)

Provide a variety of seasonal, locally produced fruit and/or vegetables.

### Eatwell Guide

#### Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates

All meals should be based around starchy carbohydrates.

Choose wholegrain or higher fibre versions with no or low added fat, salt and sugar.

These are a good source of energy and the main source of a range of nutrients in our diet.

#### Potatoes, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates

##### Requirements (must do)

A portion of starchy carbohydrates must be provided every day

**At least** three types of starchy carbohydrates must be provided each week.

**At least** one portion of starchy carbohydrates provided each week must be pasta, noodles or rice containing **at least** 50% wholegrain, (see below in interpretation list for starchy carbohydrates).

Starchy carbohydrates do not include potatoes or potato products cooked in fat or oil. If potatoes or potato products cooked in fat or oil have been provided therefore, an alternative from this category must be provided.

## **Interpretation**

The minimum wholegrain requirement for rice relates to the percentage of wholegrain rice within portions (as a percentage of total rice).

The minimum wholegrain requirement for pasta and noodles relates to the percentage of wholegrain flour within products (as a percentage of total flour) or the percentage of wholegrain pasta or wholegrain noodles within portions (as a percentage of total pasta or noodles).

Starchy carbohydrates includes bread, potatoes (other than where cooked in fat or oil), rice, pasta, noodles and couscous, – this list is not exhaustive. See below for separate requirements for potatoes and potato products cooked in fats or oils.

## **Guidance (should do, unless there are clear and justifiable reasons not to)**

The wholegrain percentage should be gradually increased from 50% to 100%, being mindful of consumption and waste (the rate of increase can vary according to local needs).

### **Recommendations (could do, as best practice)**

Where possible, take steps to source other bread-based products (for example, pizza, naan and garlic bread) that are at least 50% wholemeal, in relation to their percentage of wholegrain flour (as a percentage of total flour.)

Where possible, leave the skin on potatoes to maximise consumption of fibre.

## **Portion Size**

### **Baked potatoes**

At least 100g infants, at least 150g juniors

### **Mashed and boiled potatoes**

At least 105g infants, at least 160g juniors

### **Rice**

At least 75g cooked (approx.30g dried) infants, at least 115g cooked (approx. 45g dried) juniors,

### **Pasta**

At least 75g cooked (approx. 35g dried) infants, at least 115g cooked (approx. 55g dried) juniors,

### **Noodles**

At least 75g cooked (approx. 30g dried) infants, at least 115g cooked (approx. 55g dried) juniors,

### **Cous-cous**

At least 65g cooked (approx. 33g dried) infants, at least 100g cooked (approx. 50g dried) juniors,

<b>Bread</b>
<p><b>Requirements (must do)</b></p> <p><b>All bread</b> (except garlic bread, naan bread, pizza bases, tea cakes and crumpets) provided must be <b>at least</b> 50% wholegrain</p> <p>Supplementary bread (with no added fat or oil) must be available every day at lunchtime to those learners who want it.</p>
<p><b>Interpretation</b></p> <p>The minimum wholegrain requirement for bread relates to the percentage of wholegrain flour within the bread (as a percentage of total flour).</p> <p>Includes bread within sandwich-type foods where ingredients are placed between or wrapped in bread. Examples include, but are not limited to, sandwiches, baguettes and wraps.</p> <p>Supplementary bread is bread that does not form part of a sandwich or a set meal. This is provided in addition to the food and drink that is included within the nutritional analysis of an average primary school lunch. It is intended for learners who are still hungry after taking up and consuming the school lunch provided to them. Supplementary bread must not be included within nutritional analysis calculations.</p>
<p><b>Guidance (should do, unless there are clear and justifiable reasons not to)</b></p> <p>The wholegrain percentage should be gradually increased from 50% to 100%, being mindful of consumption and waste (the rate of increase can vary according to local needs).</p> <p><b>Recommendations (could do, as best practice)</b></p> <p>Where possible, take steps to source other bread-based products (for example, pizza, naan and garlic bread) that are at least 50% wholegrain, in relation to their percentage of wholegrain flour (as a percentage of total flour.)</p>
<p><b>Portion sizes</b></p> <p>Bread as a portion of secondary starchy carbohydrate (e.g naan/garlic bread where another primary starchy carbohydrate is provided) 25g – 30g for infants and juniors</p> <p><b>Pizza</b> <b>At least</b> 55g but <b>no more than</b> 95g (per slice including the topping)</p> <p><b>Supplementary Bread</b> <b>No more than</b> 2 slices of medium sliced bread for juniors and <b>no more than</b> 1 slice of medium sliced bread for infants.</p> <p><b>Bread as a portion of starchy carbohydrates</b> 50g – 70g for infants and juniors</p>

Eatwell Guide	Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other protein foods
	<p>Eat more beans and pulses.</p> <p>Eat 2 portions of sustainably sourced fish per week, one of which should be oily.</p> <p>Eat less red and processed meat.</p> <p>These foods are good sources of protein, vitamins and minerals.</p>

Fish
<p><b>Requirements (must do)</b> A portion of fish must be provided <b>at least</b> once each week</p> <p><b>At least</b> one portion of fish provided every four weeks must be oily fish</p> <p>Fish combined with at least one other ingredient to form a fish product must contain <b>at least 50%</b> fish</p>
<p><b>Interpretation</b></p> <p>Can be fresh, frozen or canned.</p> <p>Fish are a good source of vitamins and minerals, however, oily fish is particularly high in omega-3 fatty acids.</p> <p><b>Oily fish</b> includes but is not limited to anchovies, herring, kipper, mackerel, pilchards, salmon, sardines, trout and whitebait.</p> <p>Fish products which do not contain oily fish but which are fortified with omega-3 fatty acids do not count towards the oily fish requirement.</p>
<p><b>Guidance (should do, unless there are clear and justifiable reasons not to)</b></p> <p>Fish procured should be sustainably sourced.</p> <p><b>Recommendations (could do, as best practice)</b></p> <p>Use oily fish fillets (fresh, frozen or canned) as they provide significantly more omega-3 fatty acids than coated oily fish products</p> <p>Choose canned fish that's not in brine or oil.</p>
<p><b>Portion sizes</b></p> <p>Fish and Oily Fish = <b>At least</b> 50g for infants and juniors. Fish combined with at least one other ingredient to form a fish product = <b>At least</b> 25g fish for infants and juniors.</p>

## Red Meat

**Requirements (must do)**

A portion of red meat must be provided **at least** once a week

Red meat **must not be provided more than** twice a week.

For the purpose of the above requirements, 'red meat' does not include a specified meat product.

**Interpretation**

Red meat means meat of mammalian species including beef, lamb, mutton, pork, veal, venison and goat meat but not including rabbit meat.

This does not include white meat.

**Guidance**

Leaner cuts of meat should be used, trim off visible fat, skim off excess fat during cooking and use mince with a lower fat content

**Recommendations (could do, as best practice)**

Use opportunities to reduce red meat in recipes by adding beans, pulses or more vegetables. This will also increase fibre and reduce the saturated fat content of meals.

**Portion sizes**

**No more than** 55g for infants and juniors.

**Specified meat products****Requirements (must do)**

A portion of a specified meat product **must not be provided more than** once each week

**Interpretation**

Specified meat product means:

- bacon;
- burger consisting of a mixture of meat and other ingredients;
- canned or tinned meat;
- chorizo;
- corned meat;
- gammon;
- ham;
- meatballs;
- pastrami;
- pâté containing meat or liver of any mammalian or bird species;

- salami (including pepperoni);
- sausage consisting of a mixture of meat and other ingredients;
- a food that contains one of the following as an ingredient whether or not the food also contains any other ingredient—
- mechanically separated meat;
- the carpus, the heart, the muscles of the head (other than masseters), the tarsus, the tail or the tongue of any mammalian or bird species recognised as fit for human consumption;
- any other shaped or formed meat product not falling within the bullet points above consisting of a mixture of meat and other ingredients.

Fresh meat cuts can be used for burgers, meatballs and food falling within the ‘any other shaped or formed product’ category above, where they are made:-

- on school premises;
- on premises owned or occupied by a local authority;
- where the local authority or governing body of a maintained primary school have a contract with a third party to provide school lunches, on premises owned or occupied by that third party.

To note, where meat cuts are used in this way they will not be classed as specified meat products.

“ham” includes jambon de Paris, prosciutto, serrano ham and similar products;

“sausage” includes chipolata, corn dog, hot dog, frankfurter, sausage meat and similar products;

“any other shaped or formed meat product” does not include a sliced cut of meat (this could be meat that is sliced on school premises or pre-sliced at a place other than school premises).

This requirement does not apply to ham provided as part of a school lunch on a school trip, and in calculating the number of times processed meat or products containing meat are provided each week, ham provided on a school trip must not form part of the calculation.

#### **Recommendations (could do, as best practice)**

Gradually reduce the provision from one portion each week to none each week.

#### **Portion sizes**

**No more than** 55g for infants and juniors.

### **Processed alternatives to meat and fish**

#### **Requirements (must do)**

<p>A portion of processed alternatives to meat and fish <b>must not be provided more than</b> twice a week.</p>
<p><b>Interpretation</b></p> <p>Industrially produced processed non-meat and non-fish food products that attempt to mimic meat or fish products, such as mycoprotein and plant based sausages and burgers.</p> <p>These do not include soya, mycoprotein and pea protein mince, chunks or pieces.</p> <p>Baked beans, hummus and nuts are not included as these do not come within this description.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations (could do, as best practice)</b></p> <p>Gradually reduce the offer from two portions per week to one/none per week.</p>
<p><b>Portion sizes</b></p> <p><b>No more than</b> 55g for infants and juniors</p>

<p><b>Beans and Pulses</b></p>
<p><b>Requirements (must do)</b></p> <p>Either beans or pulses or both must be provided as the main source of protein in a non-meat and non-fish school lunch <b>at least once a week</b></p>
<p><b>Interpretation</b></p> <p>A non-meat and non-fish school lunch is a school lunch that is provided as an alternative to a school lunch providing meat or fish on the same school day</p>
<p><b>Guidance (should do, unless there are clear and justifiable reasons not to)</b></p> <p>A wide variety of pulses, such as different types of beans and lentils, should be used rather than relying solely on baked beans.</p> <p>Expanding the range of pulses on school menus helps increase dietary diversity and promotes the consumption of natural, minimally processed pulses to support healthier choices and broaden children’s exposure to nutrient rich food.</p> <p><b>Recommendations (could do, as best practice)</b></p> <p>Take opportunities to provide beans and pulses across all food options (not only the non-meat and non-fish option.)</p>
<p><b>Portion sizes</b></p> <p><b>No more than</b> 55g for infants and juniors.</p>

## Eatwell Guide Oils and spreads

Choose unsaturated oils and spreads, and eat in small amounts.

### Interpretation

Includes vegetable, olive, rapeseed and sunflower oils and spreads

### Recommendations

Keep fats and oils to small amounts and add small amounts during cooking. All types of fat are high in energy and recommended to be eaten in small amounts.

Eatwell Guide	Other foods high in fat, salt and sugars <sup>3</sup>
	<p>If consuming foods and drinks high in fat, salt or sugars have these less often and in small amounts.</p> <p>These foods are not needed in our diet.</p>
<b>Note</b>	Recipes and products developed for primary schools are not usually high in fat, salt or sugar, but are restricted to convey consistent healthy eating messages.

## Potato or potato products cooked in fat or oil

### Requirements (must do)

A portion of potato or potato products cooked in fat or oil **must not be provided more than twice each week**, and where provided **no more than one portion may be deep-fried**.

### Interpretation

Any potato or potato products cooked in fat or oil. This includes fat or oil added to potatoes before or during the cooking process and fat or oil in the coating of potato products. 'Deep-fried' means deep-fried during the manufacturing process or during the cooking process. Examples include, but are not limited to, chipped potatoes, potato shapes, hashbrowns, roast potatoes, diced potatoes and potato wedges.

When potatoes prepared in fat or oil are offered, an alternative starchy carbohydrate not cooked in fat or oil must also be available.

### Recommendations (could do, as best practice)

Seek opportunities to reduce potato products which have been coated in or cooked in fat or oil during the manufacturing process

Take steps to remove deep fat fryers altogether.

<sup>3</sup> [The Eatwell Guide - NHS](#)

### Portion sizes

Potatoes cooked in fat or oil (other than roast potatoes) = **No more than 60g** for infants and **no more than 85g** for juniors

Roast potatoes cooked in fat or oil = **No more than 75g** for infants and **no more than 115g** for juniors

### Deep-fried or flash fried food or where coating or breadcrumb contains oil

#### Requirements (must do)

A deep fried or flash fried food or where coating or breadcrumb contains oil **must not be provided more than once each week.**

#### Interpretation

Alternative deep-fried or flash-fried foods can be offered at the same time, on the same day, because learners can only take up 1 of these options.

Deep-fried means to cook by immersing in a deep utensil of fat or oil. Flash-fried means to cook quickly in hot fat or oil. They apply to manufactured or prepared-from-scratch foods.

Includes foods that have been coated or breaded with the addition of oil during the manufacturing process. Such foods may be baked rather than deep-fried or flash-fried.

Does not include potato and potato products

#### Recommendations (could do, as best practice)

Take steps to remove these food items from the menu over time, replacing them with healthier alternatives and replacing deep fat fryers with healthy cooking appliances

### Portion sizes

The food items that would be included within this section have been attributed portion sizes under other food categories

### Pastry and pastry products

#### Requirements (must do)

Pastry or products containing pastry (whether sweet or savoury) **must not be provided more than once a week.**

#### Interpretation

Alternative pastry and pastry products can be offered at the same time, on the same day, because learners can only take up 1 of these options. (e.g. sausage roll and a vegetarian sausage roll).

A sweet and savoury pastry product cannot be served on the same day. (e.g. sausage roll and apple pie)

#### **Recommendations (could do, as best practice)**

When making pastry from scratch, it is recommended the flour be at least 50% wholegrain. Take steps to source pastry products where the flour is at least 50% wholegrain.

#### **Portion sizes**

**No more than** 25g of pastry for infants and **no more than** 40g of pastry for juniors

### **Subsection Sweetened baked products and desserts**

#### **Requirements (must do)**

Sweetened baked products and desserts **must not be provided more than** three times a week. This restriction does not apply to ambient or chilled yoghurt.

#### **Interpretation**

Sweetened baked products and desserts contain ingredients which are a source of saturated fat, and free sugars that have been added to make them sweeter. Such an ingredient includes but is not limited to, sugar, fruit juice, honey syrup or artificial sweeteners.<sup>4</sup>

Includes sweet (but not savoury) pastry and sweet products containing pastry.

Examples include, but are not limited to, jelly, ice cream, whips, cakes and biscuits. It includes frozen yoghurt because of its high free sugar content.

Excludes chilled or ambient yoghurt.

#### **Recommendations (could do, as best practice)**

When making sweetened baked products and desserts from scratch, it is recommended the flour be at least 50% wholegrain.

Take steps to source sweetened baked products and desserts where the flour is at least 50% wholegrain.

Consideration should be given to providing reduced-sugar yogurts, as they are a healthier option and support compliance with free sugar standards.

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<sup>4</sup> [Approved additives and E numbers | Food Standards Agency](#)

Gradually phase out the frequency of sweetened baked products and desserts to support children in making healthier choices. It is important that children are taught to see this type of product as one that should be enjoyed occasionally as part of a balanced diet rather than something to be consumed every day.

#### **Portion sizes**

##### **Biscuits\***

No more than 30g for infants and juniors

##### **Cakes\***

No more than 40g for infants and juniors

##### **Flapjack\***

No more than 40g for infants and juniors

##### **Sponge Pudding\***

No more than 40g for infants and juniors

##### **Yoghurt**

At least 80g but no more than 120g for infants and juniors

##### **Rice Pudding**

At least 100g but no more than 120g for infants and juniors

##### **Custard**

At least 60g but no more than 80g for infants and juniors

##### **Ice cream and frozen yoghurt**

80ml pot portion for infants and juniors

\* exclude any additional fruit/veg/seeds and the weight is for mixes

#### **Subsection - Salt and condiments**

##### **Requirements (must do)**

**No salt** is to be added to food, or to be made available to add to food, after the cooking process is complete.

The portion of any condiment made available to learners **must not exceed** 10ml.

##### **Interpretation**

Salt used in the cooking process must be included in nutritional analysis of an average school lunch.

All condiments offered as part of the school lunch must be included in the nutritional analysis.

##### **Recommendation (could do, as best practice)**

Minimise the use of salt during the cooking process

### Subsection – confectionery

#### Requirements (must do)

Confectionery and food containing confectionery **must not be** provided

#### Interpretation

No confectionery is permitted.

#### Confectionery means the following –

- a) cereal bars;
- b) chewing gum;
- c) chocolate in any form;
- d) any product containing chocolate or wholly or partially coated with chocolate;
- e) any chocolate flavoured substance (**except** cocoa powder used in sweetened baked products and desserts);
- f) decorative toppings made from sugar or icings made from sugar;
- g) processed or extruded fruit bars;
- h) other non-chocolate confectionery (whether or not containing sugar) including mints;

Cereal bars can be chewy or crunchy.

Chewing gum includes sugar free chewing gum.

### Subsection - Savoury snacks

#### Requirements (must do)

Savoury snacks **must not be** provided

#### Interpretation

Savoury snacks means pre-packaged savoury items which are ready to eat without further preparation, and

consist of or include as a basic ingredient potatoes or other root vegetables, cereals, legumes, nuts or seeds but does not include -

- (a) legumes, nuts, seeds or root vegetables with no added fat, salt or sugar,
- (b) plain unflavoured crackers, oatcakes or water biscuits and
- (c) sandwiches.

Examples of the types of savoury snacks that must not be provided include but are not limited to:

- crisps (whether made with potatoes or root vegetables)
- popcorn (whether plain, sweetened or salted);
- rice cakes (whether plain or flavoured);
- Bombay mix;

- flavoured savoury biscuits or crackers;
- legumes with added salt, sugar or fat (such as chickpea puffs)

(removing the packaging does not exempt these products)

## **Drinks in maintained primary schools**

Eatwell Guide

### **Drinks**

Drink 6 to 8 cups or glasses of fluid each day.

Water and lower fat milk

### **Requirements (must do)**

Only plain water, plain milk and plain plant-based drinks may be provided

### **Subsection - Plain water**

#### **Interpretation**

Still or carbonated

Does not contain artificial or natural sweeteners, sugars, honey, colouring or flavouring

Learners in all maintained schools must have easy access at all times to free, fresh drinking water; especially during breakfast sessions and lunchtimes.

#### **Guidance (should do, unless there are clear and justifiable reasons not to)**

Water stations in the dining room and throughout the school should be signposted.

Following the guidance found in the [Promotion of Healthy Eating and Drinking in maintained schools Guidance<sup>5</sup>](#), a school should be aware of where and how drinking water is available free of charge, consider the use of water coolers/fountains, and promote healthy hydration during the school day and the use of water bottles

Make sure the supervisors direct children to available water sources at lunchtime.

Freshly poured tap water should be provided together with cups/glasses on tables and at the serving counter.

#### **Recommendations (could do, as best practice)**

If water can be chilled then it is more appealing but this is not a requirement.

<sup>5</sup> [Healthy eating in maintained schools: statutory guidance | GOV.WALES](#)

<p><b>Subsection - Plain milk</b></p> <p><b>Requirements (must do)</b></p> <p>Milk provided to nursery children must be semi-skimmed or whole milk</p> <p>For all other learners, must be semi-skimmed, 1% fat or skimmed milk</p>
<p><b>Interpretation</b></p> <p>No added substances</p>
<p><b>Guidance (should do, unless there are clear and justifiable reasons not to)</b></p> <p>Where possible, lower fat milk should be chosen as it contains the same amount of calcium, protein and other nutrients as full fat equivalents</p> <p><b>Recommendations (could do, as best practice)</b></p> <p>Maintained primary schools can take advantage of the free and subsidised milk scheme.</p>
<p><b>Subsection - Plain Plant-based drinks</b></p>
<p><b>Interpretation</b></p> <p>Means soya, oat or other plant-based drinks (but not including rice drinks), which are fortified with calcium, unflavoured and do not contain free sugar (for example, do not contain strawberry or vanilla flavouring).</p> <p>Plain plant-based drinks must be fortified with calcium.</p>
<p><b>Guidance (should do, unless there are clear and justifiable reasons not to)</b></p> <p><b>Plain plant based milk should:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be labelled with 'no sugars'</li> <li>• Have a maximum threshold of <math>\leq 0.5\text{g}</math> Total sugars/100ml (aligned with legal criteria for no sugars)</li> <li>• Be fortified with vitamin A, riboflavin, vitamin B12, vitamin D and iodine, to match cow's milk nutritional profile, where possible</li> </ul>

**Fruit juice is only permitted to be provided on a school trip.**

**The essential need is to provide fresh, readily available drinking water in all maintained schools**

## **Portion sizes**

The following portion sizes are cooked weights (unless specified otherwise).

<b>Food</b>	<b>Primary portion</b>
<b>Vegetables</b>	

<b>Cooked*</b> <b>*Includes baked beans, pulses and cooked vegetables</b>	Infants = minimum of 40g Juniors = minimum of 60g
<b>Raw*</b> <b>*Includes salad, coleslaw and uncooked veg</b>	Infants = minimum of 40g Juniors = minimum of 60g
<b>Fruit</b>	
<b>Fruit</b>	Infants = minimum of 40g Juniors = minimum of 60g
<b>Dried fruit</b>	Infants = minimum of 15g and maximum of 20g Juniors = minimum of 15g and maximum of 20g
<b>Dessert portion of Fruit/Vegetables</b>	
<b>Fruit and vegetables within a sweetened baked product or dessert or as an accompaniment</b>	Infants = minimum of 20g or at least 10g of dried fruit Juniors = minimum of 40g, or at least 15g of dried fruit
<b>Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates</b>	
<b>Mashed and boiled potato</b>	<u>Mash</u> Infants = minimum of 105g Juniors = minimum of 160g  <u>Boiled</u> Infants = minimum of 105g Juniors = minimum of 160g
<b>Baked potato</b>	Infants = minimum of 100g Junior = minimum of 150g
<b>Rice</b>	Infants = min 75g cooked (approx. 30g dried) Juniors = minimum of 115g cooked (approx. 45g dried)
<b>Pasta</b>	Infants = min 75g cooked (approx. 35g dried) Juniors = Minimum of 115g cooked (approx. 55g dried)
<b>Noodles</b>	Infants = minimum of 75g cooked (approx. 30g dried) Juniors = minimum of 115g cooked (approx. 55g dried)
<b>Cous-cous</b>	Infants = min 65g cooked (33g dried) Juniors = min 100g cooked (approx. 50g dried)

<b>Bread*</b> <b>*offered as part of a meal</b>	Infants = 25g – 35g suggested Juniors = 25g – 35g suggested
<b>Bread*</b> <b>*Main component of a meal</b>	Infants = 50g – 70g suggested Juniors = 50g – 70g suggested
<b>Supplementary bread</b>	No more than 1 slice of medium sliced bread for infants No more than 2 slices of medium sliced bread for juniors
<b>Pizza</b>	Infants = at least 55g but no more than 95g (slice composite base and cheese topping) Juniors = at least 55g but no more than 95g (slice composite base and cheese topping)
<b>Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins</b>	
<b>Fish and oily fish portions</b>	Infants = Minimum of 50g portion Juniors = Minimum of 50g portion
<b>Fish and oily fish products</b>	Infants = Minimum of 50g portion, of which minimum 50% fish content (at least 25g of fish) Juniors = Minimum of 50g portion, of which minimum 50% fish content (at least 25g of fish)
<b>Red meat (other than specified meat products)</b>	Infants = no more than 55g Juniors = no more than 55g
<b>Poultry</b>	Infants = 40g – 60g suggested Juniors = 40g – 60g suggested
<b>Specified meat products</b>	Infants = no more than 55g Juniors = no more than 55g
<b>Processed alternatives to meat and fish</b>	Infants = no more than 55g Juniors = no more than 55g
<b>Beans and Pulses</b>	Infants = no more than 55g Juniors = no more than 55g
<b>Potato and potato products cooked in fat or oil</b>	
<b>Potato products cooked in fat or oil (potato shapes, hashbrowns, chips, diced and wedges)</b>	Infants = no more than 60g Juniors = no more than 85g
<b>Roast potatoes cooked in fat or oil</b>	Infants = no more than 75g Juniors = no more than 115g

<b>Pastry &amp; Pastry Products</b>	
<b>Pastry</b>	Infants = no more than 25g of pastry Juniors = no more than 40g of pastry
<b>Sweetened Baked Products and Desserts</b>	
<b>Freshly baked and commercially produced baked goods e.g. biscuits, cookies, cakes, brownies, flapjack</b>	Biscuits = no more than 30g for infants and juniors Cake (brownies/sponges/Welsh cakes/muffins/cupcakes = no more than 40g for infant and juniors Flapjack = no more than 40g for infant and juniors  All the above are for the mixes – these figures exclude any additional fruit and veg and seeds
<b>Sweetened desserts such as sponge puddings, cheesecakes, crumbles, tarts, jelly</b>	Sponge pudding = no more than 40g for the constituent ingredients (excluding fruit, veg and seeds)
<b>Frozen desserts such as ice cream</b>	Infants = 80ml Juniors = 80ml
<b>Rice Pudding</b>	Infants = At least 100g but no more than 120g Juniors = At least 100g but no more than 120g
<b>Custard</b>	Infants = At least 60g but no more than 80g Juniors = At least 60g but no more than 80g
<b>Yoghurts (chilled or ambient)</b>	Infants = At least 80g but no more than 120g Juniors = At least 80g but no more than 120g
<b>Cheese (with crackers)</b>	Infants = 15g – 25g suggested Juniors = 15g – 25g suggested
<b>Condiments</b>	
<b>Condiments include but are not limited to: tomato ketchup, brown sauce, salad cream, mayonnaise, French dressing, tartare sauce, mustard, pickles and relishes</b>	Infants = no more than 10ml per condiment  Juniors = no more than 10ml per condiment

## Requirements for food provided otherwise than as part of a school breakfast or a school lunch

Nursery aged children need healthy snacks between meals that are the appropriate portion size for their age, to meet their nutritional requirement. Snacks to avoid include sugary snacks, savoury pre-packed snacks, nuts and popcorn, tree nuts and peanuts.<sup>6</sup>

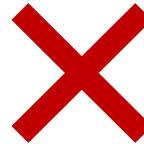
Breaktime snack provision for primary learners other than nursery learners should consist of fruit and vegetables only. Fruit and/or vegetables must be available in any place on school premises where food is provided.

The following table outlines food between meals that is recommended during different parts of the day, and food that is prohibited.

<u>Product</u>	<u>Nursery snack provision</u>	<u>Primary learners breaktime provision</u>	<u>After school provision</u>
<b>Recommended provision</b>			
<b>Vegetables</b>			
<b>Fruit</b>			
<b>Protein items such as hummus, tuna and chicken</b>			
<b>Bread based products (at least 50% wholemeal bread, English muffins, crumpets, bagels breadsticks)</b>			

<sup>6</sup> [Food and nutrition for childcare settings: standards, guidelines and menu planning](#)

<b>Plain cream crackers, water biscuits and oatcakes</b>			
<b>Small sandwiches/wraps/baguettes with a variety of non-mayonnaise based fillings including salad</b>			
<b>Dairy products such as yoghurts and cheese</b>			
<b>Foods prohibited</b>			
<b>Red Meat</b>			
<b>Specified meat products</b>			
<b>Processed alternatives to meat and fish</b>			
<b>Potato and Potato Products cooked in fat or oil</b>			

<b>Deep-fried or flash-fried foods</b>			
<b>Pastry and pastry products</b>			
<b>Sweetened baked products and desserts (not including ambient or chilled yoghurt)</b>			
<b>Salt</b>			
<b>Confectionery</b>			
<b>Savoury snacks</b>			

## Vending

Food selected for selling in vending machines must follow the requirements for food provision served outside of breakfast and/or lunch time under the Healthy Eating Regulations. Further, where vending is used to provide food at lunchtime, the food available must be nutritionally analysed along with the rest of the lunch provision.

## **Nutritional standards**

The nutritional standards in the Healthy Eating Regulations for an average school lunch are based on the most up-to-date scientific research and dietary guidelines, reflecting the energy and nutrient needs of Primary school aged children<sup>7</sup>.

### **Average School Lunch**

The nutritional standards for an average school lunch are designed to provide a maximum 30 per cent of a child's daily needs for macronutrients<sup>8</sup> (energy, carbohydrates, protein, fat, saturated fat, free sugar and fibre) and a minimum 35 per cent of their daily needs for key micronutrients (iron, calcium, folate, zinc, vitamin A and vitamin C). Sodium is an exception, with a maximum allowance set at 30 per cent of the daily limit.

These guidelines have been developed on the basis that children eat three meals a day, with lunch making up around one-third of their daily intake.

The energy and nutrients in an average school lunch will be analysed per menu cycle (1-4 weeks) rather than weekly. The energy in an average school lunch will also be analysed on a daily basis. An average school lunch must provide:

The amount of energy shown in the table below, within a 15 per cent daily tolerance and 5 per cent tolerance per menu cycle.

No more than the maximum amount shown in the table for fat, saturated fat, free sugars and sodium.

At least the minimum amount shown in the table for carbohydrate, fibre, protein, iron, zinc, calcium, vitamin A, vitamin C, and folate.

The nutritional standards are split into two different age groups:

Juniors (Year 3 to Year 6) based upon the average needs of 7-10 year olds.

Infants (Nursery to Year 2) based on the average needs of 4-6 year olds. See table below:

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<sup>7</sup> COMA Dietary Reference Values for Food Energy and Nutrients for the United Kingdom;

<sup>8</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/collections/sacn-reports-and-position-statements](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sacn-reports-and-position-statements)

**Table of energy and nutrient standards for Year 3 – year 6 and nursery – year 2**

<b>Nutrient</b>	<b>Percentage of daily requirement*</b>	<b>year3 – year 6</b>	<b>Nursery – Year 2</b>	<b>Minimum or Maximum</b>
Energy (Kcal)	30%	528 (permitted range on a daily basis 449-607 and over a menu cycle 502-554)	429 (permitted range on a daily basis 365-493 and over a menu cycle 408-450)	(15% daily tolerance, 5 % tolerance over a menu cycle)
Fat (g)	30%	20.5	16.8	Max
Saturated fat (g)	30%	6.5	5.3	Max
Carbohydrates (g)	30%	70.4	57.3	Min
Free Sugars (g)	30%	7	5.7	Max
Fibre (g)	30%	6	5.3	Min
Protein (g)	30%	8.5	5.91	Min
Iron (mg)	35%	3	2.1	Min
Zinc (mg)	35%	2.5	2.3	Min
Calcium (mg)	35%	193	157.5	Min
Vitamin A (µg)	35%	175	140	Min
Vitamin C (mg)	35%	10.5	10.5	Min
Folate (µg)	35%	53	35	Min
Sodium (mg)	30%	499	360	Max

Kcal – kilocalories; g = grams; mg = milligrams; µg = micrograms

### **Calculating the average school lunch**

Schedule 5 provides formulas to calculate the energy and nutrient content of an average school lunch for infant and junior learners, both daily and across a menu cycle

The “provision” of food and drink consists of a selection of mains, sides/accompaniments, desserts and drinks. Learners are encouraged to take up each element to create a complete meal for their school lunch and all elements are to be included in the nutritional analysis calculation other than any supplementary bread provided. The energy and nutrients provided in school lunches estimated to be served to less than 1% of registered pupils served with a school lunch are also excluded from the calculations required by Schedule 5.

Food and drinks provided as part of lunchtime provision must be nutritionally analysed using the appropriate method set out in the nutritional analysis guide. The Nutritional Analysis Guide provides details on how to nutritionally analyse school lunches to ensure compliance with the nutrient standards for an average school lunch.

## Macronutrients

To note: the advice below stated under '**practical advice**' for each **Macronutrients and Micronutrients** is stated only as overall general health advice:

### Energy

An average school lunch must provide 30 per cent of the total daily energy requirement for Primary school age children, within a 15 per cent daily tolerance and a 5 per cent tolerance over one full menu cycle (1-4 weeks):

Nutrient	Percentage of daily requirement	Year 3 – Year 6	Nursery – Year 2	Minimum or Maximum
Energy (Kcal)	30%	528 (permitted range on a daily basis 449-607 and over a menu cycle 502-554)	429 (permitted range on a daily basis 365-493 and over a menu cycle 408-450)	15% daily tolerance, 5 % menu cycle tolerance

#### Why is the energy standard important?

- Energy fuels children's bodies to function well each day.
- Children need the right amount of energy from a variety of nutritious foods each day to grow, be active and maintain a healthy weight.
- Energy helps children to stay alert, engaged and ready to learn, supporting them to thrive throughout the school day.
- Consuming too much energy can lead to weight gain over time, increasing the risk of ill health both now and in the future.

**This standard ensures school lunches provide the right amount of energy to support healthy growth and development, helping children feel their best at school every day.**

#### Sources of energy

Energy from food comes from carbohydrate, fat and protein:

- At least 50 per cent of total daily dietary energy should come from carbohydrate, with no more than 5 per cent of this from free sugars.
- Fat should provide no more than 30 per cent, including a maximum of 10 per cent from saturated fat.
- The rest comes from protein.

#### Practical advice

- Plan balanced meals that appeal to learners e.g. a starchy wholegrain carbohydrate, vegetables and lean/ low fat protein.
- Use standard serving spoons or ladles to assist with appropriate portion sizes. Include foods that offer steady, long-lasting energy to support learners throughout the school day, focusing on ingredients that are satisfying and nutrient-dense.

Where a school is closed on any day of a menu cycle (for example an INSET day or other planned closure) then the food and drink that would otherwise be planned for that specific day of the menu cycle if the school was open, must be included in the overall menu cycle nutritional analysis calculation. This also applies to days when food and drink to mark any religious or cultural occasion is provided as a school lunch. The food and drink that would otherwise be planned for that specific day of the menu cycle must be included in the overall menu cycle nutritional analysis calculation (rather than the food and drink provided to mark any religious or cultural occasion).

## Protein

An average school lunch must contain no less than 30 per cent of the total daily protein requirement:

Nutrient	Percentage of daily requirement	Year 3 – Year 6	Nursery – Year 2	Minimum or Maximum
Protein (g)	30%	8.5	5.91	Min

### Why is the protein standard important?

- Protein is a source of energy and is essential for children’s growth and repair, helping to build muscle and strength.
- It also supports other key functions, such as supporting immune health and maintaining bone health.
- Learners are growing quickly, so getting enough protein is especially important for them.

**This standard helps ensure school lunches include a variety of protein sources that support children’s satiety, growth, development and long-term health – making every meal a valuable part of their overall wellbeing.**

### Sources of protein include:

Bean, pulses, lentils, fish, eggs, tofu, soya, nuts, seeds, poultry, red meats and other meat.

### Practical advice

- Use more beans and pulses – they’re low fat, high fibre, and help pupils feel full longer.
- Lean meat, with the fat trimmed and skin removed before cooking, provides a valuable source of protein
- Don’t rely only on cheese for vegetarian meals – mix it up with tofu, lentils, eggs, and soya.
- Include a broad mix of protein-rich dishes across the menu cycle to maintain choice and appeal. For lactose-free pupils, provide plain plant-based drinks instead of milk

## Fat

An average school lunch must contain no more than 30 per cent of the total daily requirement for fat:

Nutrient	Percentage of daily requirement	Year 3 – Year 6	Nursery – Year 2	Minimum or Maximum
Fat (g)	30%	20.5	16.8	Max
Saturated fat (g)	30%	6.5	5.3	Max

### Why is the fat standard important?

- Fat is an essential part of a healthy, balanced diet in small amounts. It provides energy, supports brain and nervous system health (e.g., Omega-3 fatty acids), and helps absorb important vitamins (A, D, E, K).
- Consuming too much fat over time can impact children’s health, contributing to weight gain and increasing the risk of conditions like type-2 diabetes, some cancers, high cholesterol and heart disease.
- However, reducing the amount of saturated fat and replacing it with small amounts of unsaturated fat can support both immediate and long-term health and wellbeing.

**This standard ensures school lunches provide the right amount and type of fat to support children’s immediate and long-term health and wellbeing, while still delivering meals that are tasty and balanced.**

### Sources of fat include:

- **Saturated fat:** mainly found in animal products such as fat in meat and meat products, butter, cheese, and cream. Vegetable fats high in saturated fat include cocoa butter and coconut oil. Chips, pasties, deep fried foods, pastries, dressings such as mayonnaise, cakes, biscuits, puddings are often high in saturated fat.
- **Unsaturated fat:** usually found in plant foods such as vegetable oils and spreads, e.g. olive, rapeseed and sunflower oil. Also nuts and seeds.
- **Omega 3 fatty acids:** the best sources are oily fish e.g. sardines, salmon, mackerel. Other sources include walnuts, flax and linseeds and green leafy vegetables.

### Practical advice

- Select ingredients that naturally contain healthier fats to support balanced, nutritious cooking. Swap saturated fats for smaller amounts of unsaturated fats whenever possible.
- Choosing lean cuts of meat, with visible fat trimmed and skin removed before cooking, helps to lower the overall fat content of the meal.
- Opt for healthier cooking methods such as steaming, boiling, baking, or grilling instead of frying.
- Remove excess fat during cooking (e.g. by skimming it off sauces or stews).
- Avoid adding butter to food (e.g. vegetables) after cooking.
- Use reduced-fat dairy foods and lean meat options when possible, such as skimmed or semi-skimmed milk, low fat yoghurt and reduced fat cheese.
- Skip spread or mayonnaise in sandwiches if the filling is already moist.
- If using a fat spread, choose a reduced-fat version and use it sparingly.
- When buying pre-prepared products or if you receive a replacement product, check the ingredients and nutrition labels—choose options with lower fat. According to the Government’s Front of Pack Nutrition labelling scheme:
  - Over 17.5g of fat per 100g is high, 3g or less is low.

- Over 5g of saturated fat per 100g is high, 1.5g or less is low.

*(Note: these are adult guidelines—children should consume even less.)*

- Speak to suppliers about the fat content in the products they provide.

## Carbohydrate

There are two types of carbohydrate – starches and sugars. Starchy carbohydrates should provide the main source of energy in the diet and form the main component of a meal. Gram for gram carbohydrate contains less than half the calories of fat. The fats added during cooking and serving with these foods is what increases the calorie content.

An average school lunch must contain no less than 30 per cent of the total daily requirement for carbohydrate:

Nutrient	Percentage of daily requirement	Year 3 – Year 6	Nursery – Year 2	Minimum or Maximum
Carbohydrates (g)	30%	70.4	57.3	Min

### Starchy carbohydrates

#### Why is the carbohydrate standard important?

- Carbohydrates are a central part of a healthy balanced diet and our main energy source.
- Foods that contain carbohydrate provide energy, vitamins, minerals and fibre which support health.
- Wholegrain starchy carbohydrates are healthier options:
  - They digest slowly and are high in fibre, providing lasting energy and keeping children fuller for longer, whilst supporting their digestive health.
  - Rich in vitamins and minerals wholegrains also offer more nutritional benefits than refined carbohydrates.
  - Including them regularly in meals can reduce the risk of conditions like heart disease, certain cancers, type 2 diabetes, and supports a healthy weight —making them a great choice for school menus.

**This standard ensures school lunches provide the right amount and type of carbohydrates to support children’s long-term health, while keeping them feeling full, satisfied and energised - helping them to thrive every day.**

#### Sources of starchy carbohydrates include:

Cereals (wheat oats, barley, millet, rye), bread of all types, potatoes, yam, cassava, cous cous, rice, noodles and pasta.

#### Practical advice

- Offer starchy carbohydrate options that contribute to balanced, satisfying meals and work well across the menu cycle. Introduce wholegrains gradually if needed, starting with a 50:50 mix of white and wholegrain, then slowly increasing the amount of wholegrain portion over time.

## Free Sugars

An average school lunch must contain no more than 5 per cent total daily dietary energy of free sugars:

Nutrient	Percentage of daily requirement	Year 3 – Year 6	Nursery – Year 2	Minimum or Maximum
Free Sugars (g)	30%	7	5.7	Max

### Why is the free sugars standard important?

- Free sugars are sugars added to foods in any form (like biscuits, chocolate, and cake) or naturally found in honey, syrups, fruit juices/ smoothies and similar products where the structure of the fruit or vegetable has completely broken down.
- These foods often have little nutritional value, but consuming too much free sugar over time is linked to weight gain, poor dental health and increased risk of health issues such as heart disease and type-2 diabetes, making it important to limit their presence in school lunches.

**This standard ensures school lunches align with recommendations to reduce free sugar intake, supporting children with tasty, satisfying healthier choices as part of a balanced diet whilst normalising desserts as an occasional rather than everyday item.**

### Sources of free sugars include:

- Table sugar
- Syrups, honey, jam
- Confectionery, biscuits, chocolate, cake, pastries, sweets, ice cream
- Sweetened yoghurt and milks
- Fruit and vegetables that are blended, pureed, pastes, or juiced
- Sugar sweetened beverages
- Some other common terms used to label sugar are glucose; fructose; beet sugar; cane sugar; dextrose; and syrup.

The natural sugars found in milk and in whole fruits and vegetables are not free sugars and do not need to be restricted in the same way.

### Practical advice

- Choose whole fruit over sweetened products
- Serve whole or chopped fruit instead of fruit purées.
- Offer fresh fruit in appealing ways to encourage learners to choose it regularly as part of the meal.
- Replace cakes, biscuits, and pastries with:
  - Whole fruit
  - Fruit-based desserts (e.g. baked apples, fruit salad)
  - Use unsweetened yogurt and add fresh fruit for flavour.
  - Cut down sugar in homemade desserts and sauces
  - Use spices like cinnamon or vanilla to add flavour without sugar.
- Check Labels on Prepared Products

- Look for products with 5g or less sugar per 100g (low sugar)
- Avoid products with more than 22.5g sugar per 100g (high sugar)
- These are adult guidelines—children should consume even less.
- Speak to Suppliers and Manufacturers
- Work with Manufacturers to include free sugar on their product specifications, so it will make it easier for you to access the relevant information.
- Engage with manufacturers and suppliers to source or develop products with lower sugar levels.

## Fibre

An average school lunch must contain no less than 30 per cent of the total recommended dietary intake of fibre:

Nutrient	Percentage of daily requirement	Year 3 – Year 6	Nursery – Year 2	Minimum or Maximum
Fibre* (g)	30%	6	5.3	Min

\* AOAC is the standard methodology used in product analysis food labelling for calculating fibre.

### Why is the fibre standard important?

- Fibre is essential for maintaining healthy digestion and supporting gut function.
- A high-fibre diet also lowers long term risk of chronic conditions like cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and bowel cancer - making it an integral part of every school lunch to support children’s health and wellbeing.
- Many children don’t get enough fibre, so small changes in school meals can make a big difference.

**This standard supports children to increase their daily fibre intake, which many find challenging, ensuring they stay full and satisfied at school whilst supporting their long-term health and wellbeing.**

### Sources of fibre include:

- Wholegrains; brown rice, oats, wholegrain cereals, wholemeal pasta, wholemeal bread.
- Potatoes with the skin on.
- Whole fruit and vegetables with skin on.
- Beans, pulses, lentils.

### Practical advice

- **Add** extra vegetables and pulses throughout the menu, such as lentils, into sauces for bolognese, curry and chilli.
- **Swap** white carbohydrates to wholegrain options or start with introducing 50/50 options to help you transition.
- Prepare fruit and vegetables using methods that retain their natural texture and nutritional value. Speak to suppliers about the fibre content in the products they

provide and choose products that are higher in fibre, look for wholegrain or added fibre options

## Sodium (Salt)

An average school lunch must contain no more than 30 per cent of the total recommended dietary intake of salt:

Nutrient	Percentage of daily requirement	Year 3 – Year 6	Nursery – Year 2	Minimum or Maximum
Sodium (mg)	30%	499	360	Max

Sodium is a component of salt. To convert sodium into grams (g) of salt you need to multiply the sodium value by 2.5.

### Why is the sodium standard important?

- The cells in our body need a small amount of salt to function properly.
- However, too much salt in children's diets can lead to issues like water retention, raised blood pressure and increased risk of heart disease, kidney problems, and stroke later in life.
- Reducing children's intake of salty foods not only supports better health outcomes but can also help them develop a preference for less salty flavours.

**This standard helps ensure school lunches stay within safe salt limits, encouraging healthier taste preferences and supporting children's health both now and as they grow.**

### Sources of sodium include:

Salt is often added during or after cooking, however most of the salt that children eat is already in the food we buy including bread, cheese, soups and sauces, stock and gravy, ready meals, some breakfast cereals, salty snacks (e.g. crisps, salted nuts), sausages and cured meats, condiments.

### Practical advice

- Use herbs, spices, garlic, lemon juice to enhance taste instead of salt.
- When possible, prepare meals from scratch to reduce hidden salt often found in manufactured products.
- When using pre-prepared items, check nutrition labels and choose those lower in salt. According to the Government's Front of Pack labelling scheme:
  - More than 1.5g of salt (0.6g sodium) per 100g is high
  - 0.3g of salt (0.1g sodium) per 100g or less is low

*(Note: these are adult guidelines—children should consume even less.)*

- Speak to suppliers about the salt content in the products they provide.

## Micronutrients

## Iron

An average school lunch must contain no less than 35 per cent of the total recommended dietary intake of iron:

Nutrient	Percentage of daily requirement	Year 3 – Year 6	Nursery – Year 2	Minimum or Maximum
Iron (mg)	35%	3	2.1	Min

### Why is the iron standard important?

- Iron is essential for growing children, supporting muscle development and helping carry oxygen around the body.
- It also plays a key role in maintaining a healthy immune system.
- During periods of rapid growth—like in childhood—iron needs are higher.
- Without enough iron, children may feel tired and low in energy, making it harder for them to stay focused and thrive at school.

**This standard helps ensure school lunches make an important contribution to children’s iron intakes as part of a healthy balanced diet, supporting children to feel at their best each day.**

### Sources of iron include:

- Red meat and offal are rich sources of iron.
- Canned fish
- Eggs
- Plant-based sources of iron include:
  - Pulses and legumes (such as beans, peas, and lentils)
  - Dark green vegetables (such as kale and broccoli)
  - \*Nuts and seeds
  - Dried apricots
  - Wholegrains

*\*be aware of all allergies, including specifically nut allergies*

- Some foods are fortified with iron, such as bread and breakfast cereals.

### Practical advice

- Iron from animal sources is more easily absorbed by the body than plant sources but plant sources remain essential, offering important health benefits and contributing significantly to children’s overall iron intake.
- Pair plant-based iron sources (like beans, lentils, and wholegrains) with foods rich in vitamin C (such as peppers, citrus fruits, or tomatoes) to help boost absorption.
- Be aware that some foods, like bran-based cereals (high in phytates) and drinks like tea (high in tannins), make it more difficult for the body to absorb iron.
- Use varied, well-chosen ingredients in vegetarian meals so they contribute meaningfully to learners’ dietary iron needs. Add iron-rich foods to familiar dishes—for example: lamb casserole, spaghetti bolognese, hummus, shepherd’s pie, mixed bean wraps.

## Zinc

An average school lunch must contain no less than 35 per cent of the total recommended dietary intake of zinc:

Nutrient	Percentage of daily requirement	Year 3 – Year 6	Nursery – Year 2	Minimum or Maximum
Zinc (mg)	35%	2.5	2.3	Min

### Why is the zinc nutritional standard important?

Zinc is essential for children’s growth, tissue repair, wound healing, and supporting a healthy immune system.

**This standard ensures school lunches make an important contribution to children’s zinc intake, supporting children’s growth, immune function, and overall health.**

### Sources of zinc include:

Red meat, offal (especially liver and kidney), eggs, fish, milk and other dairy products, cereals, soya products, red kidney beans, lentils, chickpeas and nuts\*.

**\*Be aware of all allergies, including specifically nut allergies.**

### Practical advice

- Create vegetarian dishes that use a range of nutritious ingredients to help support learners’ zinc intake.
- Add zinc-rich ingredients to popular meals—for example: cottage pie, roast pork or beef, lentil bake, brown rice, vegetarian bolognese with soya mince, and crumble toppings with pumpkin seeds.

## Calcium

An average school lunch must contain no less than 35 per cent of the total recommended dietary intake of calcium:

Nutrient	Percentage of daily requirement	Year 3 – Year 6	Nursery – Year 2	Minimum or Maximum
Calcium (mg)	35%	193	157.5	Min

### Why is the calcium nutritional standard important?

- Calcium is essential for strong bones, as well as healthy muscle and nerve function, making it especially important for school-aged children who are growing.
- A lack of calcium can lead to stunted growth during childhood and increase the risk of osteoporosis later in life, so it’s vital to include calcium-rich foods in school lunches to support children’s development.

**This standard ensures school lunches make an important contribution to children’s calcium intake, supporting their growth, bone development and long-term health.**

### Sources of calcium

- Dairy products such as milk, cheese and yoghurt
- Canned fish with bones (e.g. salmon and pilchards)
- Broccoli and cabbage
- Dried fruits
- Tofu
- Red kidney beans, chickpeas and soya beans.
- Fortified plant-based milk drinks

### Practical advice

- Low-fat dairy products provide the same amount of calcium as the full-fat versions, making them a healthier choice.
- Include plant-based items that support children’s calcium needs as part of everyday meals
- Add calcium-rich foods to meals, such as cheese and potato pie, salmon quiche, salmon fishcakes, red kidney beans and chickpeas into stews, soups, casseroles and curries, and custard made with milk.

### Vitamin A

An average school lunch must contain no less than 35 per cent of the total recommended dietary intake of Vitamin A:

Nutrient	Percentage of daily requirement	Year 3 – Year 6	Nursery – Year 2	Minimum or Maximum
Vitamin A (µg)	35%	175	140	Min

### Why is the Vitamin A nutritional standard important?

- Vitamin A is essential for healthy vision, especially in dim light, supports the immune system, and plays a key role in maintaining healthy skin and tissue.

**This standard ensures school lunches provide a valuable contribution to children’s vitamin A intake as part of a healthy, balanced diet supporting their vision, skin health and overall wellbeing.**

### Sources of Vitamin A include:

- Oily fish, eggs, liver
- Cheese, milk and yoghurt
- Yellow, orange and red coloured fruits and vegetables such as: carrots, peppers, apricots, oranges, papaya, mango, butternut squash, sweet potato and tomatoes.
- Dark green leafy vegetables.

### Practical advice

- Incorporate foods high in vitamin A into dishes, e.g. salmon fish cakes, baked sweet potato wedges, red pepper and tomato omelette, carrot and coriander soup and fruit salad.

### Vitamin C

An average school lunch must contain no less than 35 per cent of the total recommended dietary intake of Vitamin C:

Nutrient	Percentage of daily requirement	Year 3 – Year 6	Nursery – Year 2	Minimum or Maximum
Vitamin C (mg)	35%	10.5	10.5	Min

#### Why is the Vitamin C nutritional standard important?

- Vitamin C is essential for wound healing, protects cells and helps maintain healthy blood vessels, skin, bones and cartilage.
- It also acts as an antioxidant, protecting children from infections and disease, and helps the body absorb iron more effectively.
- Not enough vitamin C can lead to health issues such as scurvy.

**This standard ensures school lunches provide a valuable contribution to children’s vitamin C intake, as part of a healthy balanced diet, supporting their overall health and wellbeing.**

#### Sources of Vitamin C include:

- Fruits – especially citrus fruits (oranges, lemons, limes, grapefruit), berries and kiwi fruits.
- Vegetables – especially broccoli, green and red peppers, potatoes and sweet potatoes.

#### Practical advice

- Make raw (uncooked) fruit and vegetables available each day as they contain the most vitamin C.
- Prepare and cook food containing vitamin C as close to lunchtime as possible to preserve their nutritional value, as vitamin C is water-soluble and can be lost during cooking.
- Steam vegetables or cook them with minimal water to retain more vitamin C.
- Include appealing ingredient combinations that naturally help boost vitamin C intake across the menu.

#### Folate

An average school lunch must contain no less than 35 per cent of the total recommended dietary intake of folate:

Nutrient	Percentage of daily requirement	Year 3 – Year 6	Nursery – Year 2	Minimum or Maximum
Folate (µg)	35%	53	35	Min

#### Why is the folate nutritional standard important?

- Folic acid is essential for making red blood cells and supporting growth and healthy cell division. In food, it naturally occurs as ‘folate’.
- Folic acid deficiency can lead to tiredness, weakness, loss of appetite, weight loss, and digestive issues.

- Including folate-rich foods in school lunches is important to help children stay healthy and energised throughout the day.

**This standard ensures school lunches provide a valuable contribution to children’s folate intake, as part of a healthy balanced diet, supporting their overall health and wellbeing.**

**Sources of folate**

- Oranges, green leafy vegetables, green beans, beetroot, broccoli, peas
- Wheat bran and other wholegrain foods including brown rice
- Fortified breakfast cereals
- Eggs
- Poultry, pork, shellfish and liver
- Yeast and beef extracts,

**Practical advice**

- Prepare and cook folate-rich foods (like leafy greens and lentils) as close to serving time as possible to keep their nutritional value.
- Steam vegetables like broccoli, cabbage, and spinach instead of boiling
- If boiling is needed, use minimal water and avoid overcooking
- Add leafy greens at the end of cooking to preserve folate
- Add lentils, peas, or chickpeas to:
  - o Spaghetti bolognese
  - o Shepherd’s pie
  - o Veggie curry or chilli
  - o Mixed bean wraps
- Use spinach or kale in:
  - o Pasta sauces
  - o Omelettes
  - o Stews and casseroles
- Offer Folate-Rich Sides and Fillings
  - o Include lettuce, spinach, or shredded cabbage in sandwiches and wraps
  - o Serve raw vegetable sticks like cucumber, pepper, and carrot with dips

**Basic overview – Lunch**

Food category	Primary
Vegetables	<p><b>At least 2</b> portions of vegetables must be provided each day.</p> <p><b>At least 6</b> varieties of vegetables must be provided each week.</p> <p>Vegetables includes salad but excludes potatoes</p> <p>Different vegetables provided as a single portion count as one vegetable.</p>

<b>Fruit</b>	<p><b>At least</b> 1 portion of fruit must be provided each day.</p> <p><b>At least</b> 4 different types of fruit must be provided each week.</p> <p>Different fruits provided as a single portion count as one fruit</p>
<b>Dessert portion of Fruit/Vegetables</b>	All desserts must contain or be accompanied by a dessert portion of fruit and/or vegetables
<b>Starchy carbohydrates</b>	<p>A portion of starchy carbohydrates must be provided every day</p> <p><b>At least</b> three types of starchy carbohydrates must be provided each week.</p> <p><b>At least</b> one portion of starchy carbohydrates provided each week must be pasta, noodles or rice containing <b>at least</b> 50% wholegrain.</p>
<b>Bread</b>	<p><b>All bread</b> (except garlic bread, naan bread, pizza bases, tea cakes and crumpets) provided must be <b>at least</b> 50% wholemeal</p> <p>Supplementary bread (with no added fat or oil) must be available every day at lunchtime to those learners who want it.</p>
<b>Fish</b>	<p>A portion of fish must be provided <b>at least</b> once each week</p> <p><b>At least</b> one portion of fish provided every four weeks must be oily fish</p> <p>Fish combined with at least one other ingredient to form a fish product must contain at least 50% fish</p>
<b>Red meat</b>	<p>A portion of red meat must be provided <b>at least</b> once a week</p> <p>Red meat <b>must not be provided more than</b> twice a week.</p> <p>For the purpose of these requirements, 'red meat' does not include 'specified meat products'.</p>
<b>Specified meat products</b>	A portion of a specified meat product <b>must not be provided more than</b> once each week

<b>Processed alternatives to meat and fish</b>	A processed alternative to meat and fish <b>must not be provided more than</b> twice a week.
<b>Beans and Pulses</b>	Either beans or pulses or both must be provided as the main source of protein in a non-meat and fish school lunch at least once a week.
<b>Potato and potato products</b>	A portion of potato or potato products cooked in fat or oil <b>must not be provided more than twice each week</b> , and where provided <b>no more than one portion may be deep-fried</b> .
<b>Deep-fried or flash-fried or where coating contains oil</b>	A deep fried or flash fried food or where coating contains oil <b>must not be provided more than once each week</b> .
<b>Pastry and pastry products</b>	Pastry or products containing pastry (whether sweet or savoury) <b>must not be provided more than</b> once a week.
<b>Sweetened baked products and desserts</b>	Sweetened baked products and desserts (not including ambient or chilled yoghurt) <b>must not be provided more than</b> three times a week.
<b>Condiments and salt</b>	<b>No salt</b> is to be added to food, or to be made available to to add to food, after the cooking process is complete.  The portion of any condiment made available to learners <b>must not exceed</b> 10ml.
<b>Confectionery</b>	Confectionery and food containing confectionery <b>must not be</b> provided
<b>Savoury snacks</b>	Savoury snacks <b>must not be</b> provided

## Exemptions

8.1 The Healthy Eating Regulations do not apply to food and drink in the following list. However, it is recommended that those organising any events still encourage and promote healthier options in keeping with the requirements and standards under the Healthy Eating Regulations and as part of a whole-school ethos towards healthy eating. Therefore, such food and drink can still be subject to restrictions at the discretion of the local authority or governing body of a school.

- At fund-raising events;
- For use in teaching food or drink preparation and cookery skills provided that any food or drink so prepared is not provided to learners as part of a school breakfast or school lunch;
- As part of any medically prescribed dietary requirements;
- To learners at a boarding school as part of an evening meal.
- To pupils on a residential trip\*
- To pupils on the premises of a maintained school that does not provide primary education(e.g. primary school aged pupils who attend a secondary school for school transition days and for the occasional lesson).

### **Religious or cultural occasions**

The Healthy Eating Regulations do not apply to food and drink provided to mark any religious or cultural occasion other than when the food and drink is provided as a school lunch. When such food and drink is provided as a school lunch, it must comply with the requirements in Schedule 3, but will not be included in the nutritional analysis in Schedule 5. It is recommended that these occasions should be held no more than once per half term. (See par [7.9] on how the nutritional analysis for a menu cycle should be carried out when such days fall in the menu cycle)

### **Food brought into school by learners/parents/carers to celebrate birthdays, etc.**

It is recommended that schools develop policies for restricting birthday foods in line with the ethos of the requirements and standards under the Healthy Eating Regulations, for example, advising parents/carers that the food will be given to the learners to take home with them at the end of the school day. Schools and governing bodies should consider whether allowing children to bring birthday cake into school is in accordance with the duty to promote healthy eating and drinking.

### **Special Diets Guidance**

Special diets refer to food and drink provided to meet individual needs not covered by the standard school menu. A special diet could for example be requested due to an individual's healthcare need, such as a metabolic condition, food allergy, or intolerance, due to an individual having a disability or where a learner is neurodivergent. It may also refer to food provided due to a religion or belief.

[The Healthy Eating Regulations](#) must still be complied with where any adjustments are made to the school food offer, unless food and drink is provided as part of any 'Medically Prescribed Dietary Requirements' or unless doing so would conflict with a reasonable adjustment required under the Equality Act 2010.

The Regulations and associated guidance set out the framework within which adjustments can be implemented. Local Authorities governing bodies and schools, as appropriate, should work closely with the learner, their family and any relevant health professionals involved with the care of the learner, to determine the exact nature of any reasonable adjustments in relation to the school food provision. As appropriate where safeguarding concerns arise, local authorities, governing bodies and schools may request medical evidence. Medical evidence must be obtained for food and drink to come within the definition of 'medically prescribed dietary requirements'.

## **Making adjustments and interaction with other statutory duties**

### **Making adjustments based on religion or belief**

Local authorities and governing bodies of maintained schools have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 not to discriminate, either directly or indirectly<sup>9</sup>, against those with a protected characteristic, which could be because of a religion or belief.<sup>10</sup>

Local authorities and governing bodies should work with the learner and their family to develop inclusive menus and consider any further support or adjustments in relation to the school food provision in line with the requirements in the Healthy Eating Regulations.

### **Making alternative arrangements for learners with dietary healthcare needs**

[Section 175 of the Education Act 2002](#) places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies of maintained schools to make arrangements for ensuring that their functions are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in school or another place of learning. This includes supporting children with healthcare needs, which could be food-related e.g. intolerances, allergies, coeliac disease, type 1 diabetes and metabolic conditions. Adjustments in relation to the school food provision on healthcare basis must be in line with the requirements in the Healthy Eating Regulations (but see below where food and drink is provided as part of medically prescribed dietary requirements or where a duty to make reasonable adjustments applies).

[The Supporting Learners with Healthcare Needs Guidance](#) is issued under Section 175 to assist schools to consider how they can support learners with healthcare needs.

In making any changes to the standard school food offer, local authorities and governing bodies should consider any risks associated with adjusting the offer to ensure learner safety. This may involve the need for them to seek the advice of registered health professionals where appropriate.

### **Duty to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010**

There may be specific instances where the individual needs of learners on roll at a school restrict them from accessing the standard school food offer because of a disability within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010. For example, a learner with complex needs, who is neurodivergent and has autism who may require a restricted diet.

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<sup>9</sup> Indirect discrimination applies when a provision, criterion or practice is applied equally to all but has the effect of putting people with a particular characteristic at a disadvantage when compared to people without that characteristic. It is a defence against a claim of indirect discrimination if it can be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

<sup>10</sup> (1) Religion means any religion and a reference to religion includes a reference to a lack of religion.

(2) Belief means any religious or philosophical belief and a reference to belief includes a reference to a lack of belief.

Under the Equality Act 2010, local authorities and governing bodies are under a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled learners to ensure they are not put at a substantial disadvantage in relation to accessing meals where appropriate.

Whether this duty to make reasonable adjustments applies will depend on whether the learner has a disability within the meaning of the Act.<sup>11</sup>

The Healthy Eating Regulations apply unless they conflict with a reasonable adjustment required under the Act.

## **Medically Prescribed Dietary Requirement**

The Healthy Eating Regulations do not apply to food and drink provided as part of any 'Medically Prescribed Dietary Requirements' (MPRD). This means dietary requirements prescribed or recommended in writing for a learner by a registered medical practitioner or a registered dietitian<sup>12</sup>. A medical practitioner or dietitian may for example prescribe or recommend dietary requirements for a learner where there is a need to follow a particular diet due to a medical condition. This could be a need to eat certain foods or to avoid certain foods.

However, it is recommended that where there are MPDR, and those cannot be accommodated under the Regulations, local authorities and governing bodies providing food and drink should continue to encourage and promote healthier options in keeping with the requirements and standards under the Regulations and as part of a whole-school ethos towards healthy eating. Therefore, such food and drink can still be subject to restrictions at the discretion of the meal provider.

The provisions outlined above have been set out in a diagram below. The diagram is an example of where a learner may expect an adjustment and where food and drink provided because of an adjustment may be exempt from requirements set out in the Regulations. However, it is not an exhaustive description of circumstances in which adjustments can be made by local authorities and schools. It should also be noted that some learners may fall into more than one category.

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<sup>11</sup> A person (P) has a disability if -

(a) P has a physical or mental impairment, and

(b) the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on P's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

<sup>12</sup> A dietitian who is registered in Part 4 of the Register maintained under [article 5](#) of the [Health Professions Order 2001](#)

## Special Diets Synopsis

The Regulations apply to **all** learners

Adjustments **should be considered** for the following learners - the Regulations apply unless the food and drink provided comes within the third box:

- Learners with healthcare needs (e.g. allergy/intolerance) - consider duty under section 175 Education Act 2002 and how these learners can be supported.
- Learners with religious / lifestyle diet - consider duty not to discriminate against those with a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 e.g food requirements because of a religion or belief.
- Learners with a disability (as per Equality Act 2010) or learners who are neurodivergent - consider duty to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 for learners with a disability.

The Regulations **do not apply to** the following:

- Food and drink provided as a reasonable adjustment required to be made to a learner with a disability under the Equality Act, where this conflicts with the Healthy Eating in Schools Regulations 2025.
- Food and drink provided as part of Medically Prescribed Dietary Requirements (MPDR) supported by written evidence provided by a healthcare practitioner.