



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

The Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Requirements) (Wales) Regulations 2013: Statutory guidance for local authorities and governing bodies

Guidance

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The Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Requirements) (Wales) Regulations 2013: Statutory guidance for local authorities and governing bodies

Audience

Everyone who is involved with the provision of school food and drink in maintained secondary schools ('maintained secondary schools', for the purpose of this guidance, includes maintained middle schools, special schools and PRUs that provide secondary education). This includes local authorities and governing bodies of maintained secondary schools, those working in schools, (for example headteachers and teachers, midday supervisors and teaching assistants), parents, carers, learners, private and in-house catering providers, as well as other stakeholders, for example health professionals, dietitians and healthy schools coordinators.

Overview

This document provides guidance for local authorities and governing bodies of maintained secondary schools on complying with the provisions in the Healthy Eating in Schools (Wales) Measure 2009 and the Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Requirements) (Wales) Regulations 2013 made under it.

Action required

Local authorities and governing bodies of maintained secondary schools must have regard to this statutory guidance.

Further information

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

Related documents [Healthy Eating in Schools \(Wales\) Measure 2009](#)

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

[Promotion of healthy eating and drinking in maintained schools](#)

[School Standards and Organisation \(Wales\) Act 2013](#)

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

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Status of this guidance

In discharging their duties under section 1 of the [Healthy Eating in Schools \(Wales\) Measure 2009](#) ('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 statutory guidance is issued under section 1. Local authorities and governing bodies of maintained secondary schools must have regard to it, which means that they must take account of it and, if they decide to depart from it, have clear and justifiable reasons for doing so.

This statutory guidance replaces the Welsh Government's Healthy eating in maintained schools: Statutory guidance for local authorities and governing bodies (2014).

Background

There have been long-standing concerns about the number of children who are overweight or obese, and the impact this has on health and well-being, especially in relation to reducing health inequalities. Poor diet is a major contributing factor. The food and drink provided in schools can make a positive contribution towards giving children and young people a healthy balanced diet and encouraging them to develop good eating habits. To address these concerns the Measure was passed by the National Assembly for Wales on 8 July 2009 and received Royal Approval on 15 October 2009.

The Measure places duties on local authorities and governing bodies to promote healthy eating by pupils in maintained schools. To monitor compliance, governing bodies are required to provide information in their annual report on the action taken to promote healthy eating and drinking by pupils at their schools and Estyn is required to report to the Welsh Ministers on the action taken by schools. The Measure also gives the Welsh Ministers the power to regulate food and drink provided to pupils of maintained schools and to other persons on school premises.

The table below sets out the provisions in the Measure.

Section	Provision of the Measure
Section 1	Duty on a local authority and a governing body of a maintained school to take action to promote healthy eating and drinking among registered pupils.
Section 2	Duty on the governing body of a maintained school to include in their annual report information on the action taken to promote healthy eating and drinking by pupils of the school.
Section 3	Duty on the Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales to keep the Welsh Ministers informed about actions taken at maintained schools to promote healthy eating and drinking.
Section 4	<p>Gives the Welsh Ministers the power to make regulations about food and drink provided on the premises of maintained schools and food and drink provided by local authorities or governing bodies at a place other than school premises to registered pupils of maintained schools.</p> <p>The Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Requirements) (Wales) Regulations 2013 were made under this power and came into force on 2 September 2013.</p>
Section 5	Duty on a local authority to ensure that drinking water is available, free of charge, on the premises of any maintained school.
Section 6	Duty on a local authority, or the governing body of a maintained school which provides school meals or milk, to encourage the take-up of school meals or milk, and to take reasonable steps to ensure that every pupil who is entitled to receive free school lunches and free school milk receives them.
Section 7	<p>Duty on a local authority or governing body to take reasonable steps to ensure that a pupil cannot be identified by any person, other than a person authorised under the legislation, as a pupil who receives a free school lunch or free school milk.</p> <p>Duty on a local authority or governing body to take reasonable steps to ensure that teachers/employees/volunteers at the school do not make disclosures, other than to a person authorised under the legislation, about the fact that a pupil receives free school lunches or free school milk.</p>

The Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Requirements) (Wales) Regulations 2013

[The Healthy Eating in Schools \(Nutritional Standards and Requirements\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2013](#)

(‘the Healthy Eating Regulations’) set out the types of food and drink that can and cannot be provided during the school day in maintained secondary schools, as well as the nutrient content required for school lunches. This section of the guidance is designed to help local authorities and governing bodies understand these standards and support their implementation within schools.

The Healthy Eating Regulations made under Section 4 of the Measure came into force on 2 September 2013.

Who the Healthy Eating Regulations apply to

The Healthy Eating Regulations apply to a local authority or governing body of a maintained secondary school that provides food or drink on a school day to:

- pupils of a maintained secondary school on school premises before 6p.m.
- pupils of a maintained secondary school at a place other than school premises before 6p.m. (for example on a school trip)
- any other person on the school premises before 6p.m., for example visitors, parents, carers and staff

‘School premises’ means the premises of the maintained secondary school.

Where ‘maintained secondary school’ is used in this guidance and in the Healthy Eating Regulations, this includes a maintained middle school, special school and PRU that provides secondary education. Where such a school provides both primary and secondary education, the Healthy Eating Regulations will not apply to pupils in Year 6 and below. See The Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Requirements) (Maintained Primary Schools) (Wales) Regulations 2025 for the regulations that apply to pupils in Year 6 and below.

Food covered under the Healthy Eating Regulations

[The Healthy Eating Regulations](#) impose requirements and standards about the following.

- Regulation 4 and Schedule 1: 'Breakfast in maintained secondary schools' sets out the 4 food categories permitted to be served in all maintained secondary schools as part of breakfast provision.
- Regulation 6 and Schedule 3: 'Lunch in maintained secondary schools' states what foods can and cannot be served as part of school lunch and specifies the frequency that particular foods can be served as part of a school lunch.
- Regulation 6 and Schedule 4: 'Nutritional standards for lunch in maintained secondary schools' sets out the proportion of nutrients that a pupil should obtain from an average day's school lunch, analysed across five days.
- Regulation 7 and Schedule 5: 'Drinks provided in maintained secondary schools' specifies what drinks can and cannot be provided across the entire school day.
- Regulation 8 and Schedule 6: 'Other food provided in maintained secondary schools' sets out the requirements that apply to food provided before 6p.m. outside of breakfast and lunch provision; and specifies the type and frequency of certain food that can and cannot be offered at mid-morning break, afterschool clubs, etc. This includes food/drinks served in any outlet: tuck-shops, vending machines, on-site coffee shops, etc.

Responsibility for ensuring compliance

Local authorities and governing bodies of maintained secondary schools who provide food or drink (including where they arrange the provision) must comply with the Healthy Eating Regulations. Anyone else who is involved in providing food and drink in maintained secondary schools in Wales should be aware of the statutory requirements if they plan menus, purchase and procure food and prepare food and drink for or in schools.

This includes:

- those working in schools, for example headteachers and teachers
- parents and carers
- pupils
- private or in-house catering providers
- other stakeholders, for example health professionals, dietitians and healthy schools' coordinators

Throughout this guidance, the term 'school meal providers' is used to describe all those that provide food and drinks in schools, for example local authority catering, private and school 'in-house' catering.

The food and drink the Healthy Eating Regulations applies to

The Healthy Eating Regulations apply to all food and drink served to pupils at breakfast, break times, lunchtimes, afternoon break and after-school-clubs across the whole school day in all maintained secondary schools. They apply regardless of whether such food or drink is provided:

- by the local authority
- in-house by the school
- by a contract caterer

The Healthy Eating Regulations also apply to food and drink served at any outlet on school premises throughout the school day, for example:

- a school tuck shop
- a vending machine
- an outside serving area
- a canteen
- a sixth form café

Exemptions

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 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 local authority or governing body of a school. This includes:

- at any school social event or school recreational event to mark any religious or cultural occasion
- at fund-raising events
- as rewards for achievement, good behaviour or effort (non-food rewards such as a sticker or star scheme are encouraged to recognise achievement or good behaviour)
- for use in teaching food preparation and cookery skills, provided that any food prepared is not served to pupils as part of a school breakfast or lunch (it is recommended that the food and drink chosen for such activities reflect the ethos of the health-promoting school)
- by parents and carers, pupils or others for their own consumption on school premises, for example packed lunches or food and drink bought from a shop outside the school premises and brought into school
- as part of any medically prescribed dietary requirements
- on or after 6p.m. on a school day, for example as an evening meal served in a local authority boarding school

Food brought into school by pupils, parents and carers to celebrate birthdays

It is recommended that schools develop policies for restricting birthday foods in line with the ethos of the standards under the Healthy Eating Regulations, for example advising parents and carers that the food will be given to the pupils 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.

Regulation 4 and Schedule 1 – Breakfast in maintained secondary schools

Breakfast

A local authority or governing body of a maintained secondary school that provides a breakfast service has the flexibility to decide the form of the breakfast content subject to compliance with the Healthy Eating Regulations.

Breakfast in maintained secondary schools is dealt with in Regulation 4 of, and Schedule 1 to, the Healthy Eating Regulations. Schedule 1 (as indicated below with suggested standard items) specifies 4 permitted food categories. Only foods from these categories must be available during breakfast on each school day.

Food categories	Suggested standard items
Milk-based drinks or yoghurts	Semi-skimmed or skimmed milk
Cereals – not coated or flavoured either alone or in combination with sugar, chocolate or cocoa powder	Whole-wheat biscuit cereal Cornflakes Rice-based cereal Shredded wholegrain wheat biscuit cereal Malted wheat squares Bran flakes Porridge (To avoid adding sugar, children should be encouraged to use fresh fruit and dried fruit as sweeteners)
Fruit and vegetables	A selection of chopped fresh fruit or dried fruit to add to the cereals Fruit canned in natural fruit juice Unsweetened fruit or vegetable juices Baked beans in tomato sauce Tomatoes tinned in juice (Vegetables must not be fried)
Breads and toppings	A variety of breads can be offered Toppings include: Polyunsaturated or monounsaturated margarine, jam, marmalade and honey (thinly spread)

Each child or person attending the breakfast session must be given the option to choose one item from each of the 4 food categories.

Regulation 6 and Schedule 3 – Lunch in maintained secondary schools

A basic overview of the food standards for school lunches in maintained secondary schools, under the Healthy Eating Regulations, is provided in the table below.

Food category	Standard
Vegetables	At least 2 portions of vegetables or salad must be provided each day. (‘Vegetables’ excludes potatoes.)
Fruit	At least one portion of fruit, fruit salad or fruit juice must be provided each day. A fruit-based dessert must be provided at least twice each week – it must contain fruit content of at least 60g per portion measured by the weight of raw ingredients.
Fish	Fish must be provided at least twice each week. Oily fish must be provided at least twice during any 4-week period.
Meat	Meat cuts must be provided on at least 3 days each week.
Potato and potato products	Potato and potato products which are cooked in fat or oil must not be provided more than twice each week. On each day that a portion of potato or potato product cooked in fat or oil is provided, an alternative starchy food that is not cooked in fat or oil must also be provided.
Deep-fried or flash-fried food	Food that has been deep fried or flash-fried (not including potato and potato products) must not be provided more than twice a week.
Meat products	No more than 2 products containing meat are to be provided each week. Any one product containing meat provided must not be served more than twice each week.
Cakes and biscuits	Permitted for lunch time provision only. Must not contain any confectionery.

Salt (in cooking)	Salt should be restricted or removed from recipes (where possible) and replaced with appropriate and acceptable herbs and spices.
Condiments	The portion of any condiment made available to pupils must not exceed 10ml.
Confectionery and savoury snacks	Not permitted.
Salt	Salt must not be available to pupils to add to food after the cooking process is complete

It is recommended that bread (without spread) is available throughout lunch.

More detailed guidance on the food standards under the Healthy Eating Regulations is provided in the following section.

Unrestricted food categories

Vegetables

At least 2 portions of vegetables or salad must be provided each day.

Vegetables must be available and visible at any outlet across the whole school day where food is served and/or sold. All pupils should be able to have a portion of vegetables if requested.

What this food category includes

Vegetables in all forms including fresh, frozen, tinned (with no added salt or sugar) or juiced.

Vegetable portions can include a variety taken from the list below.

- Fresh, frozen and tinned varieties whether offered as a salad, cooked vegetables or as part of a dish (for example, broccoli quiche, vegetable curry, stir fry).
- Pulses such as baked beans, kidney beans, lentils and chickpeas are included in the vegetables food category. (Pulses count towards one portion of vegetables under this food standard.)
- Foods such as tomatoes and cucumbers are classed as vegetables within the food standards.
- Schools should offer hot vegetables with the main meal as well as a salad bar.

What this food category does not include

Potatoes, spaghetti hoops and other canned pasta in tomato sauce must not be served as a vegetable as they are part of the starchy carbohydrate food group.

Combination vegetable drinks do not count towards the vegetables food standard.

Portion size

Vegetables within a recipe should contain the appropriate portion size (see following portion size table) to count towards this food standard.

The following table details suggested portion sizes for vegetables.

Vegetables	Portion size
Cooked vegetables	80g
Raw vegetables or mixed salad	80g
Baked beans in tomato sauce	140g
Coleslaw (at least 60 per cent vegetables)	70g
Pulses (dried raw weight) for example red lentils, green lentils, kidney beans, chickpeas	25 to 35g
Vegetable-based soup	300g
Tomatoes tinned in juice	130g

It is recommended that a variety of seasonal vegetables are served each day.

Although baked beans are popular, it is important to offer a variety of vegetables on your menu, therefore it is recommended that schools do not serve baked beans daily as the only portion of vegetables.

Fruit

At least one portion of fruit, fruit salad or fruit juice must be provided each day.

In addition to a portion of fruit, a fruit-based dessert must be provided at least twice each week. To count towards this standard, the amount of fruit within the dessert must follow the portion size for fruit-based desserts stated in the table below.

Fruit, fruit salad or fruit juice must be available and visible at any outlet across the whole school day where food is served or sold. All pupils should be able to have a portion of fruit if requested.

What this food category includes

Fruit in all forms: fresh, frozen, fruit tinned in juice, dried fruit and fruit juice

What this food category does not include

- Combination fruit drinks do not count towards the fruit food standard.
- Glace cherries, fruit flavoured yoghurts (for example strawberry yoghurt) or jam added to a dessert do not count towards the fruit standard.
- Fruit juice should not be served daily as the only fruit option.
- Foods such as tomatoes and cucumbers are classed as vegetables within the Healthy Eating food standards. Therefore, recipes containing these items, for example salads, are not to be counted as meeting the fruit food standard.

It is recommended that a variety of seasonal fruit be served in a variety of ways each day, as it should taste better and provide better value. It is recommended that these are attractively displayed to encourage take-up.

Fruit-based dessert

A fruit-based dessert is a dessert that either has a portion of fruit within the dessert (for example a crumble, pie or tart) or a portion of fruit served with an accompaniment (for example jelly, yoghurt, ice cream or custard). The accompaniment should be an appropriate portion size for the dessert to ensure the overall dessert portion isn't too large but must be at least 60g (raw weight).

It is recommended that school lunch menus contain fruit and fruit-based desserts as the main types of dessert each day. This is in order to encourage fruit to be eaten as a dessert in place of high-fat or high-sugar foods.

Portion sizes

The following table details suggested portion sizes for different types of fruit.

Fruit served unaccompanied	Portion size
Pieces of fruit (medium size), for example apples, pears, bananas, peaches, oranges	One fruit 80 to 100g
Pieces of fruit (small size), for example satsumas, nectarines, plums, apricots, kiwis	2 fruits 80 to 100g
Pieces of fruit (very small size), for example grapes, cherries, strawberries	80 to 100g
Fruit salad, fruit tinned in juice and stewed fruit (at least 80% of weight should come from fruit)	130g
Dried fruit, for example raisins, sultanas, apricots	20g
Fruit juice	150ml

Fruit-based desserts	Portion size
Fruit within a dessert or served with an accompaniment	60g minimum (measured as raw ingredients)

Fish

Fish must be provided at least twice each week.

Oily fish must be provided at least twice during any 4-week period.

What this food category includes

Fish includes fresh, frozen and tinned white and oily fish.

Oily fish

An oily fish is one containing omega-3 fatty acids.

Oily fish includes fresh and frozen tuna; fresh, frozen and canned salmon; anchovies; mackerel; sardines; pilchards; herring; trout; kippers; and whitebait.

Non-oily fish

Canned tuna is cooked before it's canned and most of the oil is lost during the cooking process, therefore it does not count as oily fish. In contrast, canned salmon and sardines are cooked whole in the can and as a result omega-3 levels are not affected (see [NHS Fish and shellfish](#)).

Fortified fish products or other foods fortified with omega-3 do not count towards the oily fish standard.

It is recommended that a variety of dishes are offered over time to encourage children to keep eating oily fish.

Portion sizes

Annex 1, (see page 43), provides suggested portion sizes.

Meat

Meat cuts must be provided on at least 3 days each week.

What this food category includes

Examples of meat cuts include:

- chicken drumsticks, thighs and breast meat
- joints
- cooked sliced meat
- bacon
- mince meat
- lamb and pork chops

This list is not exhaustive.

Portion sizes

Annex 1 (see page 43) provides suggested portion sizes.

Restricted food categories

Potato and potato products (cooked in fat or oil)

Potato or potato products which are cooked in fat or oil must not be provided more than twice each week.

On each day that a portion of potato or potato product cooked in fat or oil is provided, an alternative starchy food that is not cooked in fat or oil must also be provided.

What this food category includes

This food category includes any potato or potato products cooked in fat or oil, either on the school premises or during the manufacturing process. For example, this includes:

- oven chips
- potato waffles
- potato wedges
- pre-prepared battered or breaded products (such as potato shapes)

This food category also includes homemade roast potatoes, diced potatoes and potato wedges where any amount of fat or oil is added during the cooking process. This list is not exhaustive.

Check food labelling or food specifications to identify whether the food has been cooked in fat or oil during manufacturing.

Any fat or oil added to potato recipes, such as mashed or baked potato, must be included in the nutritional analysis software. However, they do not count toward this food standard under the Healthy Eating Regulations.

Where potato or potato products cooked in fat or oil are on offer, an alternative starchy food not cooked in fat or oil must be provided. A variety of such foods could include:

- bread
- potatoes
- rice
- pasta
- noodles

Portion sizes

Annex 1 (see page 43) provides suggested portion sizes.

Deep-fried or flash-fried food

A portion of food, including prepared, coated, battered and breaded food products, deep-fried or flash-fried on school premises or during the manufacturing process, must not be provided more than twice each week.

Deep-fried means to cook by immersing in a deep utensil of fat or oil and flash-fried means to cook quickly in hot oil.

What this food category includes

This food category includes any food item that has been deep-fried or flash-fried, whether on the school premises or during the manufacturing process. For example, this includes:

- chicken nuggets
- fish fingers
- samosas
- spring rolls
- battered onion rings
- doughnuts
- Yorkshire puddings

This list is not exhaustive.

What this food category does not include

This food category does not include potato and potato products cooked in fat or oil because these foods are captured by the specific restriction relating to potato and potato products cooked in fat or oil (see above).

The manufacturer's specifications must be checked for every product to ascertain whether the product has been deep-fried or flash-fried during manufacture.

Portion sizes

Annex 1 (see page 43) provides suggested portion sizes.

Products containing meat

No more than 2 products containing meat are to be provided each week.

To clarify, where the same product containing meat served at break time is then served again at lunch time on the same day; this would be counted as one product containing meat. This would allow for another product containing meat to be served the same week, totalling 2 over the week.

What this food category includes

Products containing meat include:

- burger
- hamburger
- chopped meat
- corned meat,
- sausage (including frankfurter/hotdogs and pepperoni)
- sausage meat
- sausage roll
- meat balls
- link chipolata

The food category also includes:

- individual meat pies
- meat puddings
- pork pies
- game pie
- Scotch pie
- pasty or pastie
- bridie
- any other formed, shaped or coated (breaded, crumbed or battered) meat product, for example nuggets

This food category also includes homemade varieties of these products.

Chopped meat refers to finely chopped processed meat, for example canned chopped pork and ham. It does not refer to unprocessed meat cuts that are chopped up to prepare a dish.

What this food category does not include

Product containing meat does not include luncheon meat. However, products containing meat including luncheon meat must meet the minimum meat content levels set out in Schedule 1 to the [The Products Containing Meat etc. \(Wales\) Regulations 2014 \('the Meat Products Regulations'\)](#).

No product containing meat must be provided if it contains any carcase part listed in regulation 5(2) of the Meat Products Regulations, subject to the exception provided in regulation 5(3) of those regulations.

No economy burgers as defined in Schedule 1 to the Meat Products Regulations must be provided.

Any shaped meat product consisting of a mixture of meat and other ingredients which is not included in the reserved descriptions specified in Schedule 1 to the Meat Products Regulations may only be provided if it complies with the meat content requirements for 'burger' in that Schedule.

Portion sizes

Annex 1, (see page 43), provides suggested portion sizes.

Cakes and biscuits

Cakes and biscuits must not contain confectionery. Any cakes and biscuits provided must be treated as though they form part of the lunchtime provision and are included in the nutritional analysis for that day.

Cakes and biscuits sold other than at lunchtime, for example morning break, must comprise part of the lunch provision and therefore be included in nutritional analysis.

All cakes and biscuits served must meet the food standards under the Healthy Eating Regulations, namely those for confectionery, cooked in fat or oil, and deep-fried or flash-fried products (for doughnut-type products).

What this food category includes

This food category includes all types of cakes and biscuits. For example, pancakes, scones, sponges, flapjacks, shortbread, cookies and brownies. This list is not exhaustive.

Provision of cakes and biscuits must be carefully considered, and care should be taken to ensure that choices on offer do not undermine the uptake of healthy school lunches.

It is recommended that pupils be encouraged to eat cakes and biscuits as part of a dessert following a meal, and not instead of a main course.

Salt

Salt must not be made available to pupils to add to food after the cooking process is complete.

Salt should be removed or reduced from recipes (where possible) and replaced with appropriate and acceptable herbs and spices.

Nutritional analysis

Salt used in the cooking process must be included in nutritional analysis.

Condiments

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

What condiments include

Condiments include:

- tomato ketchup
- brown sauce
- salad cream
- mayonnaise
- French dressing
- tartare sauce
- mustard
- pickles
- relishes

This list is not exhaustive.

What condiments does not include

Vinegar is not included in this food category.

It is recommended that condiments only be provided on request and they are not put on display.

Nutritional analysis

All condiments served or sold for consumption as part of the school meal must be included in the nutritional analysis.

Non-permitted food categories

Confectionery and savoury snacks

No confectionery or savoury snacks are permitted as part of school lunch, or at any point throughout the whole school day.

What the confectionery food category includes

Confectionery means:

- chewing gum, including sugar-free chewing gum
- cereal bars (whether chewy or crunchy)
- processed or extruded fruit bars
- other non-chocolate confectionery (whether or not containing sugar) including mints, sherbet, boiled sweets and marshmallows
- frostings, icings or decorative toppings made from icing sugar
- chocolate in any form, for example white, milk, plain, chocolate spread (except hot chocolate used for drinking)
- any product containing chocolate or wholly or partially coated with chocolate

- any chocolate flavoured substance (except cocoa powder used in cakes, biscuits and puddings or in a drink listed in the drinks section – see page 37).

What the savoury snack food category includes

Savoury snacks means pre-packaged items which:

- are ready to eat without further preparation (pre-packaged sandwiches, nuts and seeds are not classed as savoury snacks and neither are pre-packaged cakes, biscuits and confectionery as they have their own standards)
- consist of or include as a basic ingredient:
 - potato or root vegetables (such as crisps)
 - cereals (such as corn puff or corn snacks)
 - tortilla chips
 - pretzels
 - popcorn (whether plain, sweetened or salted)
 - prawn crackers
 - rice cakes (whether plain or flavoured)
 - Bombay mix

Cream crackers, water biscuits and oatcakes are not classed as savoury snacks and are therefore permitted.

Note: be aware of nut allergies.

Recommendations

Bread (without spread)

Bread (with no added fat or oil) should be available on a daily basis at lunchtime to those pupils who want it. A variety of breads should be encouraged, which should include brown and wholemeal bread.

What this food category includes

This food category includes:

- brown
- wholemeal
- granary
- high-fibre white and white breads
- pittas
- rolls

The form of the bread does not matter, therefore sliced bread, homemade bread, baguettes, breadsticks and chapattis may all be used.

Some bread has a lot of fat added to it and this makes it unsuitable to offer every day. These include naan and garlic bread.

Why this food category is important

- Bread is a starchy food which provides energy and a range of vitamins and minerals. It is also a good source of fibre.

- Most breads are low in fat.
- Pupils who are hungry should be encouraged to fill up on extra bread. This should help satisfy larger appetites.
- Eating starchy foods is a key part of a healthy diet.

Practical advice

- Schools should promote wholemeal or brown bread varieties as they have more fibre than white bread.
- Schools should use a proportion of wholemeal flour when baking homemade bread.
- Schools could display a breadbasket where pupils can help themselves. Bread should be easily seen by the pupils who can then pick up a piece if they wish.
- Bread is not required to be free of charge unless it is provided as part of free school breakfasts or free school meals.

Nutritional analysis

Bread must not be included within nutritional analysis calculations unless it is specifically provided as part of a meal (for example garlic bread served with spaghetti bolognese), in which case the bread must be analysed along with all other components of the meal.

Regulation 6 and Schedule 4 – Nutritional standards for lunch in maintained secondary schools

The nutritional standards in the Healthy Eating Regulations set out the proportion of nutrients that a pupil should get from an average day's school lunch, analysed across 5 days. They relate to overall provision rather than individual consumption.

How the values for the nutritional standards were derived

The nutritional standards for school lunches in the Healthy Eating Regulations are based on providing 30% of an individual's daily nutrient requirement for macronutrients. This includes energy and 35% of an individual's daily nutrient requirement for micronutrients (exception of iron, zinc and calcium which is set at 30 per cent of greatest need for secondary pupils).

The [Appetite for Life Action Research Project 2008–2010: Research Report](#) found that the 35% requirement for 3 micronutrients (iron, zinc and calcium) in secondary schools was very challenging to meet. The standard for these 3 micronutrients was therefore reduced to 30 per cent for secondary schools only. However, these are minimum standards, and school caterers should strive towards achieving higher levels of these nutrients where possible as many children and young people are deficient in these nutrients.

The micronutrients standards are based on the greatest need in the school-aged population and were calculated using a percentage split of age ranges. The secondary standards were based on the assumption that 70% of those receiving school meals were aged 11 to 14 years and 30% aged 15 to 18 years (see School Census (2010) Welsh Government).

Nutritional standards

The table below outlines the daily nutrient intake that daily menus should supply for an average lunch over a period of 5 school days for co-educational (mixed gender) schools and single-sex girls' and boys' schools. This means that school meal providers must plan a 5-day menu to ensure that an average lunch meets the daily nutrient-based standards.

An average school lunch must provide:

- the amount of energy shown in the table below (within the 5 tolerance)
- no more than the maximum amount for fat, saturated fat, non-milk extrinsic sugars (NMES) and sodium shown in the table below
- at least the minimum amount for carbohydrate, fibre, protein, iron, zinc, calcium, vitamin A, vitamin C, and folate shown in the table below

Table: School lunch provided in secondary schools

Nutrient	Minimum or maximum	Coeducational	Single sex girls'	Single sex boys'
Energy (kilocalories)	±5%	646	577	714
Total fat (grams)	Maximum	25.1	22.5	27.8
Saturated fat (grams)	Maximum	7.9	7.1	8.7
Total carbohydrate (grams)	Minimum	86.1	77	95.2
Non-milk extrinsic (NME) sugars (grams)	Maximum	18.9	16.9	20.9

Fibre (grams)	Minimum	5.2	4.6	5.7
Protein (grams)	Minimum	13.3	12.7	13.8
Iron (milligrams)	Minimum	4.4	4.4	3.4
Zinc (milligrams)	Minimum	2.8	2.7	2.8
Calcium (milligrams)	Minimum	300	240	300
Vitamin A (micrograms)	Minimum	245	210	245
Vitamin C (milligrams)	Minimum	14	14	14
Folate (micrograms)	Minimum	70	70	70
Sodium (milligrams)	Maximum	714	714	714

Nutritional analysis

School meal providers must ensure that where a school provides both primary and secondary education, a school lunch provided to a pupil in:

- Year 6 and below must comply with the nutritional standards for primary schools in the Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Requirements) (Maintained Primary Schools) (Wales) Regulations 2025
- Year 7 and above (and anyone else on the school premises) must comply with the nutritional standards for secondary schools in the Healthy Eating Regulations

These are set out in the table above. In practice this will mean portion sizes will need to vary for primary and secondary pupils.

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

Pupils who require a special diet should be provided with food that is healthy and nutritionally balanced (meeting the food and nutritional standards in the Healthy Eating Regulations). Specialist foods provided as part of medically prescribed dietary requirements would not need to be included within nutritional analysis calculations, for example foods prescribed by dieticians or registered medical practitioners such as supplement feeds or full fat milk where a child is underweight due to their medical condition. Advice should be sought from specialists for pupils with complex dietary needs.

Local authorities and governing bodies of maintained secondary schools may wish to consider the advice on special diets contained in the guidance for local authorities and governing bodies of maintained primary schools accompanying the [Healthy Eating in Schools \(Nutritional Standards and Requirements\) \(Maintained Primary Schools\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2025](#).

Calculating the average school lunch

The average school lunch for a school or a group of schools must be calculated in accordance with the following formula:

$$(A / B / C)$$

Where 'A' is the total amount of energy and nutrient content provided in all school lunches served in the course of a school week (see table above), 'B' is the estimated number of school lunches served to pupils during that school week, and 'C' is the number of days in the school week.

More information about the individual nutrients, food sources of these nutrients and good practice is provided in the following section.

Energy

An average school lunch should provide 30% of the total daily energy requirement. This is based on the assumption that 3 meals a day are consumed and that lunch provides approximately one-third of the daily intake. This is a significant contribution, but it must also be well balanced.

An average school lunch must contain the following.

Table: School lunch provided in secondary schools

Nutrient	Co-ed	Girls	Boys
Energy (kilocalories)	646 (± 32.3)	577 (± 28.9)	714 (± 35.7)

Energy is most commonly expressed in 'calories' but the actual unit is a kilocalorie. The modern metric units for energy are kilojoules (kJ). To convert kilojoules to kilocalories (calories) divide by 4.2.

Importance of the energy nutritional standard

Energy is vital for pupils' growth and development. It is essential for normal daily activity.

Sources of energy

Energy from food comes from carbohydrate, fat and protein. At least 50% of our energy should come from carbohydrate, with no more than 11% of this coming from NME sugars. A smaller amount of energy should come from fat (not more than 35%) of which there should be no more than 11% coming from saturated fat. The rest of the energy comes from protein.

Risks of consuming more energy than required

Consuming more energy than you need is not recommended as it may lead to weight gain and associated health problems like coronary heart disease and diabetes.

Fat

An average secondary school lunch must contain not more than:

Table: Secondary school lunch fat content

Nutrient	Minimum or maximum	Co-ed	Girls	Boys
Total fat (grams)	Max	25.1	22.5	27.8

Why the fat nutritional standard is important

- This standard is important as it limits the amount of fat in the diet.
- Fat is a concentrated source of energy.
- Fat has more than twice the calories weight for weight of carbohydrate.
- Fat provides essential fatty acids.

Sources of fat

Sources of fat include:

- butter
- lard
- margarine
- fat spreads
- oils
- dressings such as mayonnaise
- chips and other deep-fried food
- garlic bread
- pastries
- cakes
- biscuits
- creamy puddings
- meat or products containing meat such as pasties.

Why consuming more fat than required is not recommended

High fat intake can lead to excess energy intake and weight gain.

Practical advice

- Food should be baked or grilled instead of fried.
- When making sandwiches, avoid using spread or mayonnaise if the filling is moist enough.
- When using fat spread, choose a reduced-fat variety and spread thinly.
- When choosing prepared products, check the label and choose those products lower in fat. The UK Government's [Front of Pack nutrition labelling scheme](#) states that more than 17.5g of fat per 100g is 'high' and 3g fat or less fat per 100g is 'low'.
- Ask suppliers about the fat content of food.

There are 2 types of fat – saturated fat and unsaturated fat.

High fat intake can lead to excess energy intake and weight gain

Saturated fat

An average school lunch must contain not more than:

Nutrient	Minimum or maximum	Secondary (co-ed)	Secondary (girls)	Secondary (boys)
Total carbohydrate (grams)	Minimum	86.1	77	95.2

Why the saturated fat nutritional standard is important

- This standard is important as it limits the amount of saturated fat in the diet.

- Too much saturated fat can cause weight gain and ill health in later life.
- A diet high in saturated fat can raise the levels of cholesterol in the blood which increases the risk of diseases such as coronary heart disease.

Sources of saturated fat

Foods that are high in saturated fat include:

- animal products such as fatty cuts of meat, butter and cheese
- pastry
- chocolate
- biscuits
- coconut cream

Practical advice

- Choose lower-fat dairy products such as skimmed or semi-skimmed milk, low-fat yoghurt and reduced-fat cheese.
- Choose lean cuts of red meat, trim the fat from meat cuts and remove the skin from chicken.
- When cooking, use an unsaturated vegetable oil such as rapeseed oil or olive oil.
- Avoid adding butter to food (e.g. vegetables) after cooking.
- When choosing prepared products, ensure the label is checked and products lower in saturated fat are chosen. The UK Government's [Front of Pack nutrition labelling scheme](#) states that more than 5g of saturated fat per 100g is 'high' and 1.5g or less saturated fat per 100g is 'low'.
- Ask suppliers about the saturated fat content of food.

Carbohydrate

An average school lunch must contain not less than:

Nutrient	Minimum or maximum	Secondary (co-ed)	Secondary (girls)	Secondary (boys)
Total carbohydrate (grams)	Minimum	86.1	77	95.2

Why the carbohydrate nutritional standard is important

There are 2 types of carbohydrate: starches and sugars. Starchy carbohydrates should provide the main source of energy in the diet and should form the main component of a meal. Starchy carbohydrates such as wholegrains can help reduce blood cholesterol and keep the heart healthy as well as helping the digestive system.

Sources of starchy carbohydrates

Sources include:

- bread of all types
- rice
- pasta
- noodles
- potatoes
- yam
- oats

- cassava
- couscous
- breakfast cereals
- wheat grains like bulgar wheat

Lentils, red kidney beans and black-eyed beans are a good source of dietary fibre.

These food items can be incorporated into dishes, for example:

- spaghetti bolognaise
- lasagne
- curry with rice
- cottage pie
- shepherd's pie
- baked potato with beans
- pasta bake
- risotto

Practical advice

Wholegrain varieties of bread and cereals should be used where appropriate as they are good sources of fibre.

Non-milk extrinsic (NME) sugars

An average school lunch must contain not more than:

Nutrient	Minimum or maximum	Secondary (co-ed)	Secondary (girls)	Secondary (boys)
Non-milk extrinsic sugars (grams)	Maximum	18.9	16.9	20.9

Why the NME sugars nutritional standard is important

- Food and drink high in NME sugars often provide calories but few other essential nutrients.
- A diet high in NME sugars contributes to tooth decay.
- This standard is important as it limits the amount of NME sugars in the diet.

Sources of NME sugars

Sources include:

- table sugar
- jam
- honey
- sweetened drinks
- cakes
- pastries
- ice cream
- sweets
- biscuits
- confectionery
- chocolate

NMES also includes the sugar released from fruit when it is blended or juiced.

Some other common terms used to label sugar are:

- glucose
- fructose
- beet sugar
- cane sugar
- dextrose
- syrup

Practical advice

- Use less sugar in your recipes.
- Serve fruit-based or dairy-based desserts instead of cakes and biscuits which often contain lots of added sugar.
- When choosing prepared products, check the label and choose those products lower in sugar. The UK Government's [Front of Pack nutrition labelling scheme](#) states that more than 22.5g of sugar per 100g is 'high' and 5g or less sugar per 100g is 'low'.
- Ask suppliers about the sugar content of food.

Fibre

An average school lunch must contain not less than:

Nutrient	Minimum or maximum	Secondary (co-ed)	Secondary (girls)	Secondary (boys)
Fibre (grams)	Minimum	5.2	4.6	5.7

Why the fibre nutritional standard is important

Fibre is essential for a healthy digestive system. It assists bowel function and prevents problems such as constipation.

Sources of fibre

Sources include:

- brown rice
- oats
- wholegrain cereals
- muesli
- potatoes with skins
- wholemeal pasta
- wholemeal bread
- lentils
- chickpeas
- red kidney beans
- fruit
- vegetables

These food items can be incorporated into dishes, for example:

- vegetable and lentil bake
- chilli con carne served with brown rice
- jacket potato with beans
- fruit salad

Practical advice

- Choose wholegrain, wholemeal or brown varieties where possible.
- Where possible leave the skins on potatoes and do not peel fruit or vegetables.
- Add pulses and vegetables to stews and pies to add fibre.

Protein

An average school lunch must contain not less than:

Nutrient	Minimum or maximum	Secondary (co-ed)	Secondary (girls)	Secondary (boys)
Protein (grams)	Minimum	13.3	12.7	13.8

Why the protein nutritional standard is important

Protein is important for the growth and repair of body tissues like muscles. Pupils are growing fast so protein is particularly important for them.

Sources of protein

Sources include:

- meat
- fish
- milk
- cheese
- eggs
- yoghurt
- nuts and seeds
- red kidney beans
- chickpeas
- lentils
- meat alternatives (for example tofu, soya products, mycoprotein foods)

These food items can be incorporated into dishes, for example:

- chicken and vegetable jambalaya
- chickpea and cauliflower curry
- salmon sandwiches
- nut roast
- chicken casserole
- omelette with ham and cheese

Note: Be aware of nut allergies.

Practical advice

- Including plant protein as well as animal protein on your menu will ensure that pupils are eating protein from a variety of sources.
- Vegetarian pupils should have adequate protein intakes if they eat cereals, beans and lentils, soya products, eggs, milk and dairy products.
- Do not rely on cheese as the only vegetarian protein alternative, a wide variety of non-animal protein-rich foods must be available for all pupils. The vegan diet excludes all meat, fish and animal products, including eggs, dairy and honey.
- For vegan or lactose-intolerant pupils, ensure soya, oat or rice drinks are provided as an alternative to milk.

Iron

An average school lunch must contain not less than:

Nutrient	Minimum or maximum	Secondary (co-ed)	Secondary (girls)	Secondary (boys)
Iron (milligrams)	Minimum	4.4	4.4	3.4

Why the iron nutritional standard is important

- Iron plays a major part in how the body uses oxygen. It is needed for the production of red blood cells which carry oxygen around the body, and iron-containing substances utilise oxygen within the cells.
- Iron also plays an important role in maintaining a healthy immune system.
- It is especially important for teenage girls as nearly half of all 11 to 18-year-old girls are deficient in iron (see the Government's [National Diet and Nutrition Survey](#)).
- Iron deficiency can cause anaemia which may result in loss of stamina, tiredness and headaches.
- Iron deficiency has also been shown to lower resistance to infection.

Sources of iron

Sources include:

- red meat
- offal (especially liver and kidney)
- canned fish
- eggs
- dark green leafy vegetables
- peas
- whole grains (for example brown rice)
- nuts and seeds
- red kidney beans
- black-eyed beans
- lentils
- chickpeas
- dried apricots and raisins

Note: Be aware of nut allergies.

Practical advice

- Iron from animal sources is more easily absorbed by the body than iron from plant sources, but plant sources are important because they provide most of the iron in the diet.
- Consuming food high in vitamin C at the same time as food containing iron enhances iron absorption.
- Vegetarian dishes should regularly include a variety of lentils and peas, eggs, dark green leafy vegetables and whole grains.
- Incorporate foods high in iron into dishes, for example lamb casserole, hummus, spaghetti bolognese, shepherd's pie, mixed-bean wrap and dried-fruit compote.
- Breakfast cereals are often fortified with iron, and all wheat flour (other than wholemeal) is fortified with iron by law (see the [Bread and Flour \(Wales\) Regulations 2025](#)).

Zinc

An average school lunch must contain not less than:

Nutrient	Minimum or maximum	Secondary (co-ed)	Secondary (girls)	Secondary (boys)
Zinc (milligrams)	Minimum	2.8	2.7	2.8

Why the zinc nutritional standard is important

Zinc is used by the body and has a number of important functions, including growth and tissue repair, wound healing and the immune system.

Sources of zinc

Sources include:

- red meat
- offal (especially liver and kidney)
- eggs
- fish
- milk and other dairy products
- cereals
- soya products
- red kidney beans
- lentils
- chickpeas
- nuts

Note: Be aware of nut allergies.

Practical advice

- Vegetarian dishes should regularly include whole grain cereals, kidney beans, milk and eggs.
- Incorporate foods high in zinc into dishes, e.g. cottage pie, roast pork or beef, lentil bake, brown rice, vegetarian bolognese using soya mince and pumpkin seeds in crumble toppings.

Calcium

An average school lunch must contain not less than:

Nutrient	Minimum or maximum	Secondary (co-ed)	Secondary (girls)	Secondary (boys)
Calcium (milligrams)	Minimum	300	240	300

Why the calcium nutritional standard is important

- Calcium is essential for strong bones and teeth, especially during childhood and adolescence when the skeleton is growing.
- Calcium is also important for muscle and nerve function as well as blood clotting.
- Children who do not have enough calcium may have stunted growth and rickets, as well as be at risk of developing osteoporosis or brittle bones in later life.

Sources of calcium

Sources include:

- dairy products such as milk, cheese and yoghurt
- canned fish with bones (for example salmon and pilchards)
- broccoli and cabbage
- dried fruits
- tofu
- red kidney beans
- chickpeas
- soya beans

White bread is fortified with calcium.

Practical advice

- For people who are not able to drink cow's milk, schools should provide an alternative such as soya, oat or rice drinks enriched with calcium.
- Use lower-fat dairy products; they contain as much calcium as their full-fat equivalents.
- Incorporate foods high in calcium into dishes, for example cheese and potato pie, salmon quiche, rice pudding and custard made with milk.

Vitamin A

An average school lunch must contain not less than:

Nutrient	Minimum or maximum	Secondary (co-ed)	Secondary (girls)	Secondary (boys)
Vitamin A (micrograms)	Minimum	245	210	245

Why the vitamin A nutritional standard is important

Vitamin A is important for growth and tissue repair, good eyesight and the immune system.

Sources of vitamin A

Sources include:

- oily fish, eggs, liver, cheese and milk
- 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, for example 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 not less than:

Nutrient	Minimum or maximum	Primary	Secondary (co-ed)	Secondary (girls)	Secondary (boys)
Vitamin C (milligrams)	Minimum	10.5	14	14	14

Why the vitamin C nutritional standard is important

- Vitamin C is needed for wound healing and the structure of blood vessels and skin.
- Vitamin C is an antioxidant which helps to protect the body from infections and disease.
- Vitamin C enhances iron absorption.

Sources of vitamin C

Sources include:

- fruits – especially citrus fruits (oranges, lemons, limes, grapefruit), berries and kiwi fruits
- vegetables (including frozen) – especially broccoli, green and red peppers, potatoes and sweet potatoes

Practical advice

- Make raw 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. Vitamin C is a water-soluble vitamin and may be lost during preparation and cooking.
- Steam vegetables to minimise vitamin losses or cook them in a minimum volume of water.
- Incorporate foods high in vitamin C into dishes, for example jacket potato with salad, fruit salad, mixed-vegetable hotpot, casserole and stew.

Folate

An average school lunch must contain not less than:

Nutrient	Minimum or maximum	Secondary (co-ed)	Secondary (girls)	Secondary (boys)
Folate (micrograms)	Minimum	70	70	70

Why the folate nutritional standard is important

- Folate is essential for blood cells and the nervous system as well as helping prevent anaemia.
- All young women of child-bearing age should have sufficient folate to reduce the risk of neural tube defects such as spina bifida in any resulting pregnancy.

Sources of folate

Sources include:

- liver
- yeast extract
- orange juice
- green leafy vegetables (for example spinach)
- green beans
- beetroot
- chickpeas
- black-eye beans
- broccoli
- peas
- brown rice

Breakfast cereals are often fortified with folic acid.

Practical advice

- Prepare and cook food containing folate as close to lunchtime as possible as folate may be lost during the cooking process.
- Steam or cook vegetables in a minimum volume of water to minimise vitamin losses.
- Incorporate foods high in folate into dishes, for example pea and ham soup and spinach and potato curry.

Sodium

An average school lunch must contain not more than:

Nutrient	Minimum or maximum	Secondary (co-ed)	Secondary (girls)	Secondary (boys)
Sodium (milligrams)	Maximum	714	714	714

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 the sodium nutritional standard is important

- This standard is important as it limits the amount of sodium in the diet.
- Most salt consumed is contained within processed food.
- Too much salt can cause high blood pressure, which may lead to conditions such as stroke and heart disease.

Sources of sodium

Sources include:

- ready-made soups and sauces
- gravy
- processed food
- some breakfast cereals
- salty snacks (for example crisps and salted nuts)
- bacon
- ham
- sausages
- pizza
- cheese
- condiments

Note: Be aware of nut allergies.

Practical advice

- Remove or reduce the amount of salt added during cooking and instead flavour with appropriate and acceptable herbs and spices.
- Cook meals from raw ingredients rather than using manufactured products high in salt.
- When choosing prepared products, check the label and choose those products lower in salt. The UK Government's [Front of Pack nutrition labelling scheme](#) states that more than 1.5g of salt (0.6g sodium) per 100g is 'high' and 0.3g or less of salt (0.1g sodium) per 100g is 'low'.

Regulation 7 and Schedule 5 – Drinks in maintained secondary schools

The table below details the permitted drinks across the entire school day, under the Healthy Eating Regulations.

Single drinks	Mandatory requirements for product	Permitted drinks
Plain water (still or carbonated)	No added substances.	Yes
Plain milk	No added substances. Milk provided must be semi-skimmed or skimmed milk.	Yes
Fruit juice or vegetable juice (still or carbonated)	No added substances, except sugar, which may be added to fruit juice (other than any prepared from grapes or pears) for the purpose of regulating acidic taste in an amount (expressed as dry matter), not exceeding 15 grams per litre of juice (see The Fruit Juices and Fruit Nectars (Wales) Regulations 2013).	Yes
Plain soya, plain rice or plain oat drinks	No added substances except that they may contain added calcium.	Yes

Combination drinks	Mandatory requirements for product	Permitted drinks
Fruit juice or vegetable juice combined with plain water (still or carbonated)	Must contain a minimum of 50% fruit juice or vegetable juice. No added substances except; may contain colours, flavourings and other additives such as preservatives, antioxidants and stabilisers (see European Parliament regulation on food additives).	Yes

Fruit juice or vegetable juice combined with plain milk or plain yoghurt	<p>Milk must be semi-skimmed or skimmed.</p> <p>Milk or yoghurt must be at least 50% by volume.</p> <p>No added substances, except may contain colours, flavourings and other additives such as preservatives, antioxidants and stabilisers; may have less than 5% added sugar or honey added; and/or may contain vitamins and minerals.</p>	Yes
Fruit juice or vegetable juice combined with plain soya, plain rice or plain oat drinks	<p>Must contain a minimum of 50 per cent soya, rice or oat drink by volume.</p> <p>No added substances, except may contain colours, flavourings and other additives such as preservatives, antioxidants and stabilisers; may have less than 5% added sugar or honey; or may contain vitamins and minerals</p>	Yes
Flavoured milk, yoghurt or soya, rice or oat drinks	<p>Milk must be semi-skimmed or skimmed.</p> <p>Milk or yoghurt or soya, rice or oat drink must be at least 90% by volume.</p> <p>No added substances, except may contain colours, flavourings and other additives such as preservatives, antioxidants and stabilisers; may have less than 5% added sugar or honey; or may contain vitamins and minerals.</p>	Yes

Blended drinks	Mandatory requirements for product	Permitted drinks
A drink made singly or in combination with a blend or puree of fruit, vegetables, fruit juice or vegetable juice	No added substances, except a blended drink may contain colours, flavourings and other additives such as preservatives, antioxidants and stabilisers (see	Yes

	European Parliament regulation on food additives).	
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Traditional hot drinks	Mandatory requirements for product	Permitted drinks
Tea and coffee	No added substances, except may contain semi-skimmed or skimmed milk.	Yes
Hot chocolate	Must be made with plain water, or plain milk (semi-skimmed or skimmed) or plain soya, plain rice or plain oat drink. Drink must not exceed 250ml in volume. No added substances, except may contain vitamins and minerals; and may have less than 5% added sugars or honey.	Yes

Note: All drinks must satisfy the mandatory requirements to be permitted.

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

For further information on drinking water in schools please refer to 'Section 5: Drinking water in schools' in [Promotion of healthy eating and drinking in maintained schools guidance](#).

Drinks provided through vending or counter services must also comply with the standards set out in the table above.

Combination drinks

To ensure a consistent approach towards healthy eating avoid serving imitation fizzy pop drinks, for example fruity cola and lemonade-type drinks. While these types of drinks may meet the drinks criteria in terms of the fruit juice content, they may also confuse pupils about the types of drinks that are healthy.

Drinks standards at a glance

The drinks standards apply to drinks served across the entire school day, and not just at lunch times.

Drinks

Drinks that are permitted in secondary schools	Drinks that are not permitted in secondary schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Plain water – still or carbonated. ✓ Plain milk – semi-skimmed or skimmed. ✓ Fruit juice – still or carbonated. ✓ Vegetable juice – still or carbonated. ✓ Plain soya, plain rice or plain oat drinks. ✓ Fruit juice combined with plain water – still or carbonated. ✓ Vegetable juice combined with plain water – still or carbonated. ✓ Fruit juice or vegetable juice combined with plain milk or plain yoghurt (for example dairy smoothies). ✓ Fruit juice or vegetable juice combined with plain soya, plain rice or plain oat drinks. ✓ Flavoured milk, yoghurt or soya, rice or oat drinks. ✓ Blended drinks – a drink made singly or in combination with a blend or puree of fruit, vegetables, fruit juice or vegetable juice. ✓ Tea and coffee. ✓ Hot chocolate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Squash of any kind, including sugar-free squash. ✗ Flavoured waters, including sugar-free flavoured water. ✗ Sports or energy drinks. ✗ Fizzy soft drinks, including diet or sugar-free fizzy drinks (for example cola, lemonade).

More detailed guidance on the drinks standards is provided below.

Plain water (still or carbonated)

What this drink standard includes

Plain water, still or carbonated which does not contain artificial or natural sweeteners, sugars, honey, colouring or flavouring.

Why this drink standard is important

- To limit the consumption of sugary drinks by pupils and increase the consumption of water.
- Water quenches thirst and does not damage teeth.
- Pupils in all maintained secondary schools must have easy access at all times to free, fresh drinking water, especially during breakfast sessions and lunchtimes.

Practical advice

- Signpost water stations in the dining room and throughout the school.
- Provide younger children with a cup or glass of water or let them carry water bottles.
- Make sure the supervisors direct children to available water sources at lunchtime.
- If water can be chilled then it is more appealing, but this is not a requirement.
- Provide jugs of freshly poured tap water together with cups or glasses on tables and at the serving counter. Modern water fountains could be an additional water point in the dining room.

For further information on drinking water in schools please refer to 'Section 5: Drinking water in schools' in [Promotion of healthy eating and drinking in maintained schools guidance](#).

Plain milk

What this drink standard includes

- Plain semi-skimmed and skimmed milk.
- Milk provided must be semi-skimmed or skimmed milk.

What this drink standard does not include

Plain milk that contains any added sweeteners, artificial or natural sugars, honey, colouring or flavouring.

Why this drink standard needs to be in place

- To remove drinks from school which have no nutritional value and can cause tooth decay.
- Milk, lower in fat, is a good source of protein.
- Milk contains vitamins and minerals, particularly calcium, which is needed to build healthy bones and teeth.

Practical advice

Where possible choose lower-fat milk as it contains the same amount of calcium, protein and riboflavin as fuller-fat equivalents.

Other drinks

What this drink standard includes

- Plain drinks such as water (still or carbonated), fruit juice, vegetable juice and milk (semi-skimmed or skimmed) and combinations of fruit and vegetable juice mixed with water.
- Plain soya, rice or oat drinks which may contain added calcium and yoghurt and combinations of fruit and vegetable juice mixed with water can also be served. For further clarification please see the table of permitted drinks (see page 37).

- Hot drinks such as tea, coffee and hot chocolate. Sugar must not be available for pupils to add to these.

Why this standard needs to be in place

- To remove drinks from school which have no nutritional value and can cause tooth decay.
- To specifically encourage children to drink water, or drinks that provide other nutrients such as milk, yoghurt or dairy equivalent drinks (which address calcium requirements) and fruit or vegetable juices (which provide vitamin C and other important nutrients).

Note: Combination fruit and vegetable drinks do not count towards the fruit and vegetable food-based standards. This type of drink cannot be used to provide the daily portion of fruit or vegetables.

The standard applies across the school day

Only permitted drinks in the table of permitted drinks (see page 37) can be provided during the school day.

Practical advice

- Schools should offer a variety of fruit juices, for example apple, orange, pineapple or mixed juices.
- Provide smoothies made from plain yoghurt or plain milk combined with fruit or fruit juice using a variety of fruits to introduce children to new flavours.
- Chill drinks where possible.

Vending

Drinks served in vending machines throughout the school day must follow the above drinks standards under the Healthy Eating Regulations. Further, where vending is used to provide drinks at lunchtime, the drinks available must be nutritionally analysed along with the rest of the provision.

Regulation 8 and Schedule 6 – Other food provided in maintained secondary schools

Pupils have access to food at a number of different times during the day, accessed from a range of outlets within school. Positive messages on nutrition must be promoted and reflected in the provision of food and drink across the whole school day. To ensure a consistent and coherent approach to promoting healthy eating, all food outlets must comply with the standards within the Healthy Eating Regulations (see Regulation 8 and Schedule 6), which will enhance and complement the school meal service.

This schedule applies to all food (outside breakfast and lunch) provided by, or under arrangements made by, the local authority or school governing body before 6p.m. to:

- registered pupils, whether on school premises or at a place other than school premises
- other persons on the school premises

Other food provision includes items served at:

- tuck shops
- counter services
- mid-morning or afternoon break
- vending
- on-site coffee shops, for example sixth form café
- after-school clubs, which are defined as regular clubs held after the official school day has finished and take place on school premises

Standards for food available outside breakfast or lunchtime provision under the Healthy Eating Regulations

Product	Permitted
Fruit and vegetables (Product must be available in any place on school premises where food is provided.)	✓
Salt	✗
Condiments The portion of any condiment must not exceed 10ml.	✓
Confectionery	✗
Savoury snacks	✗
Cakes and biscuits (Product must not contain any confectionery.)	✓ Must be included within the nutritional analysis.
Potato or potato products (Products must comply with all standards for this food category.)	✓
Deep-fried or flash-fried food (excludes potatoes) (Products must comply with all standards for this food category.)	✓
Products containing meat (Products must comply with all standards for this food category.)	✓

For further information on the standards for each product please see the detailed guidance provided on page 6. For further information on nutritional analysis please see page 21.

Practical advice

- Cakes and biscuits can only be provided if they do not contain confectionery and must be included as part of the lunch provision within the nutritional analysis.
- Confectionery must not be provided.
- Savoury snacks as defined by the regulations must not be provided.

Suggestions of foods to serve outside of breakfast or lunch time provision

The following food suggestions only apply to secondary school break times (mid-morning or afternoon), vending, after-school clubs, sixth form cafes.

Foods that could be served include:

- bread-based products, for example wholemeal toast, English muffins, crumpets, flavoured breads and bagels
- toast with various toppings, for example baked beans, cheese, tomatoes, mushrooms, eggs (not fried)
- small sandwiches, wraps or baguettes with a variety of non-mayonnaise-based fillings including salad
- protein items such as hummus, tuna, chicken, ham
- dairy products such as yoghurts, cheese and milk
- fruit
- vegetable crudities
- salads

Vending

Food selected for selling in vending machines must follow the standards for food provision served outside of breakfast 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.

Annex 1: Portion sizes

The following table details suggested portion sizes for a variety of foods which may be useful for the nutritional analysis required for maintained secondary schools.

Bread, other cereals and potatoes	Standard portion size
Rice (dry weight)	72g
Pasta (dry weight)	72g
Mashed potatoes, boiled potatoes, potato croquettes	190g
Jacket potatoes	250g
Chips, roast, other potatoes cooked in fat	150g
Bread (slice, rolls, French stick) when served as part of a meal instead of rice, pasta or potatoes	100g
Pizza	160g

Vegetables	Standard portion size
Cooked vegetables.	2 to 3 tablespoons 80g
Raw vegetables	3 heaped tablespoons 80g
Mixed salad	1 dessert bowl 80g
Baked beans in tomato sauce	140g
Coleslaw (at least 60% vegetables)	70g
Pulses (dried raw weight) for example red lentils, green lentils, kidney beans, chickpeas	25 to 35g
Vegetable-based soup	300g
Tomatoes tinned in juice	130g

Fruit served unaccompanied	Standard portion size
Pieces of fruit (medium size), for example apples, pears, bananas, peaches, oranges	One fruit 80g to 100g
Pieces of fruit (small size), for example satsumas, nectarines, plums, apricots, kiwis	Two fruits 80g to 100g
Pieces of fruit (very small size), for example grapes, cherries, strawberries	80 to 100g
Fruit salad, fruit tinned in juice and stewed fruit (at least 80% of weight should come from fruit)	130g
Dried fruit, for example raisins, sultanas, apricots	20g
Fruit juice (see The Fruit Juices and Fruit Nectars (Wales) Regulations 2013)	150ml

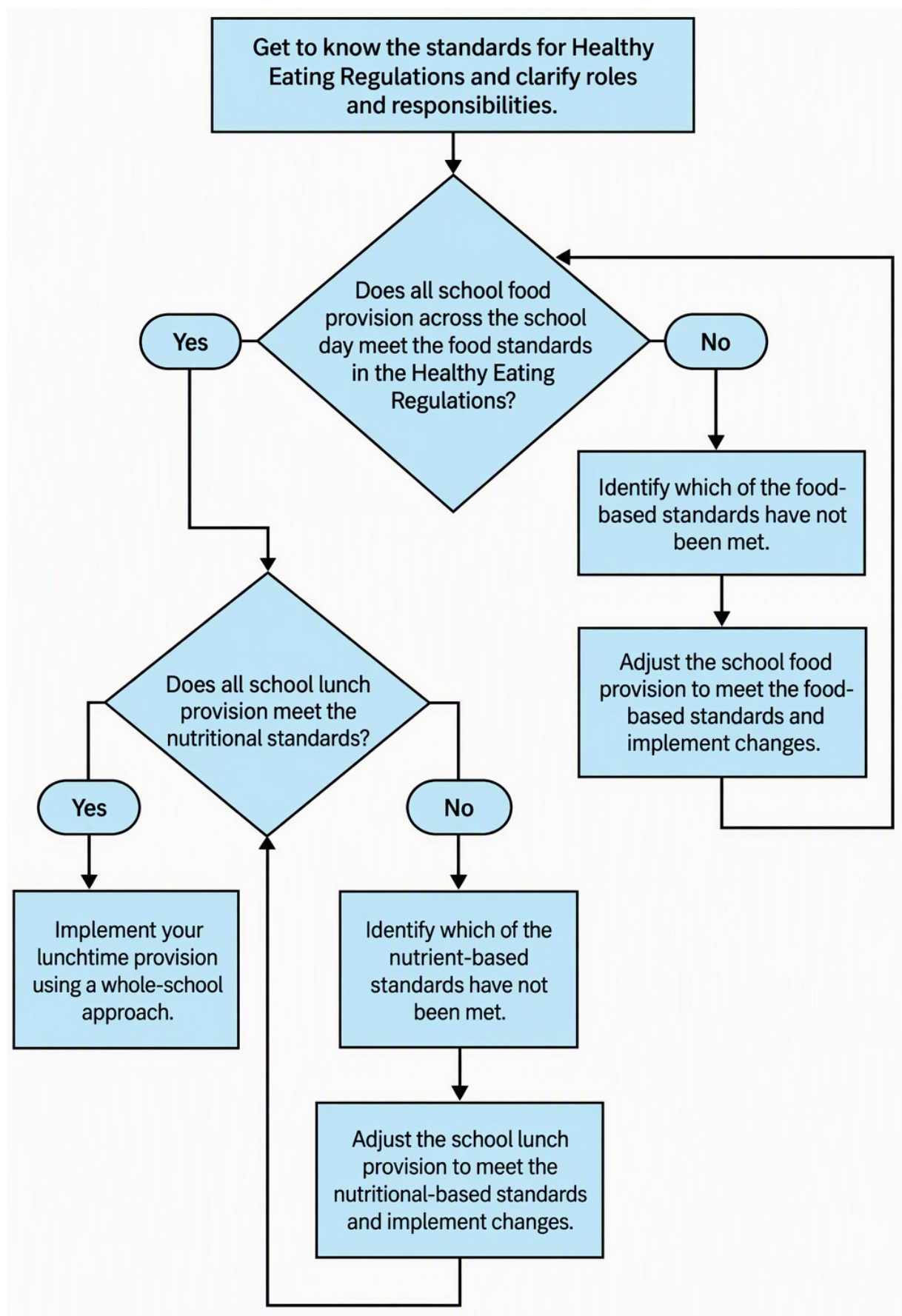
Fruit-based desserts	Standard portion size
Fruit within a dessert or served with an accompaniment (fruit measured as raw ingredient)	60g minimum

Milk and milk products	Standard portion size
Drinking milk	300ml
Custard	120g
Milk puddings	120g
Yoghurt	125 to 150g
Cheese	50g

Meat, fish and alternatives	Standard portion size
All dishes containing meat with no restrictions on their provision (for example roasts, stews, casseroles, curries, sweet and sour) will have a minimum raw meat content as stated	80g (weight of meat in composite dish can be reduced proportionately if adding in other protein-based foods, for example beans, cheese, milk or textured vegetable protein (TVP))
Burgers: beef, lamb, pork, bacon, vegetarian	80g
Sausages: beef, lamb, pork, vegetarian	120g
Shaped chicken and turkey products	120g
Individual meat pies, meat puddings, sausage rolls, pasties	110g
White fish portions	80g
Oily fish	70g
Fish in composite dishes	80g (weight of fish in composite dish can be reduced proportionately if adding in another protein item, for example beans, cheese, milk)
Fish cakes and other fish shapes	112g
Fish fingers	90g to 120g (3 or 4 fish fingers)
Egg served in a salad, baked potato or sandwich	1 or 2 eggs

Foods containing fat and sugar	
Fruit pies, sponge puddings and crumbles	145g
Cakes, muffins, sponges, fairy cakes, scones, non-fruit sponge puddings, doughnuts, cookies	65g
Ice cream	85g

Annex 2: Implementing the standards – step-by-step guide



Annex 3: References and resources

Resources

[Promotion of healthy eating and drinking in maintained schools](#) (Welsh Government)

The [Appetite for Life Action Research Project 2008–2010: Research Report](#) (Welsh Government)

[Educational Settings programme](#) (Public Health Wales)

[Guide to creating a front of pack \(FoP\) nutrition label for pre-packed products sold through retail outlets](#) (UK Government)

Think healthy vending: Guidance on vending machines in schools
[Think healthy vending: Guidance on vending machines in schools](#)

Easy ways to make lunchboxes healthier
[Healthier lunchbox recipes](#) (Better Health, healthier families, NHS)

The Eatwell Guide
[The Eatwell Guide](#) (NHS)

[Curriculum toolkits: food and nutrition guidance for teachers](#) (Public Health Wales)

Delivering Growth: An Action Plan for the Food and Drinks Industry 2014-2020
[Strategic Vision | Business Wales - Food and drink](#)

Other relevant websites

Food Standards Agency Wales
www.food.gov.uk

Estyn - Supplementary guidance: healthy living, September 2017
[NIA Supplementary guidance - healthy living in schools](#)

WLGA
[Welsh Local Government Association](#)

[Keep Wales Tidy \(Cymru\)](#)