School Food Matters

Primary school food ambassadors



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Introduction

What is this guide?

This guide provides information on school food ambassador schemes. The guide includes information on what a school food ambassador is, the benefits of having school food ambassadors and how to implement the scheme at your school!

What is a school food ambassador?

A school food ambassador (SFA) is a student who can be a role model for positive change and encourage healthy eating among other students. The SFA scheme brings a group of students together during the course of the academic year to represent the voice of the wider student body.

The SFA scheme is a great way for students to develop their interests in food, the climate and sustainability, and promote a positive attitude towards food and nutrition with their peers. The scheme also champions the inclusion of student voice for all things school food.

Introduction

Benefits of having a school food ambassador scheme

- Having a student food group acting as ambassadors for school food at your school is a great way of engaging students and giving them more agency in their school food environment
- By using peer influence, a student food group can be a driving force for positive change around food
- A student food group can motivate children and young people to explore a healthier relationship with food
- Positive changes which are student-led might be longer-lasting and more sustainable. Students know what works for other students!

Possible outcomes of having a school food ambassador scheme

- Better uptake of fruits and vegetables at lunchtime
- More curiosity and excitement among students around food
- Better awareness of nutrition and the importance of eating a variety of different foods
- Awareness of food consumption and its impact on the climate and sustainability goals
- Students are empowered to make positive changes to school food by giving feedback and suggestions
- Relationships within the school community between students, catering staff, teachers and SLT are strengthened

How to set up a school food ambassadors scheme

There are many different ways of having a student food group at your school. It's up to you to decide what works best for your school.

1. Formalise your student food group in policy

To ensure your student food group is a permanent feature at your school, have a dedicated staff member whose responsibility it is to oversee the student food group. Include this role and the student food group in your school food policy too. Incorporating ambassadors into the school's food policy will ensure it is a long-lasting initiative that will replicate every year.

2. Advertise the job, including:

A description of the role:

- Represent student views on the school food environment and relay these views to teachers and the catering team
- Be a 'good food' role model at school by supporting positive change
- Lead food activities at school (e.g. assemblies, cooking club, bake sales, healthy eating week, other celebrations)

Benefits of being a school food ambassador:

  - communication
  - teamwork
  - leadership
  - problem-solving
  - organisation
  - develop confidence
  - make friends

Become a school food ambassador!

Are you passionate about food?

Do you want to improve your school food environment?

Then apply to become a school food ambassador!

What you will do as a school food ambassador:

- Represent student views on school food in meetings with staff
- Run fun food activities like cooking sessions and celebrations
- Be a ‘good food’ role model at school

How to set up a school food ambassadors scheme

3. Choose the students who will be school food ambassadors

Do whatever works best for your school. Possible options include:

- creating application forms for students to complete explaining why they're passionate about school food
- choosing suitable students from an existing group (e.g. prefects, student council)
- selecting students who you believe will be most influential amongst their peers

4. Decide what you will call your school food group

Giving your school food group the opportunity to choose the name of their group is a great way to give them some autonomy and get them excited about participating. It also helps them to feel proud to be part of the group, motivated to live up to the name and can ensure long-lasting success.

Some options:

- school food ambassadors
- school food champions
- school foodies
- food citizens
- school food experts
- The Lunch Bunch
- The Dragon Fruits
- The Ravenous Recruits
- The Fruit Flies

5. First meeting with the school food group

The staff leading the school food group should kick off the year by delivering a session with the school food ambassadors to discuss the project. You can start off by getting the students to talk about why they are excited to be school food ambassadors and what they love about food. The staff member can also deliver a presentation discussing:

- what is a school food ambassador?
- what are the responsibilities of being a school food ambassador?
- what name should we give the group?
- how often will the group meet?
- what is our current school food policy?
- how can food help us be our best selves?
- any ideas for SFA activities to get the ambassadors excited!

How to set up a school food ambassadors scheme

6. Designating responsibilities

Set some core responsibilities that each student will take on, as well as key dates and events in the calendar. This can help with accountability and time management.

Some core tasks include:

- managing the fruit and veg trolley at lunch
- encouraging students to try items from the salad bar
- taking notes during meetings and feeding back to teachers
- refilling water jugs and promoting drinking water
- encouraging students to eat their main course before dessert
- getting student feedback on school food

Example of core responsibilities rota:

	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5
NAME	ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY
NAME	ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY
NAME	ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY
NAME	ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY

Activities to do with the school food ambassadors

7. Extra activities
Students can do lots of extra activities to make their time as a SFA more fun, exciting and part of the whole school calendar.

Assemblies

School food ambassadors could deliver whole-school or year-group assemblies on nutrition-related topics to promote healthy eating within the school.

For example, assemblies could cover the topics of:

- healthy packed lunches
- The Eatwell Guide
- understanding food labels
- food waste and sustainability
- importance of nutrition for performance in school

Posters

Students could create posters which could be put up around the school.

Posters could cover areas including:

- encouraging healthy eating habits
- providing quick information on important nutrients
- promoting school food ambassador activities and events

Student ambassadors salad bar

Students could create a ‘student ambassadors’ salad bar’ in the school canteen.

This could help encourage healthy eating and introduce other students to new foods and flavours!

Students could create posters providing details on the foods available and label lunch options as 'food ambassador picks'. For example, for options that are higher in fibre etc.

Video

Students could film a video to introduce themselves to the other students in the school.

This could include:

- what the school food ambassadors are
- what they plan to do

Activities to do with the school food ambassadors

School cooking club

Students could lead a school cooking club which encourages and educates students about healthy eating.

Talking to parents

Students could organise events or create leaflets to inform parents about the school food standards.

For example, creating a guide for a healthy packed lunch.

Celebrations

Students could be involved in organising what food will be available at school celebrations.

This could include different cultural days to discover foods from other countries and cultures.

School calendar

Students could create a calendar for other students and staff to inform them of the important dates related to food.

School survey

The SFAs could create a whole-school survey to ensure everyone has the opportunity to give their feedback.

Feedback stations

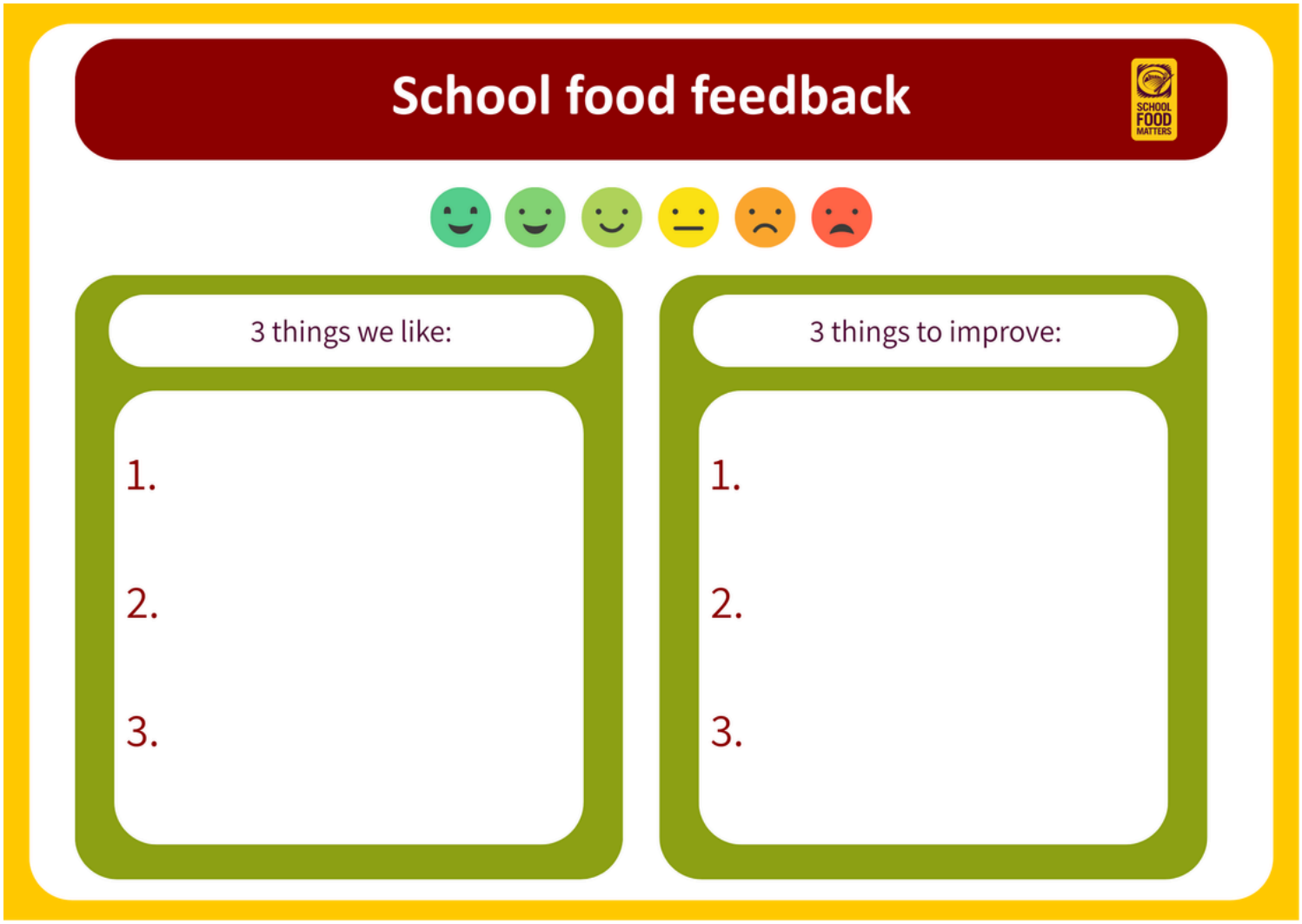
Students could set up feedback stations to allow other students to collect students' views on school food and provide suggestions.

Meet the catering team

Students could meet with the school's catering team to share feedback on school food. Beforehand, food ambassadors could agree on the key points to raise and choose a spokesperson. A constructive feedback template (see page 11) could support this process.

There's plenty more that could be done - talk to your student food group to hear their ideas.

Example of feedback sheet for catering team



Students can use this sheet to gather feedback from other students about school food and the lunch experience

How to set up a school food ambassadors scheme

8. Rewarding the SFA group

Make sure students are rewarded for their work as ambassadors!

Ways to do this include:

- certificates or badges
- invitations to school events
- ‘thank you’ assembly at the end of each year
- extracurricular food opportunities (e.g. school trips)
- inviting guest speakers to run dedicated workshops for the group as a reward - for example, invite a social media or local chef the students might like to run a cooking workshop or explore other similar opportunities

Let them have fun with it!

