School food standards

The school food standards are designed to ensure that food provided to pupils in school is nutritious and of a high quality.

They apply to all food service on school premises up to 6pm, which includes breakfast clubs, break times, school lunch times and after school food provision. Parties, celebrations, food tech and school events are exempt.

Starchy foods

□ One or more portions of food from this group every day.

□ Three or more different starchy foods each week.

□ One or more wholegrain varieties of starchy food each week.

□ Starchy food cooked in fat or oil no more than two days each week (applies across the whole school day).

□ Bread must be available every day and contain at least 4g/100g fibre (or at least 50% wholemeal flour), and no more than 5g fat/100g

□ All pasta dishes served on at least one day each week must contain at least 50% wholewheat pasta.

Fruit and vegetables

□ One or more portions of vegetables or salad as an accompaniment with main meal every day.

□ All starters and desserts must include a 40g portion of fruit or vegetables

□ Fruit or vegetables must be available wherever food is sold in schools

□ At least three different fruits and three different vegetables each week.

Milk and dairy

□ A portion of food from this group every day.

□ Lower-fat milk, which must be available for drinking at least once a day during school hours.

□Fortified plain soya, oat and pea drinks (no sugar/sweeteners) may be made available for drinking at least once a day during school hours

□Dairy yoghurts, fromage frais, custard and rice pudding to be less than 10g/100g total sugar and not contain sweeteners

□Fortified plant-based yoghurts to be less than 7g/100g total sugar and not contain sweeteners

Meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein

□ A portion of food from this group every day.

□ Meat, poultry or pulses must be provided on 3 or more days each week

□ Oily fish once or more every three weeks.

□ One vegetarian menu option must include a portion of pulses on at least 3 days each week

□ Main items* including cheese must be limited to no more than 2 portions each week

□ Pulses should be included within or alongside all main items at least once each week

□ Meat and fish alternative products must be limited to no more than 2 portions each week

Foods high in fat, sugar and salt

□ No more than 2 foods from this list may be served each week and foods from any 1 of these groups may only be served once each week:

- Batter-coated or breadcrumb-coated foods
- Foods containing pastry
- Processed meat, meat/poultry products

□ No deep frying of the final dish

□ The only permitted snacks are plain fruits, vegetables, savoury crackers, breadsticks, yoghurt/plant-based versions (as per the dairy food group) and houmous

□ Sweetened baked products are limited to once each week – they must include a portion of fruit or vegetables

□ No confectionery, sweets, chocolate or products containing chocolate

Drinks

□ Free, fresh drinking water at all times

□ All drinks must be unflavoured and unsweetened.

□ The only drinks permitted are:

- Plain water (still or carbonated)
- Semi-skimmed, skimmed, 1% or lactose free milk
- Plain fermented milk (for example, yoghurt) drinks
- Plain soya oat and pea drinks fortified with these micronutrients: calcium, iodine, vitamin D, riboflavin, vitamin B12