

# **New Standards for School Food**

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- Will better standards lead to better public health?
- How do we ensure proposed changes to school food make a difference?

## **Why nutrient-based standards?**

- Nutrient based standards provide a clear framework for developing menus which are able to provide for the nutritional needs of the majority of children in a group

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- Nutrient based standards provide a clear framework for developing menus which are able to provide for the nutritional needs of the majority of children in a group
- By expecting the food served to achieve an average level of nutrients over a period of time it becomes necessary for menus to be varied, dishes to be nutrient dense and choices offered to be balanced

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- They do not set standards for food consumed – only food served
- Standards based on 'food types' are more practical for caterers and work better with classroom teaching on the 'Balance of Good Health' plate model

## **Arguments for?**

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- The evidence that school meals play an important role in the nutrient intakes of children, particularly those that have FSM and/or no breakfast – and that better nutrient intakes could compensate for dietary insufficiencies
- The Scottish experience

## **What standards were set by the School Meal Review Panel?**

- Nutrient-based standards for school lunch
- Some additional food based standards (for fruit and vegetables, oily fish, deep fried foods)
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- Nutrient-based standards for school lunch
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- Some restrictions on types of foods offered at school lunch
- *Standards for school food other than lunch (breakfast, after school clubs, tuck shops, vending machines) are currently being developed*

**Will nutrient-standards make a difference to public health?**

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- **Yes** – if they are put into place as part of a much wider programme of change in schools so that children and young people go to school in a cohesive health promoting environment
- **Yes** - if the School Food Trust offers appropriate advice, support and tools to aid caterers and schools to plan and monitor food provision appropriately and schools are equipped to provide good food and to provide children with somewhere to eat it

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- **Not necessarily** – if planning and monitoring is left to individual schools/caterers – and the inspection process depends on self-evaluation without appropriate mechanisms to do this
- **No** – if we don't ensure a whole school approach and engage teachers and parents
- **No** – if school meals aren't eaten – particularly by those that need them most

## **My worries for school food?**

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- We will create a two-tier system of food in schools – increasing inequalities
- More parents will be pushed out of the system when the price of school lunch goes up – particularly if you are on a relatively low income but do not qualify for FSM

- Poor support, advice and monitoring could mean that it is a free-for-all in terms of what some caterers actually provide and the evidence they give that guidelines are met

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- If change is not positive people might be 'turned off' nutrient based standards despite the urgent need for them to be implemented wherever we have a 'duty of care' in terms of providing good food



## What is the reality of the school food experience in 2006?

Kevin 10 years old. At school 8am to 6pm

### 8.20am

cocoa pops with full fat milk  
2 slices white bread toast with fat spread  
2 cups of blackcurrant squash

### 12.15pm

pizza slice with potato wedges  
fruit salad

### 4.00pm

tinned spaghetti hoops on 2 slices white bread toast  
apple & blackcurrant squash  
Vanilla flavoured ice cream

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- Effective inspection of school food via Ofsted – carrots not sticks
- The supply chain to produce and develop foods which will help the process

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- Holistic approach to food in schools achieved because everyone is well trained and supported
- Joined up thinking – where is our National Food and Health Co-ordinator working across Government Departments on a health improvement agenda?

**[www.cwt.org.uk](http://www.cwt.org.uk)**

Eating well at school: nutritional and practical guidelines (2005)

