

## **2. Food-based standards**



## Food-based standards

The interim food-based standards for school lunches set minimum requirements for healthier food and restrictions on less healthy food served at lunchtimes. The food-based standards for all school food other than lunches (2007) were introduced to complement the standards for school lunches. For further information please see 'A guide to introducing the Government's new food-based standards for all school food other than lunches'.

<http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/resources/2007a>

After receiving feedback on the first set of regulations, some changes were made to the food-based standards for school lunches and the School Food Trust released 'A revised guide to the Government's new food-based standards for school lunches'.

<http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/resources/2007b>

The food-based standards for school lunches apply to:




- all school lunch services, including hot, cold and packed lunch services provided on a school day.

The food-based standards for school food other than lunch apply to all food provision up to 6pm, including:

- breakfast clubs
- mid-morning break services
- vending machines
- tuck shops
- after school snacks and meals.








**Key to symbols**

-  food or food groups that must be provided
-  food or food groups where the frequency or amount provided is restricted
-  food or food groups that are no longer allowed

# What are the food-based standards?

This table summarises the food-based standards for school lunches (interim and final\*) and school food other than lunches. It shows which of the standards will and will not apply once the nutrient-based standards are adopted. It also shows which of the standards apply across the whole school day.

Food/food groups	Interim food-based standards for school lunches from 2006 (revised 2007)	Food-based standards for school food other than lunches from 2007	Final food-based standards for school lunches from 2008 (primary) and 2009 (secondary)
Fruit and vegetables 	Not less than two portions per day per pupil must be provided; at least one should be vegetables or salad and at least one should be fruit	Fruit and/or vegetables must be provided at all school food outlets	Not less than two portions per day per pupil must be provided; at least one should be vegetables or salad and at least one should be fruit
Meat, fish and other non-dairy sources of protein 	A food from this group must be provided on a daily basis	No standard	No standard
Red meat 	Red meat must be provided at least twice per week in primary schools and at least three times per week in secondary schools	No standard	No standard
Fish 	Fish must be provided at least once per week in primary schools and at least twice per week in secondary schools	No standard	No standard
Oily fish 	Oily fish such as mackerel or salmon must be provided at least once every three weeks	No standard	Oily fish such as mackerel or salmon must be provided at least once every three weeks

\* Please see Appendix 1 for a table of the final food-based standards



Food/food groups	Interim food-based standards for school lunches from 2006 (revised 2007)	Food-based standards for school food other than lunches from 2007	Final food-based standards for school lunches from 2008 (primary) and 2009 (secondary)
Meat products – categorised and restricted	<p>● A meat product (manufactured or homemade) from each of the four groups below may be provided no more than once per fortnight across the school day, providing the meat product also meets the standards for minimum meat content and does not contain any prohibited offal*:</p> <p><b>Group 1:</b> Burger, hamburger, chopped meat, corned meat;</p> <p><b>Group 2:</b> Sausage, sausage meat, link, chipolata, luncheon meat;</p> <p><b>Group 3:</b> Individual meat pie, meat pudding, Melton Mowbray pie, game pie, Scottish (or Scotch) pie, pasty or pastie, bridie, sausage roll;</p> <p><b>Group 4:</b> Any other shaped or coated meat product</p>		
Starchy food	<p>● A food from this group must be provided on a daily basis</p>	No standard	No standard
	<p>● Starchy food cooked in fat or oil should not be provided more than three times a week across the school day</p> <p>Every day that a starchy food cooked in fat or oil is provided, a starchy food not cooked in fat or oil should also be provided</p>	No standard	No standard
Bread	<p>● Bread with no added fat or oil must be provided on a daily basis</p>	No standard	Bread with no added fat or oil must be provided on a daily basis
Deep-fried food – restricted	<p>● No more than two deep-fried food items, such as chips and batter-coated products, in a single week across the school day</p>		
Milk and dairy food	<p>● A food from this group should be available on a daily basis</p>	No standard	No standard

\* Meat Products (England) Regulations 2003 [www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20032075.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20032075.htm)

Food/food groups	Interim food-based standards for school lunches from 2006 (revised 2007)	Food-based standards for school food other than lunches from 2007	Final food-based standards for school lunches from 2008 (primary) and 2009 (secondary)
Salt and condiments – restricted	● No salt shall be available to add to food after the cooking process is complete. Salt shall not be provided at tables or service counters		
	Condiments, such as ketchup and mayonnaise, may only be available in sachets or in individual portions of not more than 10g or 1 teaspoonful		
Snacks – restricted	● Snacks such as crisps must not be provided. Nuts <sup>†</sup> , seeds, vegetables and fruit with no added salt, sugar or fat are allowed. Dried fruit may contain up to 0.5% vegetable oil as a glazing agent		
	Savoury crackers and breadsticks can only be served with fruit, vegetables or dairy food as part of school lunch	Savoury crackers and breadsticks must not be provided	Savoury crackers and breadsticks can only be served with fruit, vegetables or dairy food as part of school lunch
No confectionery	● Confectionery such as chocolate bars, chocolate coated or flavoured biscuits, sweets or cereal bars must not be provided		
Cakes and biscuits – restricted	● Cakes and biscuits are allowed at lunchtime but must not contain any confectionery	Cakes and biscuits must not be provided	Cakes and biscuits are allowed at lunchtime but must not contain any confectionery
Drinking water	● Free, fresh drinking water should be provided at all times		
Healthier drinks	● The only drinks permitted during the school day are plain water (still or sparkling); low fat milk, or lactose reduced milk; fruit juice; vegetable juice; plain soya, rice, or oat drinks enriched with calcium; plain fermented milk (e.g. yoghurt) drinks; combination drinks; flavoured low fat milk. Please see the drinks table in Appendix 2 for guidance on composition, ingredients, additives and flavourings. Tea, coffee and hot chocolate containing less than 5% added sugars or honey are also permitted. <b>Note:</b> The School Food Trust strongly encourages schools to provide drinks that are unsweetened, unfortified and additive free, and is currently developing a voluntary Code of Practice to support this.		

<sup>†</sup> Be aware of nut allergies. Always refer back to the school and catering policies regarding nuts. Many schools are finding that cases of allergies from peanuts (as well as milk and eggs) are on the increase. The Anaphylaxis Campaign states that even the most extreme form of allergy – anaphylaxis – is manageable in schools and cross contamination can be significantly lowered by washing hands with soap after eating and handling nuts. We recommend you visit the [www.allergyinschools.co.uk](http://www.allergyinschools.co.uk) website for accurate and reliable information on managing allergies in schools.

## Key challenges



These are some of the key challenges that have been highlighted by schools and caterers when implementing the food-based standards.

### **Cakes and biscuits**

We know that some schools struggled to replace cakes and biscuits with alternative snacks that pupils like. Other schools managed the change successfully and we want to share good practice so that more schools can succeed. For caterers who provide a mid-morning break service, we recommend bread products with additional ingredients to make the snacks more appealing, e.g. fruit, vegetables, seeds, cheese, herbs and spices. Other snack ideas that require little preparation include fruit, yoghurts, malt loaf, English muffins, bagels and teacakes. Have a look at our website for more ideas.

**[www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/mid-morningsnacks](http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/mid-morningsnacks)**

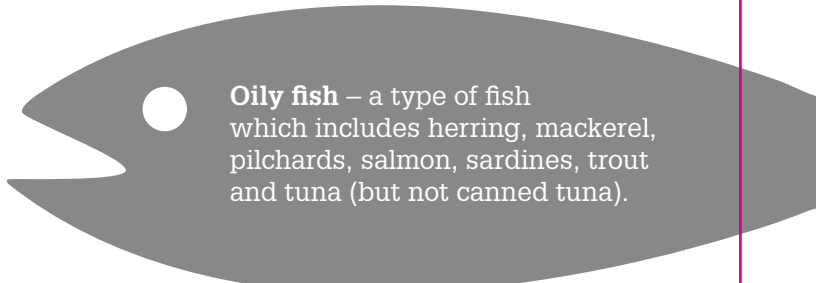
### **Oily fish**

Some schools have reported that it is difficult to persuade pupils to eat oily fish. Other schools have had success using these strategies:

- Taster sessions so that pupils and parents can sample small amounts.
- Innovative dishes using other ingredients to complement the oily fish flavour, making it more palatable for young people, e.g. risotto, pasta, fish fingers or fish cakes, salmon sandwiches or wraps with salad.

### **Implementing the standards that apply across the school day**

There are three food-based standards that apply across the school day; meat products, starchy food cooked in fat or oil and deep-fried food. In practice this means that everyone involved in school food provision will need to plan and work together to ensure the standards are met. For example, if sausage rolls are served at mid-morning break once a fortnight, no other group 3 meat product can be used in the same fortnight.



**Oily fish** – a type of fish which includes herring, mackerel, pilchards, salmon, sardines, trout and tuna (but not canned tuna).

### **Dental health**

Dental decay is widespread among pupils in England with over half of 4 to 18 year olds in the UK affected<sup>2</sup>. Dental decay is caused by having sugary food and drinks too often. Bacteria in the mouth take in sugar and produce acids which attack tooth surfaces. If these acid attacks happen frequently holes form in teeth. The food-based standards prohibit the provision of confectionery and restrict cakes and biscuits to lunchtime which reduces the opportunities for pupils to consume sugary foods. It is also important to be aware that dried fruit and fruit juices contain sugars. Tooth erosion (wearing away of the tooth enamel) is also a problem

affecting over 60% of school pupils<sup>2</sup>. Acidic drinks such as fruit juice or carbonated drinks can contribute to tooth erosion and should therefore be restricted to meal times only.

### **Case studies**

The wide range of case studies on our website shows examples of how some schools have successfully implemented the food-based standards using innovative schemes and initiatives. [www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/casestudy-home.asp](http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/casestudy-home.asp)

