



UK Government



School food standards: our consultation

Send your answers by

12 June 2026

Introduction

Eating healthy food at school helps children to

- concentrate
- learn
- thrive



From September 2026 more children will get free school meals.

This is part of the government's **10 Year Health Plan for England.**



Not enough children are getting the food they need to be healthy.



The government want to change this.

These meals will be healthy and not full of sugar. We want to update our guidance to make this happen.



Our consultation



We want to find out what people think about our plans to update school food standards.

We need these changes to work for everyone including:



- Children and young people
- Parents and carers
- Schools and governors
- Chefs and cooks

We want to make sure our standards support everyone at school to eat in a healthy way.



This booklet will:



- tell you more about our planned changes
- ask you what you think about the changes

What we want to do

We want to make changes to the food children eat at school.



We also want to look at how nursery schools follow food standards.

Every school should follow the standards:

Breakfast standards

This is the food children get before school starts.



School day standards

This is the food children get at lunchtime and during the school day. This includes breaktimes and after school clubs.



We will work closely with schools to support them with the new standards.

We will publish what we find out in

September 2026



Eating a healthier breakfast



We want to make changes to breakfast at school.

We want children to:

- eat cereal and porridge with less sugar
- eat bread with more fibre and seeds
- **stop** eating unhealthy cakes and pastries
- **stop** eating fried potatoes
- **stop** eating processed meat
- have a portion of fruit or vegetables to eat at breakfast



We will ask you a question about a healthier breakfast on page 18.

Eating more fibre in food



We want to make changes at school so that children eat more fibre.

We want children to:



- eat vegetables or salad at school
- include more fibre in starchy foods like rice and pasta



- eat fibre in food like lentils and beans

We will ask you a question about fibre on page 19.

Eating less sugar



We want to make changes at school so that children eat less sugar in their desserts

We want children to



- eat less cakes and desserts
- have healthier drinks at school



- drink milk and water only
- not have sugar, honey and syrups in food and drinks
- have less sugar in yoghurt
- not have extra sugar in drinks like water, tea, and coffee



We will ask you a question about less sugar on page 26.

Having healthier drinks



All children should get free drinking water whenever they want it.

We want children to only drink



- plain water – this can be still or fizzy

- plain dairy or lactose free milk with less fat and less sugar



- plain soya and oat drinks with less sugar and more vitamins

In secondary schools, children can have flavoured water, tea and coffee but no cream, sprinkles or syrups.



We will ask you a question about drinks on page 22.

Eating different types of protein



We want schools to give children more protein choices for their main meal. For example, beans, lentils and chickpeas.



We want children to

- eat a portion of protein every day
- eat beans or chickpeas at least once a week
- eat oily fish, like salmon, sardines and mackerel



We will ask you a question about protein on page 27.

Making changes to fat and salt

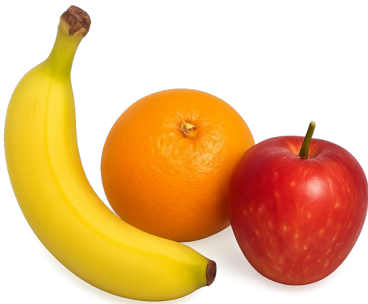


Children are eating too much fat, salt and sugar in food.

We want children to



- **stop** eating fried food
- eat less processed meat and battered food
- eat less cheese in meals
- only snack on fruit, vegetables, crackers and breadsticks
- not have salt



We will ask you a question about fat and salt on page 23.

Information about our consultation



We tested our plans with some schools in Autumn 2025.

We worked with the government **Office for Health Improvement and Disparities.**

We did some research with schools and caterers.



We know we will need to give schools and caterers more time to get ready for new standards.

Primary schools will have to make the changes from 2027.



Secondary schools will have longer to make some changes.

How to send your answers



Please send your answers online if you can

[DfE consultations on GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/consultations)

Or you can send your answers by email

[SchoolFoodStandards.](mailto:CONSULTATION@education.gov.uk)

CONSULTATION@education.gov.uk



By post



School Food Policy Team

Floor 3

Department for Education

2 St Paul's Place

125 Norfolk Street

Sheffield

S1 2FJ



The last day to send your answers is

12 June 2026

AI and data



We will use **artificial intelligence** or **AI** for short to help us look at your answers. Our team will make sure everything we do is fair and equal to everyone.

We follow the laws about keeping your information safe.



We will keep your information for **1 year** after the survey ends.

Then we will delete it.

You can find more information about how we look after the things you tell us on our website:



<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/about/personal-information-charter>

Questions about data



Data and information

Are you OK for us to keep data and information about you?

Yes

No

Do you want us to keep your answers private?



Yes

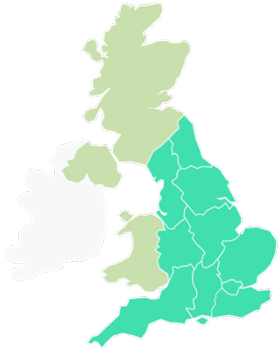
No

Are you OK for us to use your answers in our report?



Yes

No



Tell us where you live

Please put a mark in the box that matches your region

East Midlands

East of England

London

North East

North West

South East

South West

Yorkshire and the Humber

West Midlands

Please tell us who is answering the questions



I am answering as me

I am under 18 years old

I am answering as part of an organisation



Eating a healthier breakfast

Do you agree with the changes we want to make to breakfast food and drink?



I agree a lot



I agree



I don't agree or disagree

I don't agree

I don't agree a lot

Tell us more if you want to





Eating more fibre

Do you agree with making changes to fibre in foods at school?



I agree a lot



I agree



I don't agree or disagree

I don't agree

I don't agree a lot

Tell us more if you want to



Fruit and vegetables



Do you agree with serving everyone vegetables, salad or both with main meals?



I agree a lot



I agree



I don't agree or disagree

I don't agree

I don't agree a lot

Tell us more if you want to



Fruit for dessert



Do you agree that primary schools should have only fruit for dessert at least one day a week?

I agree a lot



I agree



I don't agree or disagree



I don't agree

I don't agree a lot

Tell us more if you want to



Healthy drinks



Do you agree with the list of drinks children should drink at school?



I agree a lot



I agree

I don't agree or disagree



I don't agree

I don't agree a lot

Tell us more if you want to





Fat and salt

Do you agree with changes we want to make to foods high in fat and salt?



I agree a lot



I agree



I don't agree or disagree

I don't agree

I don't agree a lot



Tell us more if you want to

Honey



Do you agree we should not have honey at school because it has a lot of sugar?



I agree a lot



I agree



I don't agree or disagree

I don't agree

I don't agree a lot

Tell us more if you want to



Cheese



Do you agree we should limit how much cheese we use in meals?



I agree a lot



I agree



I don't agree or disagree

I don't agree

I don't agree a lot



Tell us more if you want to

Desserts



Do you agree with having less sugar in desserts at school?

I agree a lot



I agree



I don't agree or disagree

I don't agree



I don't agree a lot



Tell us more if you want to

Protein



Do you agree with making changes to the types of protein served at school?



I agree a lot



I agree

I don't agree or disagree



I don't agree

I don't agree a lot

Tell us more if you want to



Our big question



Do you think these changes will make school meals healthier for children?



I agree a lot



I agree



I don't agree or disagree

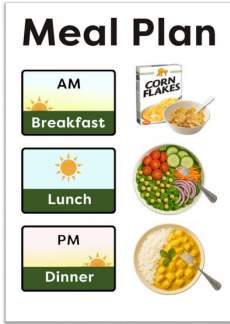
I don't agree

I don't agree a lot

Tell us more if you want to



Making changes to school meals



What might make it hard to make healthier changes to school meals?

Write your answer in the box



A large, empty rectangular box with a brown border, intended for writing an answer.

Following our standards

We need to know our standards are followed.



Do you agree there should be a governor to make sure schools follow new standards?

I agree a lot

I agree

I don't agree or disagree

I don't agree

I don't agree a lot



Tell us more if you want to

Putting a food policy online



Do you agree schools should let everyone know about their food policy online



I agree a lot



I agree



I don't agree or disagree

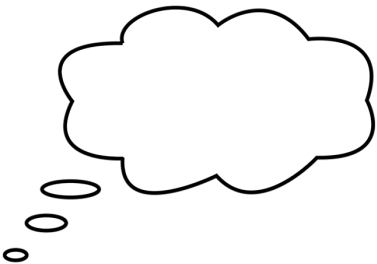
I don't agree

I don't agree a lot

Tell us more if you want to



Anything else we need to know



Please tell us anything else you think we should know – write your answer in the box



Treating people in a fair way



We follow the Equality Act 2010 law to make sure everyone is treated in a fair and equal way.

This includes any person on this list because of their:



- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation



Tell us more about this



Please tell us if you think our standards do not treat people in an equal way.





When we want the changes to start

We want to give schools time to plan for the changes.



Primary schools will follow the standards from **September 2027**

Secondary schools will

- start to follow the new standards in 2027.
- follow all the new food standards by **September 2028**



Where to go for more information

Please contact the

[Department for Education](#)

Thank you to our checking groups for your expert feedback and ideas.

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