

Little Book of Goodness



Meet James
(aged 5) the
Food Critic and
other experts
inside.

**SCHOOL
FOODTRUST**
Eat Better Do Better

The right choice

Dear parent or carer,
I know when your child starts school one of the things of most concern to you is ensuring that they are properly fed. But let me tell you why you need not worry. Over the past few years school food has undergone a revolution. New standards mean it has never been more nutritious or varied. Increased investment in school food and training has helped cooks to ensure all children can enjoy their healthy, tasty meals and lunchtime experience.

This Little Book of Goodness has been created to help you make the right choice for your child. I'm confident that when you hear why millions of parents are choosing school lunches for their children you'll want the same for yours too.

Prue Leith
School Food Trust Chair



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WIN

FREE
HEALTHY
school dinners
for one year

See page 15 for details
on how to enter.

Good stuff for kids

New Government standards now mean that school lunches provide at least one portion of fruit and vegetables every day.

The standards have also reduced the fat, sugar and salt by restricting fried foods and not allowing chocolate, sweets, salty snacks and sugary drinks.

School lunches are now healthy, well balanced and nutritious. They pack in all the essential vitamins and minerals your child needs to help them grow, develop, fight infection and have the energy to lead happy and healthy lives. In fact, our children now benefit from some of the healthiest dinners in the world. But even though they are now the healthiest ever, they still include old favourites like roast dinners, spaghetti bolognese and the occasional plate of fish and chips.

School meals are more likely to contain more fruit, vegetables and healthier drinks, compared with packed lunches.

Fruit 'n' veg

All school lunches must now provide at least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables or salad per child.

1x



1x



Common fruit



Common vegetables



“ We freshly prepare our school meals. We pride ourselves on serving healthy and delicious food, plus children have a choice of at least one portion of fruit and vegetables a day. We have learned new techniques to help us with our cooking and have been on training courses to ensure our meals are of the highest quality. ”

Carol Worrall, School Cook, Cuerden Church School

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“ It used to be that school dinners were all burgers and chips. Well thankfully that's all changed. In my profession all you care about is a meal that is balanced and healthy. I can say that after extensive research of at least a month's worth of eating them, school dinners are everything a square meal should be. ”

Davin, Nutritionist



“ I can’t recommend the new school food service highly enough. How does roast lamb with mashed potatoes, a dribble of gravy and seasonal vegetables sound? I am so happy that this old favourite has shaken off its old image and is returning to its glory days. I give the reinvigorated school canteen five stars.”

James, Food Critic



Getting it just right

It's only natural to worry about whether your child is eating the right things, getting enough, and if they will actually eat anything at all.

That's why lunchtimes are well supervised and school cooks are trained to measure just the right portions to make sure that your child eats well and is full, fit, active and focussed for the afternoon. They know some new foods can appear scary so they let children have little tasters and encourage them to experiment.

You may also receive a menu of what your child will eat, so you don't need to worry about being in the dark, you'll know exactly what's on offer.

Every school is different at lunchtime, that's why we encourage you to talk to your child's school about the lunches they offer. You can also find out if they provide family dining, classroom dining, or sittings by year group. Schools want to hear what you think about the food and the dining area, so why not see if you can try a taster meal yourself?

“ School dinners have everything I look for in a meal, variety, great presentation and above all they're oozing with taste. I wouldn't be surprised if they started to pick up a few of those Michelin stars very soon. Everyone has a great time in our rather special restaurants (that's school dining rooms to you). ”

Ruby, Chef



Of those pupils bringing a packed lunch, 65% ate sweets or a snack high in fat, sugar or salt and over a third of packed lunches had a drink that didn't meet new healthy standards.

Source: Sheffield Research Study, SLAB 1 (2008), School Food Trust

Top tip

Fussy eaters!

Children all go through fussy or picky eating stages – but this usually passes. Give them their favourite foods, but also try putting something new on their plate, and praise them if they try it.



“ Thomas is a fussy eater, so there is always a concern that he won't eat a proper meal. By signing up to school lunches we know there's more chance of him eating healthily over the course of the day. ”

Suzanne, mum of Thomas, aged 6, Darwen, Lancashire

Fun and excitement

Children love eating together at lunchtime. It's all part of a normal day at school and a chance for them to socialise with their friends away from lessons. Plus, they are also more likely to try new foods if they see their friends eating them.

Schools are doing lots of great things to improve the school meal experience, from turning old-style canteens into family-style dining rooms, to decorating rooms with brightly coloured pictures.

The cooks, supervisors and assistants, who are passionate about food, are also welcoming and warm. They often chat with the children about what's on the menu and how food links into their learning in the classroom. The whole experience is designed to be fun, safe, enjoyable and rewarding.



“Dinner times have become an integral part of the school's culture and curriculum. It has created a new vibrancy in school, better behaviour and children who become really articulate when talking about food.”

David Maddison, Headteacher,
St Peter's Primary School

“We have decided to sign Georgia up for school lunches, after sampling the food and being shown the menus.”

Jacqui Dawson, mum of
Georgia, aged 4, Stoke-on-Trent



Did you know that nearly 10% of reception year children are already considered obese. If they are not careful their life menu might include diabetes, heart disease and an increased risk of cancer.

Source: Department of Health, The National
Child Measurement Programme

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“Most people don't realise good food feeds the mind as well as the body. Psychologists have written about the improvements in social skills that happen when people sit down and share food. I know when I sit down with my friends to eat, we talk and laugh about the day.”

Melissa, Psychologist

More value, less hassle

Thanks to the new rules now in place, your child is guaranteed a healthy nutritious lunch, which can be both cheaper and a lot less hassle than giving them a packed lunch every day.

So, as well as knowing your child is eating well, it also saves you time. We all know what it can be like trying to get children ready in the morning, never mind the added trouble of agreeing what goes into the lunch box!

Some children are entitled to free lunches. Make sure you talk to your school about this before your child starts. Did you know that free school lunches can save a family with three children over £1,000 a year?

72% of children taking school lunch select vegetables, versus only 6% who take a packed lunch.

Source: Sheffield Research Study, SLAB 1 (2008), School Food Trust

Top tips

Some parents find that their children won't try school lunches. You can help by:

- being positive about school lunches
- cooking school meal recipes with your child at home
- getting together with other parents and carers so all your child's friends try school lunches.



“ I love my school dinners. I eat with my friends. I used to be scared about trying new food. But all the dinner ladies were very nice and made sure I ate my lunch up. I now like to try new things. ”

Niamh, aged 5, Walthamstow

School dinner

School lunches are on average lower in fat, sugar and salt than packed lunches.

School lunches provide one portion of fruit and a portion of vegetables.

This lunch meets all of the 14 nutrient standards for an average primary school lunch.

Packed lunch

This packed lunch is high in fat, sugar and salt.

This lunch meets only 7 nutrient standards for an average primary school lunch.

This lunch has no portion of vegetables or salad.

Healthy and happy

Eating healthy school lunches is the best choice for your child.

They will be healthier, more alert, focussed and able to concentrate on lessons. They will also develop healthy eating habits, knowledge about food and cooking, good social skills and table manners. Healthy school meals help give children the best start in life. That makes them, you, and us very happy!

Source: School Food Trust, School lunch and learning behaviour in primary schools: an intervention study (July 2009)

“ I often see the difference in my class with the children who have eaten healthy school lunches. Their behaviour and concentration levels are generally much better. ”

Sara Croft, Reception Teacher,
Bamber Bridge, Preston



“ My husband and I like that Leon will eat a wide variety of food if he has school lunches. It's important for him to eat food away from home and learn to eat with other children. ”

Sandy Al Alani, mum of Leon,
aged 5, Golders Green

Go for it

1 If you sign up your child for healthy school lunches you are guaranteed that they are getting a healthy, balanced meal.



2 It's really simple to do – just get in touch with your school.



3 Some schools will let you sign up on a daily, weekly, monthly or termly basis.



4 Everything you need to know about school lunches should be outlined in your induction day. If it isn't then ask!



5 If you're still undecided then why not talk to your child's school about trying a healthy lunch yourself.

Find out more about new school food standards at :
www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk or call our information line on 0800 089 5001.

WIN

FREE
HEALTHY
school lunches
for a year

The School Food Trust is giving 50 parents the chance to win healthy school lunches for one child for one whole school year. For your chance to win, just text 'GOODNESS' to 81400. Standard network charges apply. Closing date is 6th November 2009. For full terms and conditions visit <http://schoolfood.uk.msn.com>

Children in primary school are over three times more likely to concentrate and be alert in the classroom when changes are made to the food and dining room.



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change

4 life

Eat well Move more Live longer



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