

## **DRAFT**

# **CONCORDAT BETWEEN DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS AND THE FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY**

## **Introduction**

1. This Concordat sets out an agreed framework for co-operation between the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). It is not a legally binding agreement or a contract between the FSA and DfES, nor is it intended to cover every detailed aspect of the relationship between the two departments. Rather, it is a statement of the principles which will guide relations between the FSA and DfES to ensure sufficient communication and co-ordination to enable each to discharge their respective responsibilities effectively. The concordat is also intended to contribute to meeting the need for the FSA to promote links with other government departments, amongst others, to ensure effective consultation, as specified in the Food Standards Act (1999). The Concordat cannot override the statutory duties and powers of either the FSA or DfES. The concordat will be published.

## **General Principles**

2. In particular, FSA and DfES agree:

- to keep each other promptly and regularly informed about all work in which the other department has an interest;
- to give appropriate consideration to the other department's views;
- to request advice in good time, together with an account of its expected use;

- to inform the other department without delay of any relevant information which would require their action;
- to provide each other with as full and open access as possible to scientific, technical and policy information, and research and surveillance findings;

### **Division of Responsibilities**

3. The respective remits of FSA and DfES are as set out in Annex A. Areas of particular mutual interest include matters which have a bearing on the provision of food in schools (including school lunches and food provided at other times of the day), the teaching of food hygiene, nutrition and related subjects (and any changes to the curriculum which would affect the teaching of these subjects), and the nutritional status of school aged children. These are consequently areas that will benefit from close-co-operation between the FSA and DfES.

#### **4. Nutrition**

DfES is responsible, through compulsory minimum nutritional standards, for ensuring that all school pupils have the opportunity to eat a healthy and enjoyable lunch at school. The FSA will provide the DfES, as required, with scientific and technical advice in relation to monitoring the compulsory nutritional standards. The FSA will also provide advice to the DfES on healthy eating, as required, for the development of support on a whole school approach to food.

The FSA will provide advice, as required, on the healthy eating component of the National Healthy Schools Standard, which forms part of the Department of Health/DfES Healthy Schools Programme.

FSA will consult DfES over any educational resources on nutrition and healthy eating developed or funded by the FSA for potential use in schools.

## **Parliamentary and other business**

5. Correspondence, Parliamentary Questions and other enquiries, which are wrongly directed or assigned, will be redirected as normal between departments. The FSA and DfES will co-operate to ensure that enquiries relating to the responsibilities of both departments receive replies that reflect the position of both in respect of their individual areas of responsibility.

## **Operation and Reviewing of Bilateral Concordats**

6. The FSA and DfES are committed, wherever possible, to solving any disagreements under this concordat through normal administrative channels. If necessary and appropriate, matters will be pursued through the normal government machinery.

7. Amendments to this concordat may be made at any time by agreement between the FSA and DfES. In addition this agreement will be kept under regular review at intervals to be agreed between the FSA and DfES, and be updated as necessary in the light of experience of its operation in practice.

Signed by:

Chief Executive of the Food Standards Agency    Permanent Secretary DfES

## **ANNEX A: The Remits of the Food Standards Agency and the Department for Education and Skills**

### **The Remit of the Food Standards Agency**

The main objective of the FSA is to protect public health from risks which may arise in connection with the consumption of food, including risks caused by the way in which it is produced or supplied, and otherwise to protect the interests of consumers in relation to food. Under the Food Standards Act 1999, the FSA will have responsibility for the development of policy and for the provision of advice, information and assistance, in respect of matters connected with food safety or other interests of consumers in relation to food, to public authorities (Ministers, governments departments and their equivalents in the devolved authorities, local authorities or agencies of government), and to the general public or to individuals and bodies who are not public authorities.

### **The Remit of the Department for Education and Skills**

The remit of DfES insofar as it relates to issues of mutual interest to the FSA is to ensure that, through compulsory nutritional standards for school lunches, all pupils have the opportunity to have a healthy and enjoyable lunch. This will help them to achieve their potential, both academically and, in later life. Planned guidance to schools on developing a whole school approach to healthy food and lifestyles will reinforce this message in terms of all other food that is either provided, or is available, during the school day.

Through the National Curriculum, all children will be taught the principles of food safety and hygiene and how to follow safe procedures when preparing food. They will also be taught about the need for a balanced diet containing carbohydrates, proteins, fats, minerals, vitamins, fibre, and water, and about foods that are sources of these.

The National Healthy School Standard was launched in October 1999. The Standard encourages schools to present consistent and informed messages about healthy eating, for example, food on offer in vending machines; tuck shop and school meals should

complement the taught curriculum. Schools participating should also provide, promote and monitor healthier food at lunchtimes, break-times, in any breakfast clubs where they are provided, and should include education on healthy eating and basic food safety practices in the taught curriculum.