

National Governors' Council **and Food Standards Agency**

The role of Governing Bodies in developing policies to promote healthy eating.

Distribution of an information pack and questionnaire to governors.

Report to Food Standards Agency, January 2004

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Introduction

The Food Standards Agency and the National Governors' Council agreed to work together to consult Governing Bodies about decisions they take about food and children's health. The distribution of an information pack was designed to raise governors' awareness, and also to collect information about their practice and views in the area of food policy in schools.

The National Governors' Council

The National Governors' Council (NGC) is a national membership organisation for school governors. There are 350,000 school governors in England – almost as many governors as there are teachers – with more than 200,000 represented by NGC. NGC is the only national organisation representing governors on this scale. The role of NGC is consultative and representational. Through national conferences, regional meetings, local associations and email forums, NGC consults with its members on educational and other issues.

The Strategic role of School Governing Bodies

Governing bodies have a key strategic leadership role in schools. Since the introduction of Local Management of Schools, governing bodies have been given a wide range of duties and responsibilities. These include setting staffing levels, appointing headteachers, setting and agreeing the school budget, ensuring that a broad and balanced curriculum is delivered, as well as monitoring health and safety and the management of premises. Governing bodies also have a statutory responsibility to represent parents and the wider community.

Governing bodies are required to have a range of policies in place, including a policy for nutritional standards for school meals.

The Process

During the autumn term 2003, the National Governors' Council distributed an information pack and questionnaire. The Food Standards Agency had carried out a survey of children's school lunchboxes which revealed high levels of saturated fats, sugars, and in particular salt. The information pack drew governors' attention to this survey and highlighted the issue of lunchbox food. It also asked governors to consider food in the wider school context including vending machines, school meals, and breakfast clubs, as well as teaching about food within the curriculum.

The information pack contained:

- an explanatory letter
- a checklist to be used by Governing Bodies to review their current practice and to identify issues for policy development
- detailed information from the FSA about salt in children's diets
- suggestions for addressing these issues with parents and families
- a questionnaire

NB These materials are included at Appendix 1

A booklet containing lunchbox tips and menu plans was also distributed, based on information available on the FSA website. This was designed to be made available to families by schools.

The information packs were distributed in various ways. The information was posted on the NGC's website, www.ngc.org.uk. The DfES website for governors, www.governor.net.co.uk carried an article about the information on its home page throughout October and November 2003 with a link to NGC. The NGC email forum was used to alert governors to the project.

Hard copy versions of the pack were mailed to governors, included in conference packs for delegates, and distributed at regional meetings for governors.

Several LEAs have been involved in the process of raising this issue with governing bodies in their area. Portsmouth LEA, for example, requested 1050 copies of the information pack which were sent to all governors in the authority via internal distribution systems.

Also governors have brought the consultation to the attention of policy makers in their LEAs. For example, Durham Governors' Association discussed the materials at a meeting on 11th November 2003 with their Director of Education and cabinet members (education committee). It was timely as Durham was consulting on the quality of food in schools and catering contracts. The menu booklet was distributed to schools in the city.

Commentary on Questionnaire Responses

Responses from the first 100 questionnaires returned were scrutinised, and the findings are described below. Most respondents did not answer all the questions, therefore the numbers of responses to each question do not total 100.

1. Do you already have guidelines or rules for food brought from home? How are these working? What are the barriers?

Yes: 59

No: 32

Question one asked about guidelines for food brought from home. A large majority of responses indicated that schools had some guidelines and that they were working reasonably well. In some cases the guidelines were as simple as banning fizzy drinks or encouraging the bringing of fruit as snacks and as part of a packed lunch. Many responses emphasised that it was ultimately the choice of parents as to what they gave their children to eat and so any guidelines could actually be very difficult to enforce. The issue of cost of healthy food was raised several times, as was the convenience of highly processed foods marketed directly at children. Also the issue of policing these guidelines was a concern, and inevitably becomes another job for teachers.

The majority were in favour of having guidelines but schools felt that it was an impossible task to enforce them and therefore they were only as effective as children and parents wanted them to be.

2. Do you agree that schools should have policies to encourage healthy eating? What experiences do you have of work in this area? What might help you?

Yes: 84

No: 8

Question two asked about healthy eating policies and whether governors felt that schools should have them. Once again there was a very high number of responses agreeing that such policies were a good idea and again the issue of parental choice was raised. There was also a recurrent theme of requests for information about such policies, and requests to see exemplar policies from other schools. A small minority of schools reported that their catering was contracted out, so that the LEA, rather than the individual school, was responsible for monitoring those caterers. Some governors felt that the standard of the school meals provided was so poor that they would find it hypocritical to suggest a policy to parents. Some schools reported that they were trying to change the contracts with the LEA for catering to providers who would use local produce and produce food of better quality to nutritional standards. A very positive suggestion made was that healthy eating policies should be part of the ethos of the school.

It was again felt that policies were a good idea but that they were difficult to enforce. As one governor wrote “you know what you want teenage boys to eat but there are realities about what they will eat.” Some felt that this was the responsibility of the head as it was a day-to-day management issue rather than a strategic policy issue for governing bodies. Several

governing bodies had introduced policies regarding water stations and had found that the behaviour of the children had improved. Some liked the idea of the government fruit scheme but were unsure how it worked. The regular supply of inexpensive fresh fruit was a problem for some schools. It was suggested that at primary schools the healthy eating messages should be directed at parents rather than children, but at secondary schools the education should be targeted at pupils themselves and that they should take responsibility for their own health. Several governing bodies reported that their schools were taking part in the healthy schools initiative and had considered food policies as part of this award.

3. Does your Governing Body play a role in either developing or monitoring healthy eating policies? What barriers have you faced? How did you overcome them?

Yes: 38

No: 36

Question three asked about the governing body's role in developing or monitoring healthy eating policies. This revealed that many governors review several policies at a time and that they were not necessarily discussed at length. The headteacher or the teacher governors were most often charged with monitoring these policies and had responsibility to bring issues to the notice of the rest of the governors. Several governors reported that the school staff developed and monitored these policies and that the governors supported them in this. Some schools have a governor responsible for monitoring the PSHE curriculum and they also assumed responsibility for monitoring food policy. Where the governing body involved parents and children in the development of a policy there was very little opposition to it.

There was also quite a strong reluctance to dictate to parents about what they should feed to their children. There was a small body of governors who felt that parents would not want to be told how to bring up their children. Many governing bodies reported that they intend to look at this issue and become involved in the development of a policy for their school. An area for real concern was the poor food standards of the raw food supplied to the kitchens. Many governors mentioned the poor quality of school meals. Some were worried about the cost implications of healthy food. The healthy schools award was again mentioned by many as a way to address the development and monitoring of healthy eating policies. In Durham governors were in discussion with the LEA about catering companies and considered the NGC/FSA materials within that process. This questionnaire had obviously been a trigger in getting some governing bodies interested and involved in such policies.

4. Have you used the attached discussion checklist with your Governing Body? How did you do this? What did you achieve?

Yes: 21

No: 58

Question four asked about the use of the checklist with the governing body. Most respondents regarded the checklist as potentially useful and reported an intention to use it during the next school term.

5. Are parents and/or children involved in the development or monitoring of healthy eating policies in your school? If so, how? What issues arise and how have you overcome any barriers?

Yes: 42

No: 26

Question Five asked about the involvement of parents and children in the development and monitoring of healthy eating policies. Several schools reported that they used their school councils in order to involve children in addressing these issues. Others reported that they would be consulting with parents and children before developing policy. Many regarded children as being involved already through the curriculum. Some mentioned parents' meetings as a context for discussing these issues. One school reported that children run the fruit tuck shop. Parental questionnaires were seen as valuable by some governors in finding out what parents thought about food and healthy eating policies.

6. How might you make the pack of lunchbox tips and menus available to parents?

Yes: N/A

No: N/A

Question Six asked how the lunch box tips and menus might be made available to parents. Several governors felt that they could be sent home with the children either together with a newsletter or separately. Another suggestion was to include them in induction packs given to new parents. Governors of secondary schools suggested that the information be adapted for older pupils. Some schools felt that they were very useful and said they would make them available to all who wanted them. The school magazine was suggested as somewhere that the menus could be printed. Some suggested holding a meeting to discuss the issues with parents and distributing the top tips and menus. Another innovative idea was to produce the menus and have a tasting session at school for parents and children. One school reported that they would not use the menus as their children almost all loved the school dinners on offer. The inclusion of the documents on the school website was also suggested. One governing body suggested running workshops and producing a PTA lunch box recipe book. Inclusion in the school prospectus was suggested by several governors. Some schools felt that they would prefer to adapt the menus and tips to their own school context. One school felt that they were very patronising and would not dream of sending anything like this out to parents. One school thought that the presentation and content were unsuitable and that the sort of parents who would read the documents were those who had already been converted and that others would discard it. One school felt that the way to have maximum effect was to send them via the children to engage "pester power". One school felt that they were too long and they would edit them to suit their school. One governor, a home economics teacher, felt that the booklet probably had not been trialled with parents and felt it was very repetitive. Some were surprised at the amount of salt in the menus and suggested that it might be more appropriate to use fish in spring water rather than fish in brine as the aim was to reduce the intake of salt.

7. The FSA is currently involved in a range of work, including monitoring school meals in secondary schools; OFSTED survey of primary school/early learning settings good practice; Dish it up interactive CD ROM for 11-12 year olds; and Guide to setting up fruit tuck shops. Would you like more information on these areas of work?

Yes: 47

No: 12

Question Seven asked if governors would like more information about work that the FSA is currently involved in. The majority of governors stated that they would like more information. Information about setting up fruit tuck shops was the most requested. Several governors requested more information for younger children.

8. Are there any other areas that you would like the FSA to consider how they can help you as a School Governor?

Yes: 13

No: 13

The final question asked governors whether there were other areas they would like the FSA to consider. A small number of governors responded to this question. Clarification of the role of the governing body in areas such as nutrition policy was asked for, and the need for governor training was emphasised. Information about healthy snacks was also requested. Several schools asked for more information about school meals and their nutrition values. Some commented that because of cost, cheap foods such as chips, burgers and turkey twizzlers were often provided. Some asked what constituted a balanced school meal? Many schools would welcome cost effective high quality menu suggestions for school meals as well as for packed lunches. Some schools felt that they got a poor deal from off site kitchens delivering school meals. It was suggested that the FSA should encourage setting standards and quality benchmarks and support quality awards for school meals and school meal providers.

Some governing bodies felt that the menus did not reflect our multicultural society and that there were few alternatives for vegetarians. A governor who was also a dentist questioned the inclusion of flavoured water because of its acidity, as well as fruit juice. The inclusion of nuts in the menus was an issue for some primary schools who had in place policies banning nuts from school because of allergies.

One governing body asked that the FSA advise on how they could set up an organic food supply chain and where they could find a cook to produce fun healthy meals! Regular advice and updates from the agency were also requested. The governors of a residential school asked for information about National Care Standards and residential schools and meals.

Some governors felt that they would like the FSA to pressure government to legislate for the removal of harmful additives from all foods.

PFI schools were cited as a problem as schools lost control over all aspects of catering including vending machines.

Other issues that governors asked the FSA to consider were the clear listing of salt content on food packaging, persuading catering companies to consult pupils, parents and staff, and the promotion of exercise along with the promotion of healthy eating.

NB. Verbatim comments from the questionnaires are reproduced at appendix 2.

Suffolk County Council catering service commented on the materials and had discussed them at a meeting of their national association, LACA. They emphasised the economics underpinning school food provision and commented that while many schools would support healthy food in principle, they would not be prepared to subsidise it, and that catering had to be run on a commercial basis. They welcomed the fact that attention was being drawn to the health aspects of lunchboxes and agreed that many did not provide a balanced meal. They also questioned the role of governing bodies in the area of food policy.

Next Steps

Many governing bodies who responded to the questionnaire indicated their intention to use the checklist and discuss the issue in depth during the spring term 2004. Others wrote to say they would not be responding to the questionnaire until February 2004 when they would be able to include it on the agenda of a governing body meeting.

It is likely therefore that NGC will be receiving responses well into 2004. Suffolk County Council are distributing the materials to governing bodies during January 2004. The issue is included as a spring term agenda item for meetings of governing bodies in all Suffolk schools. An accompanying report from Suffolk's Director of Education recommends that governing bodies respond to the questionnaire. It is therefore anticipated that many Suffolk schools will discuss these issues during spring 2004.

N.B. The report of the Director of Education, Suffolk County Council, is included at Appendix 3.

Requests for further information were included in many questionnaire responses. Respondents supplied either postal or email address for receipt of this information. There is an opportunity for NGC and FSA to follow up with further information.

The menu booklets have proved to be very popular and many schools wish to distribute them to all families. It is anticipated that NGC will continue to receive requests for copies of the menu booklets for some time, as well as for copies of the full information pack.

Conclusions

- The overwhelming majority of governors agree that schools should have policies to encourage healthy eating. However, far fewer report that they play a role as a governing body in developing or monitoring such policies. **The provision of exemplar policies and case studies of good practice in governing bodies would be welcomed.**
- There is some confusion about the role of governing bodies in developing strategic policy in this area. There is anxiety about trespassing onto the day to day management role of the headteacher. This mirrors a widespread lack of understanding among governors, headteachers and some LEA officers about the difference between strategic policy and management. **There is an opportunity to use exemplar materials regarding strategic food policy to address this issue and to encourage more governing bodies to take on this important role.**
- Where governing bodies involved parents and children in the development of policy, there was little opposition to the introduction of school guidelines restricting such items as fizzy drinks or promoting fruit for snacks. **Disseminating guidance and good practice regarding the involvement of parents and children will support the work of governing bodies in developing food policy.**
- Concern was expressed about lack of storage for lunch boxes in schools and their exposure to sunshine or hot pipes for several hours before lunch time. **Guidance is needed regarding appropriate storage facilities for lunch boxes.**
- Implementing food policy was reported to be much more difficult in secondary schools than in primary schools. **Age specific guidance and good practice exemplars are useful.**
- Concern about catering companies and the quality of school meals was a recurrent theme. **Governors would value action and guidance from the FSA in this area.**
- Serious concern was raised regarding Private Finance Initiatives (PFI). Governing bodies and school managers lose control of food policy issues to PFI contractors unless clear specifications are written in to contracts. This will apply to all aspects of food provision including vending machines. Contracts stand for up to 25 years. **Urgent action needs to be taken to collect evidence of current practice in this aspect of PFI contracts and to disseminate advice to schools about to enter long term contracts.**

Appendix 1

Materials distributed to governing bodies:

- explanatory letter
- checklist to be used by Governing Bodies to review their current practice and to identify issues for policy development
- detailed information from the FSA about salt in children's diets
- suggestions for addressing these issues with parents and families
- questionnaire



The national voice of governors

Ref: JM/RH

31st October 2003

Dear Governor

National Governors' Council and Food Standards Agency Consultation
The role of Governing Bodies in developing policies to promote healthy eating

I enclose an information pack for governors which is designed to help you review current practice regarding food policy in your school.

NGC and the Food Standards Agency are working together to support governors in this area of their work. The enclosed materials include a checklist to trigger discussion within your Governing Body and help you identify issues for policy development.

Early consultation with families is highly recommended when developing policies in areas such as break time snacks, vending machines or lunch boxes. For this reason a practical information pack for families is also included. This is also available at www.ngc.org.uk. Please feel free to link it to your school website so that families can access it freely.

Finally, please could I ask you to complete and return the short consultation questionnaire which is also enclosed. This will provide information to the Food Standards Agency about governors' views on this important issue.

With many thanks.

Yours sincerely

Jean McEntire
Chief Executive Officer

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National Governors' Council

The role of Governing Bodies in developing policies to promote healthy eating

Checklist for discussion within Governing Bodies

Please use this checklist to review your current practice and to identify issues for policy development.

- Does your school have a policy for nutritional standards (a legally required policy for governing bodies)?
- Does your school have a named Governor with interest in food in schools?
- Is the Governing Body aware of any control your school has over its catering arrangements?
- Does your school have a policy on vending machines?
- Does your tuck shop policy restrict sales to healthier items?
- Does your school know how many children have an adequate breakfast? If so, have they taken steps towards breakfast provision?
- Does your school restrict break time snacks?
- Does your school restrict what children can have in their lunch boxes?
- Does your school require children to eat savoury items of lunch before sweet items?
- Does your school teach the children about the importance of a healthy diet?
- Healthy eating is a part of the curriculum. Do governors monitor this?
- Is there a link between what is being taught about healthy eating and what is available for the children to eat?
- Are there any extra curricular activities which encourage healthy eating, e.g.
Cookery Club
Ready Steady Cook Competitions
- Does your school have a mechanism to involve young people in discussions on nutrition e.g. School & Nutrition Action Group, school council?

National Governors' Council and Food Standards Agency Consultation:

The role of Governing Bodies in developing policies to promote healthy eating.

- The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is working with NGC to consult school Governing Bodies about decisions they take about food and children's health.
- Children's short and long term health can be affected by the food they eat. A significant amount of children's food intake is on school premises.
- The policy decisions made by Governing Bodies about the food that is available to children in school, whether from school lunches, vending machines, tuck shops or elsewhere, can impact positively, or negatively, on children's health.
- One issue currently of concern is children's high salt intake from food, including that eaten while at school. For the first time, recommended target salt intakes are available for children of different ages. The FSA has recently carried out a survey of lunchboxes, which identified high levels of salt. The FSA has therefore developed suggestions for childrens' lunchboxes, including some helpful tips and advice. This guidance is contained within this pack.
- This pack contains information from the FSA, suggestions for raising these issues with parents, a discussion checklist for Governing Bodies and a short consultation questionnaire. In addition, there is a practical information pack for parents and children.
- We hope that you will find this pack helpful and that it will inform and encourage discussion by your Governing Body.

To facilitate the consultation process we would appreciate it if you could:-

- Consider discussing this within your school's Governing Body.
- Please return to us your completed questionnaire on current guidance/policies.

Please return your completed questionnaire to the National Governors' Council, either in the pre paid envelope or by email or fax.

Thank you.

Food Standards Agency - Information for Governing Bodies

The diets of our young people affect their health and enjoyment over both the short and long term. One specific issue that we are asking Governing Bodies to consider is strategies to reduce salt in children's diets. This includes breakfast clubs, lunch menus, tuck shops, after school clubs and advice to parents about food brought onto the school premises.

Salt and Health

Increased blood pressure, or hypertension, is the most common condition that has been associated with high levels of salt intake. The limited data that is available for salt intake in childhood on cardiovascular health in later life suggests that long-term consumption of salt by children at current adult levels is potentially harmful in later life. The Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) an independent advisory group to Government recently reviewed the data on the link between salt and health.¹ SACN concluded that reducing the average population salt intake would have a significant benefit for the UK population.

The average intake of salt by adults in the UK is between 9 and 12g per day. Earlier Government recommendations were for this to reduce to 6 g per day.

It is a concern that children often consume salt in quantities greater than that of adults. The recent SACN report confirmed these recommendations for adults and for the first time identified target intakes for children. The following table identifies the SACN salt targets for children.

Age	Target average salt intake (g/d)
0 – 6 months	Less than 1
7 – 12 months	1
1 – 3 yrs	2
4 – 6 yrs	3
7 – 10 yrs	5
11 – 14 yrs	6

Children spend large periods of their day in a school environment. Food consumed at school during the day can contribute to these current levels of salt intake. For example, food is consumed as school meals, at breakfast clubs, food is bought from tuckshops, and is sometimes eaten as part of curriculum activities. Food is also brought onto the premises either from local shops or in lunch boxes.

As three quarters of our salt intake comes from processed foods, The Food Standards Agency recently wrote to all those responsible for public procurement of food. This letter, jointly signed by Ministers of Health, noted the SACN

¹ Salt and Health. Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (2003) The Stationery Office, London.

recommendations and encouraged those responsible for procurement of food to request reduced salt alternatives from their suppliers in order to assist in reducing the salt consumption of their diners.

Schools could also play their role in assisting children to acquire tastes for less salty options through the food that is provided or through encouraging a healthier options approach.

Lunchboxes

The start of a school day can be a busy and stressful time for any parent. Getting children ready for school and out of the house can be fraught with squabbles and general mayhem. A child's packed lunch is one morning chore that most parents want to get organised quickly. It can become an extra pressure as parents battle with what they want their child to eat and what their child wants to eat! To avoid the tantrums of picky eaters parents often give their children the odd snack bar or two, a packet of crisps or a fizzy drink to avoid those early morning arguments.

The Food Standards Agency has looked at over five hundred children's packed lunches across the UK to find out what parents are putting in their children's lunch boxes. The Agency has discovered that lunchbox food is high in saturated fats, sugars and in particular salt. Not only is there a high percentage of these foods in a child's daily lunch, but also, a low inclusion of healthier alternatives (such as a variety of fruit and vegetables) that would give children the vital nutrients that they need.

The survey revealed that up to 40% of the saturated fat content in the lunchboxes came from butter and other fat spreads, up to 25% from cheddar cheese, up to 19% from crisps and up to 14% from chocolate bars and biscuits.

Salt tended to come from foods such as white bread, ham, cheese and crisps.

The Food Standards Agency has developed practical suggestions and tips for making healthy, varied and balanced lunchboxes for school children. The aim was to help reduce the high levels of saturated fat, sugar and salt eaten by children, particularly through lunchboxes. It was also hoped that the suggestions would encourage parents to look at the foods that they and their children were eating and take small steps to reduce intakes in line with recommendations.

Menu suggestions

The Food Standards Agency developed a month's worth of menus that met the current recommendations for school lunches, or reduced the intakes from lunchboxes to values nearer the targets for children. The suggestions, attached, have been developed to provide a range of tastes, textures and colours to appeal to children without banning any particular foods; rather ensuring that over the period of a week there is a balance between the salt, fat and sugar contents of the lunchboxes.

Suggestions for addressing the issue of children's salt intake & diet with parents

Practice has shown that consultation with parents is important in the early stages of developing policy on nutrition. Parents can feel defensive at any perceived criticism of the food they provide for their children, especially if handled insensitively. Consultation is more effective if accompanied by good quality supporting information.

If your Governing Body is considering recommending developments in areas like breakfast clubs, "tuck shop" policy, or guidelines for food brought from home, it is advisable to provide information that explains the reasons underpinning policies as well as practical tips and guidance to help people make changes.

The pack of lunch box tips and menus could be made available to parents in the following contexts:

- As part of a consultation on guidelines re food brought from home.
- As part of an induction pack given to parents when their child enrolls at the school.
- To support any related aspects of the Home - School Agreement.
- To support curriculum initiatives.
- To support achievement of the National Healthy School Standard for your school.

National Governors' Council

**National Governors' Council and Food Standards Agency Consultation
The role of Governing Bodies in developing policies to promote healthy eating**

Questionnaire

We hope that you have found the information in this pack thought provoking, relevant and useful.

We would be very grateful if you could complete the following brief questionnaire. Thank you.

Do you already have guidelines or rules for food brought from home? How are these working? What are the barriers?	
Do you agree that schools should have policies to encourage healthy eating? What experiences do you have of work in this area? What might help you?	
Does your Governing Body play a role in either developing or monitoring healthy eating policies? What barriers have you faced, if any, and how did you overcome them?	
Have you used the attached discussion checklist with your Governing Body? How did you do this? What did you achieve?	
Are parents and/or children involved in the development or monitoring of healthy eating policies in your school? If so, how? What issues arise and how have you overcome any barriers?	
How might you make the pack of lunchbox tips and menus available to parents?	
The FSA is currently involved in a range of work, including monitoring school meals in secondary schools; Cook it (Food Citizenship) after-school hours learning clubs for secondary schools; healthier drinks vending in secondary schools; OFSTED Survey of primary school/early learning settings good practice; Dish It Up interactive CD ROM for 11-12 year olds; and Guide to setting up fruit tuck shops. Would you like more information on these areas of work?	
Are there any other areas that you would like the FSA to consider how they can help you as a school governor?	

School: _____

Named contact governor: _____

Email or postal address: _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. It will contribute to furthering the aim of improving the health, enjoyment and performance of young people in the short and long term.

Please return your completed questionnaire to the NGC in the pre paid reply envelope, by email or by fax before 01.03 .04

National Governors' Council, Lonsdale House, 52, Blucher Street, Birmingham B1 1QU.
Tel: 0121 616 5104 Fax: 0121 616 5105 Email: office@ngc.org.uk
www.ngc.org.uk

Appendix 2

Verbatim Comments from 100 completed questionnaires

Most respondents did not answer all the questions therefore responses to each question do not total 100. Verbatim comments have been reproduced below.

1. Do you already have guidelines or rules for food brought from home? How are these working? What are the barriers?

Yes: 59

No: 32

Seen an improvement and our school council are really getting behind the idea by thinking of ways to encourage it further. Fruity Friday works well for most. Pupils eat fruit no sweets or fizzy drinks allowed works well recently installed water machines in every class. Have reached Leeds Healthy School standard part 2. Working practice is getting better. Parents saying no to children. These work well. Fruit only tuck shop run by the school. Work very well. Not sure how this is working but feel that children needing most help, not financially deprived but lacking parental interest, get less support from home. Works better than before.

Barriers: Healthy Food Parents! E.g. cost, convenience, habit, my child won't eat that, etc Parents - lunchboxes - childrens demands. When the policy was bought in there was some parental opposition. Thought the school was interfering in parental matters. Also fears about making some children over conscious of body size leading to anorexic problems. Parental responsibility and peer pressure. Parents who say their child won't eat certain foods. Not entirely, conflict between school lunch and packed lunch. Children know what is and is not allowed. List of allergies. Childrens preferences, cost, family controls. Lack of refrigeration is a problem. Parents lack of understanding and co-operation. Some parents still send sweets. Parents and or children forget and need reminders every so often. Very hard to monitor. Very hard to police in secondary school.

2. Do you agree that schools should have policies to encourage healthy eating? What experiences do you have of work in this area? What might help you?

Yes: 84

No: 8

I think there should be a healthy eating policy. But school appears hypocritical given quality of school meals. Fruit scheme. Cookery club. We have used a range of websites to help us develop our policy. We do this through the curriculum as a continuation of what we do. We cannot police it and therefore should not have policies. Working towards Healthy Schools Award. Guidelines and guidance but not policy. PHSE lessons have been based on "Red Amber Green" foods. Discussion at annual parents meeting. Cannot stipulate what parents provide for their children to eat. The introduction of the policy created lots of discussion at the governors' AGM. Need constant policing and revisiting. Should be the ethos of the school. Change the sourcing of meals providers. My own children abandoned school lunches for packed lunches although I resisted this. I am not certain that schools should enforce this. Providing water stations has improved behaviour. Outside caterers are monitored by

the LEA. We believe that we should target where appropriate i.e. secondary school - student and primary school child - parent. Working towards Healthy Schools Award.

Experience:

None. The school encourages good quality physical activity and a healthy diet. Pupils are made aware of effects of poor diet. Healthy schools. General knowledge and media stories. Daily contact with children. Teaching children, healthy schools initiative, national fruit scheme. I believe that the health education unit offer training, however it is not sent to the governors. School recently awarded the healthy schools award. Food is part of the whole healthy environment. Working in an after school club. Part of teaching. Some experience from standards bodies and inspection routines and local healthy schools. Science and PSHE. Children learn about healthy eating but don't always apply what they have learnt.

What might help:

More information. National campaign would give more weight to an initiative. And what happened to the free fruit that was talked about for younger pupils? Stronger policies from the government and local government willing us to put stricter guidelines in place for school kitchens. Relevant sources of information, guidance on nutrition, examples of successful implementation. Good resources, videos, posters, strategies that have worked, good practice. Statistical information relating to our own pupils and a manageable policy for staff to implement. Logistics of fruit delivery. Local stores often more expensive. Alternative guide. Guidance / Support from on high. PSHE programme. Outside volunteers to run workshops. We want a grant to set up our own organic meals at our school or via another local school. Healthy schools award. We hope to gain healthy schools award. Health awareness day and National School Meals Week. Healthy eating weeks included within the curriculum. Up to date research. Funding through the healthy schools award. Liaison with other healthy schools. Share good practice. Health and education partnership file.

3. Does your Governing Body play a role in either developing or monitoring healthy eating policies? What barriers have you faced? How did you overcome them?

Yes: 38

No: 36

Headteacher sees this as a day to day school matter. We did over mid morning snacks. Some involvement through healthy schools scheme. Health and Safety policy touches briefly on this area. Plans to do the healthy schools mark. Currently focused on school meals. Only in consultation with catering company. Some encouragement with Healthy Schools. Fresh fruit scheme, school catering service, healthy schools award. By promoting with all the staff the healthy schools award. Governors worried about dictating to parents what they can feed their children. School do and we would support this. Not in general, but was discussed in inset day. PSHE governor. Fruit stall at lunchtime. Raised by teacher governors when they feel the need. Ability to monitor formally is not viable; informal observation by staff has to suffice. We shall put this into practice. Through national curriculum Science and PHSE lessons. Food committee has a governor on its school meals. Oversee but rely on headteacher and staff. Scholarest, the catering firm, are unmoveable. Overall it

forms part of the policies that the governing body review, mainly a monitoring role as we have our own kitchen and staff. The issue of large numbers of orders to process and issues of material supply to small kitchens and so a staffing issue.

Barriers:

Local government food providing agencies, refusal to retain cooks or move them on, poor food standards for the raw food given to kitchens. Some parents see it as interfering. Entrenched ideas, reluctance to change. No real barrier just need to hook up to Healthy schools initiative. Men? Willingness of parents, Parents budgets. Parents do not like to be told how to bring up their children. The monitoring of this is hard. Parents ignore. Time. Content of school meals.

We responded to some parents' concerns but went with the majority. Noticeable improvement in appetites at lunchtimes and in children's behaviour in class (fewer e numbers and less sugar). Changing views, cost is an issue - healthy ingredients cost more. School meals are still too stodgy. You can offer healthy food but you can't make them eat it! Lunches served from canteens are not always very balanced.

4. Have you used the attached discussion checklist with your Governing Body? How did you do this? What did you achieve?

Yes: 21

No: 58

Intend to. At catering committee. The school is amalgamating and this issue will be for the new school. Will do next term. Not yet but it will be on the agenda for the next G/B meeting. I will use in the near future by photocopying papers and leading discussion. Not yet. Not yet. Plan to do this at the next meeting, in sub-group. Part of our school improvement plan linked to healthy schools. We have used something similar. Personal distribution to all governors. Will fit it in at the next governors meeting. Curriculum committee. Consensus. No time yet. Next meeting. Discussed with head and referred to health and safety committee to review. Led to good discussion.

Through presenting facts and discussions. We shall discuss it at the next learning and partnership meeting.

A sense of powerlessness over the PFI.

5. Are parents and/or children involved in the development or monitoring of healthy eating polices in your school? If so, how? What issues arise and how have you overcome any barriers?

Yes: 42

No: 26

Children take some part in menu selection and preparation especially for events like birthdays.

SCHOOL COUNCIL. By meeting and sharing ideas with the Headteacher, and then their classes. Through governing body and AGM. When we were discussing mid-morning snacks guidelines, we sent out parent questionnaires to seek views and the majority were in favour of restrictions. Children are involved through circle time, PSHE and student council. Child/parent action group members and healthy schools scheme. Parents co-operate with policies and are pleased with them overall. Encourage children. The children seem to want more exotic fruits and vegetables. We did have a cook who managed to produce healthy snacks to sell instead of crisps at breaktime, but since she left this has not been carried on. Unhealthy packed lunches, litter, too much processed food in packed lunches. Parents are invited to eat with children on some days. Focus group of parents. Parent/school council questionnaires. Most changes are happening like this. Children very aware of all the issues. Yr 2 run a fruit shop selling fresh and dried fruit for 10-15p to other children in the school. Wanted healthier meals and more varied menus. Shared development of policies and questionnaires to parents.

Through presenting facts and discussions. Occasionally a pupil does not like fruit. We allow them to bring a plain digestive biscuit. Quality of school meals. Unhealthy packed lunch boxes. Science curriculum. School council is very effective. None. Should we be acting as the nanny state? Would it be better to allow freedom of choice through education. Central menus are not as nutritious as they should be. Wants are different from needs and there is a lack of parental involvement and support. Refrigeration and storage, stored on trolleys in coolest places. PFI - we need to address this issue. Choice - healthy options alongside normal confectionery etc. Some children still bring unhealthy food to school. Various and ongoing. Cost. Reporting back to each class/discussion/policy adhered to. Issues regarding the content of some lunchboxes. Parents rushing to work do not have time to think about good food in lunchboxes. There is a big issue about food stored in lunch boxes which either sit in the sun or next to hot pipes all day and goes off. Use of vending machines and what to sell in them. Cost issues and what children will eat. We have found the direct student route as the most successful.

6. How might you make the pack of lunchbox tips and menus available to parents?

Send these home as part of a newsletter or as a individual item. Through the newsletter and possibly placing letters in lunchboxes. Via children and "pester power". Through the school newsletter. With amendments to suit the school context. School website and e-newsletter and distributed with child's report. Will develop this with pupils and produce own pack with more tips for parents. Circulate bits - too long. Parents evening. Through the weekly letter, newsletters and information sheets and parent meetings. Use the copies you have provided. Make available in the parents room. Workshops/PTA recipe book/weekly newsletter. Share with parents via newsletter. Annual parents meeting. School newsletter. Would probably not bother nearly all children love school dinners. Send out as a flyer to parents. To be discussed. We are producing a leaflet to go into our prospectus for new parents. I would not use them as the presentation and content are not suitable - the sort of parents who would read this are already converted, the unconverted would bin it. Send home in school newsletter. By newsletter. Give to all new intake parents. Newsletters and advice from food standards agency. Healthy project, school

newsletters, this is already done through home/school agreements. Newsletter. Induction pack. Via school websites and food tech lessons. Get children to understand why they need to eat a balanced selection of foods. Avoidance of political correctness i.e. facing issues of consequences of overweight head on. Distribute via the register and mention in newsletter. Produce a locally adapted version of the booklet. Need to discuss with head and teachers but probably through the prospectus and whole school consultation. More copies needed to be able to send home. Would be happy to distribute if extra copies provided at no extra cost. Include copies in induction pack. Go out with the weekly news sheets. As the school is residential we probably won't. Parents information evening. Menus are available in school. Healthy schools week including practical sessions with parents. Put information on school web site. Has this booklet been trialled with any parents and if so what did they think of it? There are no oranges in the menus only a satsuma. Why have fish in brine when you could have it in spring water? I would alter the format as I don't like repetition and I feel it should have 20 different menus to give a wider range of ideas. I was surprised at the amount of salt in the menus especially as they are designed for 9-12 years. We would approach carefully as we already have the trust of our students and would not wish to undermine that.

7. The FSA is currently involved in a range of work, including monitoring school meals in secondary schools; OFSTED survey of primary school/early learning settings good practice; Dish it up interactive CD ROM for 11-12 year olds; and Guide to setting up fruit tuck shops. Would you like more information on these areas of work?

Yes: 47

No: 12

The guide to setting up a fruit tuck shop would be very useful. More info for primary schools would be useful if relevant to primary. Guide on lunch box tips. Any further information for nursery to Yr2 would be helpful as would the guide to setting up a fruit shop. Already have Dish it up but would like the OFSTED survey and the setting up fruit tuck shop guidance. We do not propose to run a tuck shop. Would like information to give to catering manager. Monitoring school meals in infant schools and setting up fruit tuck shops.

8. Are there any other areas that you would like the FSA to consider how they can help you as a School Governor?

Yes: 13

No: 13

ALL Maybe to make clear a governing body's role in this, and so encourage headteachers to make better use of their governors There is so much information available - just directing me towards relevant information to help develop a healthy eating policy would be most helpful. I would be interested to know how to get a better deal/menu from an offsite kitchen delivering school meals. Support information and guidance. Cost implications of providing high quality, healthy meals. Good sample school dinner menus as well as the packed lunch ones please. Organic food

supply chain. Does there need to be different lunch box suggestions for different ethnic groups? The two schools I serve on are predominantly Muslim and I'm not sure if the food suggested in your lunch boxes is what our children eat. This is just a thought. Setting standards and quality benchmarks or quality awards for school meals and school meal providers. Not that I can think of. More information, posters for display. Help in persuading parents. Get the government to legislate to remove harmful additives in all foods. Managing PFI Catering. Guidelines for school meals and supporting families. Details of the national healthy schools award. We would be happy to receive any leaflets or information. The best way to approach the subject with parents. National Care standards and residential schools and meals. Information on balanced school meals. Advice on acceptable national standards. Educational posters aimed at children. I noticed that food packaging does not always list sodium/salt. Curriculum areas to do with food and health combined with exercise and good practice from schools that have been successful with healthy heart schemes - like projects in Wales in the past. Materials to promote red/amber/green foods - catering agencies to be involved with more consultation with parents staff and pupils on what is good and what children enjoy. Choices of set meals of the day and food taster days and more themed food e.g. promote British food fortnight support British producers and buy British. Bring the community in e.g. elderly to eat with school children to share good habits and experiences. Eating in family type arrangements rather than cafeteria system. Monitors/responsibility/enjoyment without rush.

Appendix 3

Suffolk County Council Report to Governing Bodies



Report of the Director of Education to School Governing Bodies

HEALTHY EATING

This Report prompts governing bodies to address some of the concerns about the diets of young people in schools, and asks governing bodies to do so in the light of material recently circulated to schools from the National Governors Council/Food Standards Agency.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 There has been considerable publicity in the past months expressing serious concerns that the diets of young people will have both short-term and long-term implications for the pupils'/students' health.
- 1.2 The National Governors Council and the Food Standards Agency have together produced a set of materials which aims to support governing bodies in this area of their work. Two copies of the materials have been sent to each school.
- 1.3 In addition, Suffolk County Catering has produced an information sheet about its services and the role it plays to support schools.

2 THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 'A Guide to the Law for School Governors' explains the responsibilities of governing bodies for school meals in the chapter on 'Health, Safety and Welfare' (Chapter 15).
- 2.2 This emphasises the need for governing bodies to ensure that the minimum requirements set out in the Education Nutritional Standards for School Lunches Regulations 2000 are carried out. Those which contract their meals to Suffolk County Catering can be assured that this is so.

3 THE NGC/FSA MATERIAL

- 3.1 This material asks governing bodies to look more broadly at the issue of what young people consume in school. In addition to school meals, it refers to the contents of packed lunches, vending machines, tuck shops and Breakfast and After School clubs.
- 3.2 It recognises that improved diets must be a joint effort between parents and school.
- 3.3 It is also a Consultation Document, and includes a questionnaire.

4 ACTION TO BE TAKEN

- 4.1 Governing Bodies are recommended, at minimum, to respond to the questionnaire. This could be delegated to Head and Chair or Vice-Chair. Suffolk Governors Forum is keen for governing bodies to do this so that a better picture of governing body involvement in promoting Healthy Eating can be acquired. Suffolk children could benefit from the results.

- 4.2 Governing Bodies have probably examined these issues recently when school meals budgets were delegated. Those which feel that it is time for a Review could refer the issue to a Committee with Health and Safety responsibilities, or set up a Working Party.

David Thornton
Acting Director of Learning