

SCHOOL MEALS SERVICE

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF MILK, MEALS AND RELATED FACILITIES

**Under the Provisions of Articles 58 and 59 of the Education & Libraries
(Northern Ireland) Order 1986, as amended.**

EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARDS

ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

APRIL 2008

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1. INTERPRETATION

1.1 In these arrangements -

“board” means an education and library board;

“the Order” means the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986, as amended;

“school day” means a day on which a school is open for instruction excluding Saturday and Sunday.

2. PROVISION OF MILK

Mandatory Provision

2.1 A board shall provide one-third of a pint (0.18 litre) of milk on every school day to:

a. every pupil who wishes such provision and who attends a grant-aided nursery or primary school or part of a secondary school which is used for providing primary education, but not those who attend:

- a preparatory department of a voluntary grammar school; or
- a grant-maintained integrated nursery or primary school,

i. in respect of whom a board holds a valid certificate signed by a medical officer of the appropriate Health and Social Services Board stating that it is necessary in the interests of the health of that pupil that he/she be provided with milk; or

ii. where a dinner is not available for that pupil;

b. every pupil who attends a special school;

c. every pupil satisfying the conditions in a.i. who attends:

- a preparatory department of a voluntary grammar school; or
- a grant-maintained integrated nursery or primary school,

where the school requests a board to make such provision.

Discretionary Provision

2.2 A board may provide milk to any pupil for whom it is not under a duty to provide milk under paragraph 2.1 and who attends any school, including a voluntary grammar school, a grant-maintained integrated school or an independent school where such schools request a board to make such provision.

Charges

2.3 Milk supplied to pupils under the provisions of paragraph 2.1 shall be supplied to them free of charge.

2.4 Where a board provides milk under the provisions of paragraph 2.2 it shall not make any financial contribution towards the cost and the charge must therefore cover all purchasing, administrative and distribution expenses.

Milk Standards

2.5 All milk supplied to pupils shall conform with the standards laid down by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

2.6 If liquid milk which satisfies the requirements of paragraph 2.5 is not available, the board may, as a temporary measure, provide a suitable substitute.

3. NUTRITIONAL STANDARDS FOR ALL SCHOOL MEALS

Boards should comply with the Department's nutritional standards for school lunches as outlined in the attached Annex.

4. PROVISION OF SCHOOL DINNERS TO NURSERY, PRIMARY AND SPECIAL SCHOOL PUPILS

Mandatory Provision

4.1 A board shall provide school dinners on every school day for day pupils who wish such provision and who attend a grant-aided nursery, primary or special school, but not those attending:

- a preparatory department of a voluntary grammar school; or
- a grant-maintained integrated nursery or primary school.

Organised parties of pupils, who are on educational visits during term-time, may be regarded as attending a school which is open for instruction.

4.2 A school dinner is defined as a meal which is adequate in quantity and quality so as to be suitable as the main meal of the day for a pupil. Boards should comply with the Department's standards as outlined at paragraph 3.

Discretionary Provision

4.3 A board may provide dinners to:

- i. pupils described in paragraph 4.1 on days other than school days; or
- ii. boarding pupils attending schools described in paragraph 4.1.

Charges

4.4 The charge for a dinner shall be sufficient to recover the full cost of production.

Remission of Charges

4.5 The charge shall be remitted in full where a pupil is entitled to free school meals (see paragraph 6).

5. PROVISION OF MEALS AND REFRESHMENTS TO SECONDARY AGE PUPILS

Mandatory Provision

5.1 A board shall have available on every school day items of food adequate in quantity and quality which constitute a nutritionally balanced meal suitable as the main meal of the day for day pupils who are entitled to a free meal and who attend grant-aided secondary schools, but not voluntary grammar and grant-maintained integrated secondary schools. Boards should comply with the Department's standards as outlined at paragraph 3. Organised parties of pupils, who are on educational visits during term-time may be regarded as attending a school which is open for instruction.

5.2 Where a board operates a cafeteria system in a secondary school the maximum monetary value of a free meal shall be determined by the board.

Discretionary Provision

5.3 A board may provide meals or other refreshment to:

- i. pupils described in paragraph 5.1. on days other than school days; or
- ii. day pupils (on every school day or other days) who are not entitled to free meals and who attend grant-aided secondary schools other than voluntary grammar and grant-maintained integrated secondary schools.

Charges

5.4 The charge for any meal or refreshment provided described in paragraph 5.3 shall be determined by the board and shall be sufficient to recover the full cost of production.

Remission of Charges

5.5 The charge shall be remitted in full where a pupil is entitled to free school meals (see paragraph 6).

6. ENTITLEMENT TO FREE SCHOOL MEALS

A pupil shall be entitled to free school meals where:

- i. he/she or the parent is in receipt of Income Support or Income based Jobseeker's Allowance; or
- ii. the parent receives the Child Tax Credit; and is ineligible for the Working Tax Credit because he/she works less than 16 hours per week; and has an annual taxable income not exceeding an amount as determined by the Department; or

- iii. the parent receives the Guarantee element of State Pension Credit; or
- iv. he/she has a statement of special educational needs and is designated to require a special diet; or
- v. he/she is a boarder at a special school; or
- vi. he/she is the child of an asylum seeker supported by the Home Office National Asylum Support Service (NASS).*

*In the interim period, until such time as the result of the application for NASS support is known, boards should arrange to provide free school meals to children of asylum seekers enrolled in schools.

7. EXCEPTIONS TO MANDATORY DUTY

A board shall not be under a duty as stipulated in paragraphs 4.1. and 5.1. to provide dinners/meals in schools where the average daily number of pupils wishing to avail themselves of this provision is such that a board considers the cost of producing or transporting the dinners/meals cannot be justified.

8. PROVISION OF FOOD TO ADULTS AND OTHER BODIES

Discretionary Provision

- 8.1 A board may provide meals or other refreshment to:
- i. persons, other than pupils, having business at grant-aided schools other than voluntary grammar or grant-maintained integrated schools;
 - ii. a voluntary grammar or grant-maintained integrated school where the school requests the board to make such provision; or
 - iii. the meals-on-wheels service or any other bodies/establishments.

Charges

8.2 The charge for meals or refreshment provided shall be sufficient to recover at least the full cost of provision, except meals for kitchen and supervisory staff who, under their terms and conditions of service, are entitled to receive a meal free of charge.

9. PROVISION OF FACILITIES FOR PUPILS BRINGING FOOD TO SCHOOL

Mandatory Provision

9.1 A board shall provide facilities at all grant-aided schools in its area, other than voluntary grammar and grant-maintained integrated schools, for the consumption of any food brought to the school by day pupils.

Description of Facilities

9.2 The facilities should include accommodation, furniture and supervision to enable pupils to eat in reasonable conditions. Provision should also be made for the cleaning of the accommodation to be used. However, the requirement to provide facilities does not extend to providing light equipment, such as knives, forks, plates, beakers, etc nor does it extend to providing facilities for cooking or heating food. A board should make optimum use of existing accommodation and furniture to facilitate these pupils. Where there is spare accommodation in the school meals dining area this should be the first choice for the placement of pupils bringing packed lunches. Where there is no such spare capacity, or where it is inadequate to meet the needs of all pupils bringing lunches, then other existing appropriate accommodation, such as an assembly hall or classrooms, should be used. Consideration should also be given to introducing staggered lunch breaks where feasible. The provision of purpose-built accommodation for such purposes should be a last resort and would require prior approval from the Department.

Consultation with Trustees and Managers of Grant-Aided Voluntary Schools other than Voluntary Grammar Schools and Grant-Maintained Integrated Schools

9.3 Having regard to Article 59(5) of the Order, a board should obtain the consent of the Trustees and Managers of a grant-aided voluntary school, other than a voluntary grammar or a grant-maintained integrated school, to the use, free of charge, of such buildings and equipment to accommodate pupils bringing meals or other refreshment to the school who cannot be accommodated in the school meals dining area. Where it is necessary for such buildings to be used, a board should make adequate arrangements for the supervision of the pupils while they are consuming their food and should also make arrangements with the Managers of the school for the buildings in use to be cleaned.

10. PREMISES NOT UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF A BOARD

Responsibility of a board

10.1 A board is required, under the terms of Article 59(4) of the Order, to provide or secure the provision of premises etc in connection with the operation of the school meals service. To comply with this duty in the case of nursery, primary and secondary schools (other than grant-maintained integrated schools) or special schools not under its management a board, having regard to Article 59(5) of the Order, should consult the Trustees and Managers of such schools about the use, alteration or addition to the school premises to render them suitable for the purposes of the school meals service. Where agreement is reached to such use, alteration or addition and this deprives the Managers of a school of the use wholly or partly of such premises for essential school purposes a board, subject to the approval of the Department, shall make good such deprivation.

Expense

10.2 Where such alterations, erection of buildings or any other work are required solely for the provision of facilities for the school meals service, the expense thereof shall be borne wholly by a board.

Lease

10.3 A board, before undertaking such alterations, erection of buildings or any other work, shall, subject to the approval of the Department, enter into a contract or agreement either by way of lease or otherwise with the Trustees of the school.

11. REFERRAL TO DEPARTMENT

Any doubt or dispute as to the meaning or the effect of these Arrangements shall be referred to the Department whose decision thereon shall be final.



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ANNEX

NEW NUTRITIONAL STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL LUNCHES AND OTHER FOOD IN SCHOOLS

February 2008

NUTRITIONAL STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL LUNCHES

Food group	Standards
<p>Group 1: Bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods eg noodles and cereals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every school lunch must contain a portion or portions of food from this group. • Rice and pasta must be offered at least once a week. In a single choice menu, rice or pasta must be served at least once a week. • Bread should be available on a daily basis in all schools. • Also see additional requirements on fried foods – see Group 5a.
<p>Notes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starchy foods are usually inexpensive and provide energy, fibre, vitamins and minerals. • Offering rice and pasta provides variety and encourages children to try foods they might not get the chance to try at home. • Bread is a healthy source of carbohydrates. • Nearly all types of bread are acceptable: white, brown, wholemeal, wheaten, granary, high-fibre white bread and rolls, homemade bread, bagels, pitta bread, chapattis made without fat. • Bread should be provided without spread, which should be freely available. • Bread is additional to, and not a replacement for, the main meal accompaniment and should be positioned at the end of the servery. 	

Food group	Standards
<p data-bbox="289 258 456 359">Group 2: Fruit and vegetables.</p> <p data-bbox="289 396 480 638">This group includes fresh, frozen, canned and dried varieties and fruit juices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="521 258 1268 359">• Not less than two portions of fruit and vegetables should be available per day per child throughout the lunch service. <li data-bbox="521 396 1263 497">• Of this, at least one portion should be vegetables or salad and at least one portion should be fruit (fresh, tinned in juice, fruit salad, fruit juice or dried fruit). <li data-bbox="521 535 1284 602">• Pies, crumbles and other composite fruit dishes must contain at least one portion of fruit per serving. <li data-bbox="521 640 1263 779">• Pies, casseroles, stews and other composite main course dishes must contain a minimum of half a portion of vegetables per serving, in addition to a separate serving of vegetables or salad. <li data-bbox="521 816 1295 955">• Baked beans must not be served as a vegetable more than once a week in a primary school. Baked beans must not be the only vegetable option on any day in a post-primary school. <li data-bbox="521 993 1227 1060">• If beans or pulses form the protein part of a main course, another vegetable must be available.
<p data-bbox="289 1102 375 1129">Notes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="289 1167 1289 1268">• Fruit and vegetables provide vitamins, minerals and fibre. It is recommended that we eat five or more portions of fruit and vegetables a day. Information about portion sizes is included in the following table. <li data-bbox="289 1306 1182 1341">• Spaghetti tinned in tomato sauce does not count as a vegetable. <li data-bbox="289 1379 1166 1415">• Unlike most vegetables, baked beans do not contain vitamin C. <li data-bbox="289 1453 1247 1520">• Serving a separate, non-pulse vegetable with pulse-based vegetarian options provides variety for vegetarians. 	

What is a portion?

For adults, a portion of fruit or vegetables is 80g, but there are no recommendations for children. Practically we suggest a good guide would be to serve at least half an adult portion, (ie 40g) to nursery pupils, moving towards an adult portion (ie 80g) for primary/post-primary pupils. The table below gives examples of how these portions translate into kitchen servings.

	Nursery	Primary/Post-Primary
	One portion	One portion
Cooked vegetables	1-2 tablespoons (tbsp)	2-3 tablespoons (tbsp)
Salad vegetables	½ dessert bowl	1 dessert bowl
Fresh fruit	½ -1 fruit	1 fruit
Fruit salad, fruit tinned in juice	1-2 tablespoons (tbsp)	2-3 tablespoons (tbsp)
Fruit juice	150ml	150ml
Dried fruit	½ -1 tablespoon (tbsp)	1 tablespoon (tbsp)

Food Group	Standards
<p>Group 3: Milk and dairy foods.</p> <p>This group includes milk, cheese, yogurt and milk puddings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every school lunch must contain a portion or portions of food from this group. • In addition, drinking milk must be available as an option every day. • Cheese must not be served as the only vegetarian option more than twice a week. • Cheese may be used as a topping more frequently.
<p>Notes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk and milk products are excellent sources of several nutrients including calcium, which is important for good bone development, protein and vitamins. • Milk, plain or flavoured, is a good drink option. Semi-skimmed milk has the same amount of calcium as whole milk. Skimmed milk is not appropriate for children under five years. • Alternatives to cheese provide variety for vegetarians. Recommended alternatives include beans, pulses and lentils. • Where a portion of cheese is served as the main protein item, it also counts as a portion of food from Group 4. 	

Food Group	Standards
<p>Group 4: Meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein.</p> <p>This group includes beef, pork, lamb, chicken, fish, eggs, pulses, eg peas, beans, lentils.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every school lunch must contain a portion or portions of food from this group. • Meals containing red meat must be served: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a minimum of twice a week and a maximum of three times a week in nursery and primary schools; and ○ a minimum of three times a week and a maximum of four times a week in post-primary schools. • Fish should be available at least once a week in primary schools and at least twice a week in post-primary schools. • Oily fish should be available at least once every four weeks. • Meat or chicken products (such as burgers, sausages, sausage rolls, chicken nuggets etc) may be served a maximum of once a week in primary schools. In post-primary schools there should be at least three days on which these products are not available and on the days they are available sufficient healthy options should also be provided to allow a choice for pupils. This does not apply to single choice menus.
<p>Notes</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On days when red meat is being served at lunch, there can be more than one choice as pupils will only choose one option. • Meat, fish and alternatives such as eggs, beans and pulses are a major source of protein. • Red meat is a good source of iron. • Red meat includes beef, pork and lamb and meals made from them. • Meat and chicken products are bought-in manufactured products that have been processed in some way and are generally ready for cooking/ reheating. • Whole muscle meat or chicken, which is dipped in egg, coated in home-made crumb and dry baked will not count as a 'processed' product. • Sausages are not classed as red meat. Burgers are not classed as red meat unless they are home-made with at least 95% lean meat. Composite 	

dishes made from mince which contain less than 95% lean meat are classed as a meat product.

- Limit the fat content of lunches by not offering too many foods from this group which have added fat, eg pastry toppings on pies or battered coating on fish.
- Offering fish provides variety and offers foods that children might not otherwise get a chance to try. This would include sandwich and baguette fillings such as tuna.
- Oily fish contains omega 3 fatty acids which help maintain a healthy heart.
- Tuna only counts as an oily fish when it is fresh or frozen because the omega 3 fatty acids are removed during the canning process. However, canned tuna can be counted as one of the non-oily portions of fish.
- On the weeks when oily fish is provided this meets the standard for fish for that week.
- Meat products must:
 - Meet the legal minimum meat content levels set out in the Meat Products Regulations (NI) 2004 as amended or updated from time to time. Products not specifically covered by these legal minimal must meet the same minimum meat content levels prescribed for burgers;
 - Not be “economy burgers” as described in the Meat Products Regulations (NI) 2004; and
 - Contain none of the prohibited list of offal.

Food group	Standards
<p>Group 5a: Fried and other high fat foods.</p> <p>This group includes cooking fats and oils, oily salad dressings, mayonnaise, salad cream, crisps, cream, pastry.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep-fried foods or other high fat products, such as chips, roast potatoes, other fried potatoes or garlic bread, must not be offered, in total, more than twice a week. • Menu choices containing pastry, eg quiche, apple pie, vol-au-vent, must not be offered more than one day a week. • There should be at least 2 days each week without any meat or chicken products (see Group 4), fried foods, foods cooked in batter, or foods containing pastry, for example fish in batter, sausages, vol-au-vents, quiche, apple pie, fruit fritters etc. • When a starchy food that is cooked in fat or oil is served, a non-fried alternative must be available. • Lower fat desserts must be available on days when chips and high fat foods are offered. • The only savoury snacks available should be nuts and seeds with no added salt or sugar. Savoury crackers or breadsticks can only be served with fruit or vegetables or a dairy food as part of the school lunch.
<p>Notes</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Deep-fried or other high fat foods’ includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ any food that is deep-fried, either in the kitchen or in the manufacturing process, even flash fried foods or foods brushed with oil, eg roast potatoes, chips, oven chips, potato waffles, potato shapes; ○ pre-prepared coated, battered and breaded products, eg chicken nuggets, fried fish, fish fingers, battered onion rings and doughnuts. • On days when deep-fried foods or other high fat foods are being served at lunch there can be more than one choice as pupils will only choose one option. • Limiting fried and other high fat options helps to limit the overall fat content of lunches. • Schools should work towards limiting all fried or high fat foods to twice a week. • Offering non-fried options when fried or high fat options are on the menu 	

helps to ensure that a variety of other starchy foods are provided.

- Offering lower fat desserts on days that fried or high fat foods are on offer limits the fat content of lunches. Examples of lower fat desserts include:
 - fresh, stewed or tinned fruit (in fruit juice) or fruit salad, either on its own or served with low fat yogurt or fromage frais;
 - baked apple with custard;
 - low fat yogurt or fromage frais;
 - milk puddings, eg custard, semolina, rice pudding, tapioca – served with fruit;
 - fruit crumble with custard;
 - fruit sponge (made with egg/fatless sponge) with custard;
 - fruit crisp (breadcrumb topping) with custard;
 - fruit 'fool' made with custard/fromage frais/yogurt;
 - jelly and fruit;
 - ice cream and fruit;
 - jelly, ice cream and fruit;
 - instant dessert served with fruit;
 - bread and butter pudding with custard;
 - fruit flan (egg/fatless sponge) with fresh or tinned fruit and fromage frais;
 - wholemeal/flakemeal biscuit, fruit and milk to drink;
 - muffin and orange juice (except choc-chip muffins).

NB It is essential that the dessert combinations are as shown here for them to be considered as lower fat options, as it is the OVERALL fat content of the menu item that was used to determine their suitability.

- Be aware of nut allergies. It will be for individual schools to decide on whether or not to provide nuts.

Food group	Standards
<p>Group 5b: Confectionery and Other Sweet Foods:</p> <p>Sugar, Sweet pastry, Chocolate, Sweets, Sweetened Soft Drinks, Puddings, Cakes, Biscuits, Jam, Jelly, Ice-cream.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confectionery, chocolate and chocolate-coated products should not be available throughout the lunchtime. • Cakes and biscuits can only be provided at lunchtime and as part of a meal. • Cakes, biscuits and puddings made with cocoa powder should only be available a maximum of 2 days per week.
<p>Notes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confectionery includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chocolate and chocolate products, for example: bars of milk, plain or white chocolate; chocolate flakes, buttons, or chocolate-filled eggs. ○ Chocolate-coated bars. ○ Biscuits containing or coated in chocolate (including those with a chocolate drizzle, partly and fully-coated biscuits such as chocolate digestives, chocolate-covered caramel wafers, chocolate fingers, choc chip cookies). ○ Sweets, for example: boiled, chewy, gum, liquorice, mint and other sweets, also sherbet, fudge, marshmallows, toffee and chewing-gum; this includes sugar-free sweets and chewing-gum. ○ Cereal chewy bars, cereal crunchy bars, cereal cake bars, processed fruit bars. ○ Fresh or dried fruit that has been sugared or covered with a yoghurt or chocolate coating. ○ Choc ices and other chocolate coated ice-cream. <p>NB This does not include cocoa powder used in cakes, puddings, biscuits or low calorie drinking chocolate or combination drinks made with yoghurt or dairy equivalents.</p>	

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Drinks

The only drinks available should be:

- plain water (still or sparkling)
- milk
- pure fruit juices
- yoghurt or milk drinks (with less than 5% added sugar)
- drinks made from combinations of the above (eg smoothies)
- low calorie hot chocolate } these drinks are
- tea } not suitable for
- coffee } the nursery sector

Combination drinks must contain at least 50% of the milk, yoghurt or fruit juice as appropriate.

Low calorie hot chocolate is defined as 20 calories per 100 millilitres.

Drinking water, ie tap water, must be provided free every day.

Salt and Condiments

Table salt should not be available within nursery or primary schools. It should not be on view in the post-primary school dining room but may be made available on request from the service counter.

Condiments (tomato ketchup, brown sauce, salad cream, relishes etc) should only be provided from the service counter and should be controlled by the kitchen staff.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS

Meals provided for pupils in special schools should follow the standards listed for primary schools. However, portion sizes should reflect the pupil's age.

It should also be noted that pupils in special schools often require special diets, and that some, eg those suffering from autism, often have particular food aversions, or will only eat particular foods. Appropriate adjustments should therefore be made to the meals service. A diet sheet, prepared by a Registered Dietitian, should be available for the children concerned.

STANDARDS FOR FOOD OTHER THAN LUNCH IN SCHOOLS

The following standards apply to food sold or served in schools through vending machines, tuck shops, breakfast clubs, after school clubs and at break times and should be read in combination with the food-based lunch standards:

- (i) no confectionery should be sold in schools;
- (ii) no savoury snacks other than nuts* and seeds (without added salt or sugar) should be sold in schools;
- (iii) a variety of fruit and vegetables should be available in all school food outlets. This could include fresh, dried[^], frozen, tinned and juiced products;
- (iv) children and young people must have easy access at all times to free, fresh, preferably chilled, water in schools so that children do not have to depend on going to the lavatory to get water;
- (v) the only other drinks available should be bottled water (still or sparkling), milk, pure fruit juices, yoghurt and milk drinks (with less than 5% added sugar) or drinks made from combinations of these, eg smoothies, low calorie hot chocolate, tea and coffee. Combination drinks must contain at least 50% of the milk, yoghurt or fruit juice as appropriate. Low calorie hot chocolate is defined as 20 calories per 100 millilitres.

* Be aware of nut allergies. It will be for individual schools to decide on whether or not to provide nuts.

[^] Dried fruit has a higher concentration of sugars. Therefore, in terms of dental health, it is not regarded as a suitable snack between meals. It is best taken as part of a meal.