



# Secondary Schools' Guide For Providing Healthy Food Choices

Children's health and development are affected by the foods they eat. Schools play an important role in helping children access healthy foods across the school day. Provision of healthier foods in schools can improve attendance, behaviour, concentration, academic performance and wellbeing.

The Growing Up In North Yorkshire (GUNY) 2022 Survey found secondary-aged pupils reported that:

**20%** had nothing to eat or drink before lessons



**33%** had at least 2 sugary drinks the day before



Only **19%** had at least 5 portions of fruit and veg the day before



The school food standards (School food standards: resources for schools - [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)) are designed to help children develop healthy eating habits and ensure that they have the energy and nutrition needed to get the most from their school day. This guide is to support schools to make changes that will help children to make healthier food choices and enjoy mealtimes.

## Top Tips

Consult the **school council** for ideas or on forthcoming changes - what would the students like to see on the menu? Do a walk through of the **dining environment** to identify what the experience is like and potential changes that can be made (think about flow and seating arrangements)

Look at the **presentation of food** - we eat with our eyes. Is it attractively presented? Does it look appetising? What and how is food presented on the plate? (Can you hold taster sessions for students to try out new food?)



Look at the quantity of **single use plastic** being used in the dining area - can this be reduced, replaced?



In line with the school food standards, look at **portion sizes** being served - are these within the parameters set? (Are sweet treats like cakes the right size and weight?)

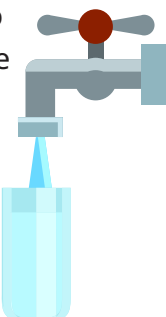


Revisit the **school food standards** - is the menu compliant over the whole school day not just lunchtimes? e.g. how often are processed/red meats served? what is served at break times?

Explore offering **wholemeal/wholegrain** or **50/50 versions** of bread/rice/pasta.

Look at ways to increase **fruit** and **vegetables** in foods eg in sandwiches, sauces, puddings. Introduce changes gradually and allow time for this.

Is **drinking water** freely available to students around the school building? Are students encouraged to bring in a clean reusable water bottle each day? Can extra water coolers be provided around school?



# Case Study - Improving the food and drink offer at Selby High School

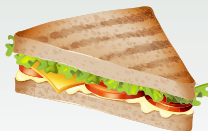
North Yorkshire's Healthier Choices Team (Trading Standards) received a request from the School Leadership Team for help with making school food healthier and improving the overall dining experience.

- One of the areas we focused on was to improve the contents of the popular 'Grab and Go' options available from the canteen, which included increasing the fruit and vegetable content of these.
- The process took over a year, providing a designated contact from the healthier choices scheme who offered one to one support. Working with staff and pupils at the school we were able to identify areas to improve.
- The following are examples of outcomes that were achieved at Selby High School:

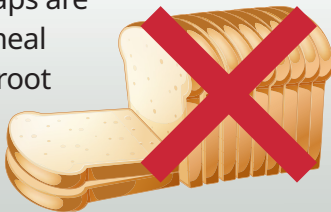
## Food - small changes that support healthier choices



**75%** of wraps and sandwiches now include salad/vegetables



All bread is **50/50** or **wholemeal** and wraps are wholemeal or beetroot



Adding **hidden veg** into sauces



Sweet treat portions sizes **decreased**



## Environmental - adopting changes that benefit the environment



**Reduction** in the use of **single use plastic** within the canteen

**Eliminated single use plastic bottles** across the school. This one change has **eliminated approx. 114,000 bottles** going to landfill each year from the school.



**Increase** in water re-filling stations around school



## Dining experience - supporting pupils to access food



**Increasing** areas to eat, installation of canopies, using outdoor space

**Reduce waiting/queues** by creating an extra lunch sitting

**Increasing serving points** for accessing food. Install a hatch (food pod) for pupils eating outside.



## Useful Links



Healthy Schools  
North Yorkshire

What works well

PHE School Zone

Contact Healthier choices for advice and support on introducing changes to your school at [ts.healthierchoices@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:ts.healthierchoices@northyorks.gov.uk)

