



Healthy Eating in Schools: A guide to implementing the Nutritional Requirements for Food and Drink in Schools (Scotland) Regulations 2020

To: All Chief Executives, Main Contacts and APSE Contacts in Scotland. For information only: England, Northern Ireland and Wales

Key Issues:

Healthy Eating in Schools: A guide to implementing the Nutritional Requirements for Food and Drink in Schools (Scotland) Regulations 2020 was published on 10 February 2021.

The full guide can be viewed [here](#).

The Nutritional Requirements for Food and Drink in Schools (Scotland) Regulations 2020 can be viewed [here](#).

1.0 Background to the 2020 Regulations

The current Nutritional Requirements for Food and Drink in Schools (Scotland) Regulations 2008 have been in place in primary schools since 2008 and secondary schools since 2009. With the introduction of [Hungry for Success](#) in 2003 and then the Regulations, on food and drink within schools we have already seen a large number of positive changes. With the new Nutritional Requirements, which will come into effect on 8 April 2021, focused on using the latest scientific evidence and dietary advice to make school meals even healthier.

This includes things such as:

- Increasing access to fruit and vegetables
- Reducing sugar
- Aligning the provision of red and red processed meat with the Scottish Dietary Goals
- Changing the way food and drink is offered in secondary schools.

2.0 Key Changes since the 2008 Regulations

- **Different criteria for some primary and secondary standards** - The 2020 regulations allow some of the food and drink standards to have different criteria for primary and secondary settings
- **Fibre** - all bread, bread rolls and breakfast cereals now need to meet a new minimum requirement of 3g AOAC fibre per 100g
- **Fruit and vegetables** - provision will now focus on full portions of fruit and vegetables rather than types that previously encouraged variety
- **Red and red processed meat** - there is a new maximum level for provision
- **Sugar** - Sugar is now measured in free sugar and total sugar rather than non-milk extrinsic sugar and total sugar - the standard applied to things like sweetened baked goods, yoghurts and cereals. Fruit juices, smoothies, etc can no longer be provided due to high free sugar content. Lower fat milk drinks will no longer be allowed to contain added sugar
- **Pastry products** - new limits on how often pastry products can be provided
- **Sugar-free soft drinks in secondary schools only** - sugar-free soft drinks can now be provided if education authorities wish to include them
- **Secondary school analysed lunches** - while standards have moved towards an enhanced set of standards, lunches which meet the nutrient standards should still be offered
- **Nutrient standards** - these have been updated in line with scientific evidence and dietary advice
- **Energy** - a new daily energy tolerance will be introduced to reduce the variations in the weekly energy tolerance

3.0 Purpose of the healthy eating in schools guidance

Helping to support healthier dietary choices in children and young people can help to instil positive and solid foundations, ensuring that children and young people get the right balance of food and nutrients to develop and grow, as well as encouraging healthy life-long habits to be carried forward into their adult years. The guidance highlights that “although schools alone cannot be expected to address poor eating habits, schools can make a valuable contribution to improving the nutritional quality of diets and promoting consistent messages about healthy eating within a health promoting schools environment”. Scottish Government therefore wants to build on the positive work already being carried out across schools to improve the diet of children and young people through balanced and nutritious food and drink choices, helping to reduce diet-related health inequalities.

The main aim of the guidance is to help those who are involved in providing food and drinks in schools to implement the Regulations through a whole school approach. As well as providing information on the nutritional requirements, Regulations and guidance on how to comply, it also provides practical recommendations and guidance to help those involved in providing food and drink in schools.

In terms of when the Regulations apply, the guidance highlights:-

Food and Drink Standards

These apply to all food and drink provided to children and young people at any time of the day. The standards also define the types of food and drinks which must, can or cannot be offered including but not limited to:-

- lunchtime
- the secondary school hostel evening meal
- breakfast clubs
- tuckshops
- vending machines
- mid-morning services
- community cafes serving children and young people during the school day
- before/ after school clubs and nurture clubs

Nutrient Standards

These apply only to primary school lunch, secondary school analysed lunch and secondary school hostel evening meal, setting out the amount of nutrients children and young people should receive from these meals.

It also provides information on the range of individuals that should use the guidance over and above Education authorities and managers of grant aided schools. This includes:-

- Head teachers and other school staff involved with food and drink in schools e.g. breakfast clubs, tuckshops or after school clubs.
- Head teachers, other school staff or catering staff who are responsible for managing arrangements where food and drink is provided during the school day on school premises by private providers, for example breakfast clubs.
- Catering staff providing lunches, evening meals and other food and drink, for example mid-morning break, in primary schools, secondary schools and school hostels.
- Teachers and other school staff supporting food and drink-related social enterprises.
- Community cafés which are part of the school campus and serve children and young people during the school day.

- Anyone providing food and drink on school premises as part of a school holiday club.
- Any other person who is involved in the provision of food and drinks in schools or on school premises, including voluntary and private organisations. For example parent councils, charity organisations or private providers running breakfast clubs, after school clubs or fund raising events.

As well as this it also provides information on those who may also find the guidance of interest which includes those developing school guidance or policies around health promoting schools; those wishing to know more about the promotion of healthy food and drink in schools e.g. to help support outcomes in the Curriculum for Excellence; health professionals providing support to schools; those responsible for the provision of food and drink as part of holiday clubs which are run off school premises; children, young people and parents; independent school managers, teachers and caterers; other providers of residential care services to children and young people. As well as food and drink manufacturers, suppliers, producers and others involved in the provision of food and drink to schools.

Over and above it also provides helpful advice on allergies, celebrations and rewards; non-prescribed dietary choices and offers good hints and tips for healthy eating generally.

4.0 APSE Comment

APSE welcomes the release of the Healthy Eating in Schools: A guide to implementing the Nutritional Requirements for Food and Drink in Schools (Scotland) Regulations 2020, and the practical guidance which it provides to those involved in providing food and drink in schools. APSE also welcomes the involvement of ourselves, ASSIST FM, as well as Education Scotland and other partners in the development of this guidance, helping to highlight that this guide is not just for caterers but a range of stakeholders (as outlined above) involved in providing food and drinks in schools.

APSE recognises Local Authority Caterers commitment and willingness to continue to promote school meals as an exemplar of tasty, healthy and nutritious food and recognise positive dietary changes should be promoted in all settings. However, as highlighted in [APSE Briefing 19-37](#) the Regulations may create a number of unintended consequences and wider implications around increased cost and reduced income and limiting the choice for young people. In addition to this, there may also be COVID-19 post lockdown implications in terms of school lunch provision. Discussions between COSLA and Scottish Government supported by ASSIST FM / APSE are ongoing in relation to these concerns.

APSE has been a key supporter of local authority school catering through our Scottish Soft FM advisory groups and annual events for many years. We welcome the involvement of all

Scottish local authority officers, managers and councillors in the advisory groups. You can receive information on these by signing up to our mailing list.

Reminder: APSE has set up a COVID-19 Information Hub to deal with frontline service issues as they arise, ensuring greater resilience and learning between each other during this difficult time. You can access this hub by [clicking here](#) and you can also join our WhatsApp Support Network by [clicking here](#).

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