

INTRODUCTION OF NEW GOVERNMENT SCHOOL FOOD STANDARDS

New school food regulations come into force in state schools in England on 1st January 2015. They replace the original school food regulations of 2007. The new regulations are the outcome of an independent review of school food, commissioned by the Government in 2012 and published as The School Food Plan in July 2013. They aim to simplify the provision of healthy, balanced meals to young people.

These regulations introduce new food-based standards to replace the existing nutrient-based and food-based standards. The standards are designed to help children and young people get the energy and nutrients that they need for growth and development at lunch and across the school day. They also aim to help them develop healthy eating habits—to eat more vegetables and fruit and to eat less saturated fat, sugar and salt.

As before, the new food standards apply to food provided across the whole school day (including breakfast and break), but there are specific standards for the lunchtime meal. Many of the food standards remain the same, for example:

- There must be vegetables and fruit available daily.
- Oily fish must be served at least once every three weeks.
- Deep-fried foods, such as chips or fried fish, can only be served twice per week.
- Meat products, such as sausages and burgers, are restricted.

However, some standards have been enhanced or revised and are slightly more stringent, for example:

- To reduce unnecessary amounts of fat, starches cooked in oil or with fat (roast potatoes, wedges, chips and garlic bread) can only be served twice per week over the whole school day—not three times per week as previously allowed.
- For the same reason, pastry products are restricted to twice per week—over the whole school day.
- Milk or dairy products, such as yoghurt, cheese, and custard, must be served each day, and milk must be available to boost calcium intake.
- There are new standards for vegetarian food to encourage the use of pulses and other alternative non-dairy sources of protein.
- There are further controls on the type and sizes of drinks that can be sold so that the amounts of fruit juices, and therefore sugars, are restricted.

You can see the full set of standards at: http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/School_Food_Standards_140911-V2c-tea-towel.pdf

Harrison carried out training workshops with our chefs and cooks throughout autumn 2014, briefing them on the details of the new standards and creating menus in preparation for full introduction of the standards in January 2015. We have always been focused on nutrition and healthier eating, and our commitment to using high-quality fresh ingredients is the foundation for our delicious meals. Our approach to catering already embraces the principles of the new food standards, so we are well prepared to implement them.

Harrison believes that the school food standards are vital to providing children and young people with the nutrition they need to perform well in the classroom, and we work with all our education clients, including academies and free schools founded between 2010 and June 2014, to implement them.

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