

Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes



Cynlluniau Ysgolion Iach – Rhwydwaith Cymru



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

# Developing a Whole School Food and Fitness Policy

PLANT A PHOBL IFANC - GWEITHREDU'R HAWLIAU  
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE - RIGHTS TO ACTION



## **Audience:**

Headteachers, healthy school co-ordinators and governors of schools in Wales.

## **Overview:**

This document is designed to guide and support schools as they develop whole school food & fitness policies.

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## **The document is also available on the Internet at:**

[www.learning.wales.gov.uk](http://www.learning.wales.gov.uk)  
[www.wales.gov.uk/cmopublications](http://www.wales.gov.uk/cmopublications)  
[www.wales.gov.uk/cmo](http://www.wales.gov.uk/cmo)  
[www.healthschool.org.uk](http://www.healthschool.org.uk)

## **Related documents:**

Food & Fitness- Promoting Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Children and Young People in Wales. 5 Year Implementation Plan (2006)  
Appetite for Life (2006)  
Food in Schools Assessment Tool (2004, 2007)  
Physical Activity in School Assessment Tool (2006)

## Foreword

Improving children's nutrition and levels of physical activity is an important priority of the Welsh Assembly Government.

We are delighted that a range of departments are working together to achieve these aims.

Two recent Welsh Assembly Government documents- *The Food & Fitness Implementation Plan* and *Appetite for Life*- recognised the need to support schools as they play their part in delivering this priority.

This document provides guidance to help schools develop food & fitness policies. We envisage that this will happen as schools consider food & fitness activities as part of their healthy school work; and their local healthy school scheme co-ordinators will guide schools through this process.

We should like to thank all those people who have commented on this document during its development; and all those schools who are helping to take forward this important work.



Chief Medical Officer



Director, Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills

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## Introduction

In March 2004 the Welsh Assembly Government set up a Food and Fitness Task Group for Children and Young People. Following the work of that group and after considerable consultation, a 5 year Implementation Plan, *Food and Fitness, Promoting healthy eating and physical activity for children and young people*, was published in June 2006. This plan made clear that the Welsh Assembly Government is moving towards the integration of nutrition and physical activity policies and programmes. It recognises the fact that the effects of diet and physical activity are often interactive, not only in relation to physical, but also mental and emotional health. Evidence increasingly shows that co-ordinated action to improve children and young people's eating habits and levels of physical activity are effective.

The consultation period for *Appetite for Life*, the review of standards for food in schools, published in June 2006 by the Welsh Assembly Government, ended on 31st October 2006. A central recommendation in *Appetite for Life* is for all schools to write, publish and implement a whole-school food policy in partnership with key stakeholders. A report produced by Estyn for the Welsh Assembly Government, *School meals: advice on the role of inspection in monitoring school meal standards*, was published in October 2006 and can be accessed from their website.

The proposal that Estyn will inspect the work of schools in promoting and enabling healthy eating and drinking will become an element of routine inspections from April 2007. In order to support this, Estyn will:

- introduce a new evaluation requirement about healthy eating and drinking in our inspection guidance handbooks for schools;
- require inspectors to report in each inspection report on whether the school has appropriate arrangements that encourage and enable healthy eating and drinking;
- provide supplementary guidance for inspectors on how to inspect healthy eating and drinking; and
- encourage schools to include in their self-evaluations how they promote healthy eating and drinking, including reporting on the quality of school meals using the agreed food and nutritional standards.

The Welsh Assembly Government's *Food and Fitness Implementation Plan* specifies action to be taken on the provision of guidance on whole school policies on food and fitness by December 2006. This publication seeks to address that action and support schools by offering a clear rationale for such policy, a process for planning and development, areas for consideration, a draft model policy and supporting resources.

Many schools, including those in the Assembly Government's PE and School Sport Initiative and Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes, may have already developed, or are developing Healthy and Active Lifestyle policies which may make reference to a wide range

of issues including food and fitness. If this is the case then this guidance may prove useful as a template for re-evaluating, refreshing or strengthening the food and fitness elements in those policies. If schools are already running a School Nutrition Action Group (SNAG), or are considering starting one, this guidance offers an opportunity to follow the same process but take a broader approach to include physical activity.

Schools may wish to adopt a single overarching policy for healthy living to encompass the contributory strands of physical activity, food and drink, relationship and sex education and the prevention of substance misuse. This would be a particularly useful approach for small schools as it streamlines partnership working which is a feature of effective intervention and support.

## Section 1

### The need for action

There is growing interest and concern in the general health and welfare of the population in Wales. Wales has the highest mortality rate in Europe for coronary heart disease and cancers. Recent data from the Health Behaviour in School Aged Children survey in Wales (2002), indicated 22% of 15 year old boys and 17% of 15 year old girls were overweight or obese. The intimate relationship between what, and how much, we eat and the amount and regularity of the exercise we take, is often misunderstood or ignored. The importance of achieving balance in the intake = output equation is considerable.

Though schools alone cannot provide the solutions, it is a setting in which children spend around a third of all their time between the ages of 4 and 16. The creation of a whole school approach to healthy eating and physical activity is essential in ensuring consistent messages, appropriate development of skills, a supportive school environment and links into community resources.

### The benefits

#### Food and nutrition

Education about food and nutrition, using appropriate methods and accurate messages, equips children with the knowledge to choose a balanced diet, the understanding of why that is important and the relationship between diet and exercise. Skills equip children not only with the confidence and competence to purchase, prepare and cook for themselves safely but also to become capable parents in the future. Access and availability of affordable, healthy food in school sets appropriate standards and models best practice food culture and behaviours.

#### Physical activity

Education about physical activity offers children an understanding of the importance of physical fitness and recreation to their health and wellbeing and explains the crucial links between diet and activity. Skills acquired through physical education enable children to take part in a wide range of sport, recreation and activities that can help to enhance self esteem, independence, enjoyment and social integration. Ready access to opportunities to engage in sport and recreation provides the basis for children to build physical activity into their daily lives. This means making best use of opportunities for physical education in the school day, after school activities including Out of School Hours Learning, and the facilities of the local authority leisure services and community sports clubs.

# Whole school site policy on food and fitness

## Purpose

A whole school policy offers a shared vision, coherence in planning and development, and consistency in the delivery of services, curriculum messages and the supporting environment. It facilitates discussion, encourages wide engagement of stakeholders and establishes belief and ownership in the aims and objectives it aspires to.

## Principle

Food and nutrition, physical activity and sport, should be seen, not in isolation, but as integral parts of the broad educative process of every child. The health and welfare of all children should sit at the heart of school site policy and reflect the core values of the school in maximising every child's potential. The process of such policy development, though relatively simple, can in itself offer a very powerful vehicle for partnership working and the engagement of pupils in taking responsibility for decision making about services specifically created for their use.

It is for this reason that the model policy on food and fitness which appears later in this guidance takes a 'process led' checklist approach rather than offering an 'off the shelf' policy package. However, examples of food and fitness policy documents will be made available as they are developed to share the range of responses to the very particular and different challenges faced by individual schools across Wales.

For school sites with attached leisure centres, collaboration in order to create an integrated whole site policy is strongly recommended.

## Process

### 1. Create a Food and Fitness Working Group (FAFWG).

Typical membership of such a group might include:

- Representative(s) from the Senior Management Team (SMT).
- Key curriculum staff.
- Pupils/students from the school council.
- Parent and governor representation.
- Catering manager/cook supervisor – (area catering manager as necessary).
- Leisure centre manager (shared school/community resources).
- 5x60 officer (in secondary schools which are part of this scheme).

Other individuals and representatives could be co-opted as and when their expertise or involvement is useful:

- Healthy schools adviser.
- Leisure and community services.
- Community sports clubs.



- Health professionals – dietitian/dental health officer/school nurse/EHO.
- LA advisers.
- LA Sports Development officer.
- Physical Education and School Sport (PESS) co-ordinator.
- Dragon Sport co-ordinator.
- Community/public health dietitian, who can be particularly useful as a source of accurate information on food and nutrition, methods of food education, advice on nutritional content of school meals and staff training.

## 2. Audit food and fitness in school

In 2004 and 2006 respectively, the Welsh Assembly Government published the *Food in School Assessment Tool* and the *Physical Activity in School Assessment Tool*. These two publications were specifically designed as self-evaluation and monitoring mechanisms and are invaluable for conducting an audit prior to the process of establishing a whole school policy; and can be obtained from your local Healthy School co-ordinator or PESS co-ordinator.

The tools are used in an interview situation and the sample of respondents should include a selection from:

- SMT.
- Class teacher/specialist curriculum staff.
- Group of pupils/students – drawn perhaps from the school council.
- Governors/parents.
- Adults other than teachers (AOTTs).

There are eight questions on each of eight topics (listed below) for each of the two disciplines:

Food:

- The environment.
- Food and drink.
- Pupils.
- Healthy living.
- Policy.
- Staff.
- Catering issues.
- Caterers.

Physical activity:

- The environment.
- Physical activity through the school day.
- Pupil related questions.
- Healthy living.
- Policy.
- Staff related issues.
- Curriculum issues.
- Community partnerships.

Issues raised in any previous review of PE and/or food and nutrition as part of the school's self evaluation should also be used to feed in to this audit.

This process of audit facilitates a critical review of the current provision and enables the FAFWG to differentiate those areas of existing good practice from those in need of improvement. The results from it should be widely shared and all stakeholders kept informed of progress. The issues thrown up by the review offer a valuable opportunity for classroom debate within a range of curriculum subjects. Importantly, this allows opportunity to emphasise the importance of the relationship between diet and physical activity in influencing health and well being and ensure links are developed across curriculum, services and school and community environment.

### 3. Draft the Policy

Using the results of the audit, and ensuring that pupils/students are central to its development, draft a policy that:

- reflects the needs of the school and the community resources that surround it, including any special requirements;
- lays down aims and objectives that are practical and underpin the school's values;
- sets priorities, identifies tasks and provides a timetable for action;
- identifies the resources, human and financial, required to deliver outcomes;
- sets a programme for monitoring the policy and reviewing its success.

### 4. Consult on the draft policy

- Will raise awareness and increase ownership.
- Must allow a specific and sufficient time for responses.
- Should be made easily available to school and wider community e.g. pupils, school governors and staff, parents, local sport and leisure representatives.
- Will benefit from a standardised questionnaire as well as individual reply.

### 5. Modify draft policy

- Analyse feedback.
- Modify policy as appropriate.
- Finalise policy within FAFWG.
- Seek governing body approval.

### 6. Disseminate food and fitness policy

The policy should be disseminated and celebrated as widely as possible and in formats appropriate to the respective audiences:

- Pupils/students via School Council, assemblies, classroom, canteen and public notice boards, curriculum debate.
- Parents through the prospectus, newsletters, school website, and parents' evenings.
- All teaching and non-teaching school staff should have a copy of the document and further information through meetings, briefings and notices.
- Appropriate visual displays with correct messages can be used around the school to

highlight the objectives and impact of the policy, and local community awareness can be raised through press releases to the local media.

- Sports development teams, leisure services and sports coaches.

## 7. Implement

Policies only have value when put into action and the policy section on 'tasks/targets/timetable' will now require:

- Decisions on how responsibility is to be delegated for the leadership of specific objectives.
- Decisions on how to gain support and involvement from partners in the wider community.
- Resource allocation ensuring that human and financial support is available as necessary to deliver targets.
- Co-ordination and communication to ensure work is done to time, challenges are overcome and successes are celebrated.
- A date to be set for formal policy review which should be included as a part of the annual governor report.
- Inclusion in the School Development Plan.

## 8. Monitor/evaluate/review

The construction and delivery of policy is circular and will require careful monitoring and regular review every year/two years as appropriate. It may be helpful to record review dates on your process flow chart. Circumstances do change as a result of developments both inside and outside the school and it is very likely that revised targets and fresh priorities will be necessary. Using your food and physical activity school assessment tools and the specific aims, objectives and timelines of the school food and fitness policy, within your FAFWG:

- Check levels and nature of success.
- Identify challenges/difficulties met.
- Canvass original stakeholders for their views.
- Modify policy targets, set new timetable, review leadership.
- Communicate progress made and new targets set as widely as possible. and celebrate success.

### Process Flow Chart – whole school food and fitness policy

Set up working group

Audit present situation/future needs

Draft/amend policy – aims/objectives/targets/tasks/timetable

Consult on draft policy and modify

Disseminate and implement policy

Monitor/evaluate/review/revise

## Section 2

### Model food and fitness policy checklist

#### Preamble

Schools can create their own food and fitness policy within their FAFWG using the process flow chart above and this model policy checklist, which is not prescriptive, but which offers a policy shape, an outline of the issues to be considered, decisions to be taken, targets to be set and a timetable for delivery.

Please note it does not offer schools an 'off the shelf' policy package as the process of individual audit and policy development has been valued by schools already engaged in the process of food and fitness policy development.

#### Aims of the School's Food and Fitness Policy

- To improve the health of the whole school community by equipping pupils with ways to establish and maintain life-long active lifestyles and healthy eating habits.
- To ensure that food and nutrition and physical activity become integral to the overall value system of the school and a common thread of best practice runs through the curriculum, the school environment and community links.
- To develop a whole school approach to food and fitness policy. A whole school policy offers a shared vision, coherence in planning and development, and consistency in the delivery of services, curriculum messages and the supporting environment. It facilitates discussion, encourages wide engagement of stakeholders and establishes belief and ownership in the aims and objectives it aspires to.

#### Objectives of the School's Food and Fitness Policy

##### 1. Ethos

- Recognise the significant impact of the informal curriculum on the social and emotional education of pupils as well as their physical health and well being.
- Understand and maximise opportunities for social and educational development through the organisation and delivery of food and fitness activity throughout the day, and promote pupil participation in decision making.
- Ensure that all activities and services related to food and fitness provided for pupils throughout the school day are consistent with the food and fitness content of the curriculum and appropriate national guidance and regulation.
- Ensure that pupils are involved in the decision making process relating to food and fitness activities.

## 2. Curriculum

The school will review the delivery of the curriculum to ensure that it offers pupils:

- An understanding of the relationship between food, physical activity and short and long term health benefits.
- The acquisition of basic skills in purchasing, preparing and cooking food and an understanding of basic food hygiene.
- Opportunities to examine the influences of food choices, including the effects of the media through advertising, marketing, labelling and packaging of food.
- Consistent and clear delivery of the key messages for good oral health (supported by the content and management of the food service).
- Opportunities to learn about the growing and farming of food and its impact on the environment both in the classroom and outside in the countryside.
- A well planned NC course of study in health-related exercise, as part PE and make good use of opportunities for cross-curricular promotion of physical activity and its relationship to diet and nutrition.
- An out of school hours programme which includes a broad range of purposeful and enjoyable physical activities for pupils and staff. This can also include practical cooking skills based on the Balance of Good Health.

## 3. Environment

The operation, scope and delivery of the food service and the provision of a range of safe, stimulating sport and recreational activities outside the formal curriculum plays a significant role in the pastoral care and welfare of pupils so the school will:

- acknowledge that effective management of pupils is more, rather than less, challenging during breaks, lunchtimes, before and after school, than within the classroom, and so plan and resource the supervision of pupils accordingly.
- recognise the importance of the involvement of catering staff and lunchtime supervisors in planning the lunchtime provision and linking with activities available to pupils.
- work with school caterers and training providers to ensure that all staff supporting pupils in making healthy choices are well informed.
- offer a broad range of safe, stimulating indoor and outdoor sports, play and recreational activities. *The Health Promoting Playground*, and, *In The Zone* playground development schemes are excellent resources for primary schools.

The school will liaise with caterers so that the food service is supplied on a 'whole school/whole day' approach and provides:

- healthy, nutritious, affordable and attractively presented choices as described in *Appetite for Life*;
- an enjoyable eating experience which underpins the valuing of each pupil, paying careful attention to key factors such as the length of the lunch break and management of queuing;
- free, fresh, water, chilled to taste, to all pupils separate from the toilet areas;
- displays and marketing materials within and around food service areas that promote the

positive relationship between food and physical activity;

- Engagement with pupils in service design, menu planning, delivery and marketing through vehicles such as School Councils and SNAGs;
- Procurement and menu planning that recognise the importance of purchasing locally, seasonality, and environmental sustainability.

The school will not advertise branded food and drink products on school premises, school equipment or books, and will ensure that any collaboration with business does not require endorsement of brands or specific company products high in fat, sugar or salt.

The school will review and develop the out of school hours program of opportunities within food and physical activity to complement and extend those offered in curriculum time and will aim to provide:

- a broad range of safe, stimulating indoor and outdoor play and recreational facilities which incorporates healthy active lifestyle activities and the inclusion of Dragon Sport clubs in primary schools and 5x60 activities in secondary schools;
- safe equipment and facilities available for recreational use and ensure high levels of maintenance;
- eye catching displays around the PE dept and public areas of the school promoting opportunities for sport and physical recreation e.g. the Welsh Assembly Government's free swimming initiative, and the positive relationship between physical activity and food;
- secure storage for cycles and safety equipment;
- designated motorised-traffic-free-areas outside the school at critical times to ensure the safety of cyclists and pedestrians as part of Safe Routes to School work, through liaison with the Local Authority highways department;
- encouragement for pupils to walk or cycle to school.

#### 4. Community

Within its broad purpose of 'education for life', the school will seek to:

- raise awareness of, and promote, the activities and policy of the school around food and fitness in partnership with key community and health agencies;
- encourage the provision of healthy food and snacks from home through the curriculum, by giving information to parents, and in partnership with key community and health agencies;
- collect, collate and provide pupils with up to date information about, and experience of, the opportunities and resources available in the community relating to food and nutrition, physical activity and sport;
- support the provision of an out-of-school hours learning cookery club for pupils and families;
- investigate the opportunities for the development of gardening clubs for pupils, parents and community interests;
- develop alliances and partnerships with local providers (e.g. sports clubs, leisure centres, agricultural colleges, farms/farm shops, catering colleges, local business);
- work with, and lobby for, provision within the community of healthy food services and opportunities to be active (e.g. safe walking, cycle routes).

## Implementation and Monitoring

- The governing body will nominate one or more individual governors to take specific responsibility for the Food and Fitness Policy.
- A member of the SMT will chair the FAFWG and be responsible to the governing body for the coordination and management of the policy.
- SMT will ensure that there is adequate training and resources for staff involved in the delivery of the aims and objectives of the school's Food and Fitness Policy.
- SMT will take advantage of the existing national and local initiatives and resources relating to food and physical activity (see page 12 - 'Useful resources').
- Progress will be monitored at regular intervals by SMT and governors.
- Updates on school food and fitness actions will be included in the Annual Report to parents.

## Section 3

### Useful resources

**30, 40, 50 Club – Athletics Association of Wales primary schools x-country project – [www.welshathletics.org](http://www.welshathletics.org)**

**Appetite for Life – [www.learning.wales.gov.uk](http://www.learning.wales.gov.uk)**

**British Heart Foundation teaching resources – [www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk)**

**British Nutrition Foundation – [www.nutrition.org.uk](http://www.nutrition.org.uk)**

**Central Council of Physical Recreation – [www.ccpr.org.uk](http://www.ccpr.org.uk)**

**Children’s Diets, Exercise and Health – The National Federation of Women’s Institutes – [www.womens-institute.org.uk](http://www.womens-institute.org.uk)**

**‘Climbing Higher’ + ‘Climbing Higher – next steps’ – [www.wales.gov.uk/cmopublications](http://www.wales.gov.uk/cmopublications)**

**Continyou– [www.continyou.org.uk](http://www.continyou.org.uk)**

**Cooking Bus –Focus on Food – [www.wales.gov.uk/improvechildrenshealth](http://www.wales.gov.uk/improvechildrenshealth)**

**Dragon Sport - [www.dragonsport.co.uk](http://www.dragonsport.co.uk)**

**Eating well at school – Caroline Walker Trust - [www.cwt.org.uk](http://www.cwt.org.uk)**

**Eco-schools – [www.eco-schools.org](http://www.eco-schools.org)**

**Estyn Report on “School meals: Advice on the role of inspection in monitoring school meal standards.” - [www.estyn.gov.uk/dynpages/publications\\_recent.asp](http://www.estyn.gov.uk/dynpages/publications_recent.asp)**

**Farmhouse Breakfast Week – [www.hgca.com/breakfast](http://www.hgca.com/breakfast)**

**Food and Fitness – Promoting Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Children and Young People in Wales. 5 Year Implementation Plan – [www.wales.gov.uk/cmopublications](http://www.wales.gov.uk/cmopublications)**

**Food in School Assessment Tool - [www.wales.gov.uk/cmopublications](http://www.wales.gov.uk/cmopublications)**

**Food in Schools Toolkit (English guidance document) – [www.foodinschools.org](http://www.foodinschools.org)**

**Food in the school curriculum in Wales – [www.learning.wales.gov.uk](http://www.learning.wales.gov.uk)**

**Food Standards Agency - [www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk)**

**Free Swimming Initiative – [www.wales.gov.uk/improvechildrenshealth](http://www.wales.gov.uk/improvechildrenshealth)**



**Get Cooking – [www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk)**

**Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Study (HBSC) – [www.wales.gov.uk/cmopublications](http://www.wales.gov.uk/cmopublications)**

**Health Challenge Wales – [www.healthchallenge.wales.gov.uk](http://www.healthchallenge.wales.gov.uk)**

**Health Education Trust – [www.healthedtrust.com](http://www.healthedtrust.com)**

**In Perspective Food and Fitness - [www.wales.gov.uk/cmopublications](http://www.wales.gov.uk/cmopublications)**

**In The Zone – [www.sports-council-wales.co.uk](http://www.sports-council-wales.co.uk)**

**National Botanic Garden of Wales – [www.gardenofwales.org.uk](http://www.gardenofwales.org.uk)**

**Nutrition Network for Wales – [www.nutritionnetworkwales.org.uk](http://www.nutritionnetworkwales.org.uk)**

**Organic Centre Wales - [www.organic.aber.ac.uk](http://www.organic.aber.ac.uk)**

**PE and School Sport (PESS) – Sports Council for Wales - [www.sports-council-wales.co.uk](http://www.sports-council-wales.co.uk)**

**Physical Activity in School Assessment Tool - [www.wales.gov.uk/cmopublications](http://www.wales.gov.uk/cmopublications)**

**Physical Activity Network for Wales – [www.wch.wales.nhs.uk](http://www.wch.wales.nhs.uk)**

**Primary School Free Breakfast Initiative – [www.learning.wales.gov.uk](http://www.learning.wales.gov.uk)**

**Safe Routes to School – [www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk](http://www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk)**

**Sports Council for Wales – [www.sports-council-wales.co.uk](http://www.sports-council-wales.co.uk)**

**The Class Moves! - [www.wales.gov.uk/cmopublications](http://www.wales.gov.uk/cmopublications)**

**The Health Promoting Playground – [www.wales.gov.uk/cmopublications](http://www.wales.gov.uk/cmopublications)**

**Think Healthy Vending – [www.wales.gov.uk/cmopublications](http://www.wales.gov.uk/cmopublications)**

**Think Water – [www.wales.gov.uk/cmopublications](http://www.wales.gov.uk/cmopublications)**

**Walking and Cycling Strategy for Wales’ – Welsh Assembly Government, 2003 – [www.wales.gov.uk/cmopublications](http://www.wales.gov.uk/cmopublications)**

**Walking the Way to Health –[www.whi.org.uk](http://www.whi.org.uk)**

**Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes – [www.wales.gov.uk/improvechildrenshealth](http://www.wales.gov.uk/improvechildrenshealth)**

## **Local support**

**Individual unitary authorities in Wales may have developed their own strategies for nutrition and/or physical activity and these should also be consulted. Contact your local education authority or public health team for further information.**