



How to set up a School Nutrition Action Group (SNAG)

A best practice guidance note



Introduction

There is an increasing amount of evidence about the importance of healthy eating but it is also worth remembering to value, enjoy and learn about food. Many schools are undertaking food projects and it is important to ensure clear, consistent, coherent messages are given out not only to pupils but to the whole school community.

School Nutrition Action Groups (SNAG's) are school based alliances in which staff, pupils and caterers, supported by health and education professionals work together to review and expand the range of food and drink in order to increase the uptake of a healthier diet and ensure consistent messages from the curriculum and the food service.

SNAG's can be set up to look at all food provision across a school day from breakfast clubs and tuck shops to school meals and after school clubs. This group can take action to improve provision and encourage healthier eating habits.

The most effective way of putting this into place is for a SNAG to be the working party that develops a robust whole school food policy through audit and consultation. The SNAG will then also be responsible for the implementation and monitoring of such a policy.

Key Benefits of a SNAG

A SNAG can ensure:

- A co-ordinated approach to food and drink in the school
- Compliance with Government food standards
- Communication of the school's shared vision, ethos and values to pupils, staff, parents and other stakeholders
- Equality of access and participation for all
- The establishment of effective working partnerships

Key Members

A SNAG should represent the whole school community. Typical membership could include:

- Pupil representatives
- Representative of the senior management team
- The Healthy Schools Coordinator
- Teaching staff
- Support staff
- Catering staff





- Parents/carers
- Governor
- Health representative such as the School Nurse, Health Promotion Specialists or Dietitian.

Where to start

The best place to start is to see where you currently are. Take a look at how healthy eating is promoted and encouraged and what food is currently being provided in the school.

Consider:

- Breakfast
- Snack times
- Lunchtime
- In the classroom
- Events
- Outside of school

Try to identify

- What is working well
- What could be better
- What changes need to be made
- What are the barriers to change

These ideas can then be turned into an action plan with small steps and targets.

Collecting information

There are a variety of ways to obtain the information

- A formal questionnaire
- Suggestion box
- Notice board
- Discussions at school council meetings
- Focus groups with parents, pupils and staff
- Hands up surveys
- As part of the curriculum

What the research tells us

- Adopting a whole school approach can contribute positively to pupils' health and well being.
- There are clear benefits to the school in terms of influence on school attainment, behaviour and



punctuality.

- The future health of individuals can be influenced by their diet in childhood.
- Healthy eating contributes to a feeling of well being and to the being healthy national outcome for children and young people
- Learning to grow, harvest and cook food in school supports young peoples' understanding of how food is produced and can motivate them to taste a variety of different fruits and vegetables.

Useful information

Active Kent

<http://www.activekent.co.uk>

Change 4 Life

<http://www.nhs.uk/Change4life>

Food for Life Partnership

<http://www.healthedtrust.com/pages/SNAG-resources.htm>

Food Standards Agency

<http://www.food.gov.uk/>

Healthy Schools

<http://healthyschools.gov.uk/>

Kent County Council Client Services online bookings for training and courses

<http://cpdonline.kenttrustweb.org.uk/cpd/>

School Food Trust

<http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk>

Wellbeing South East

<http://www.wellbeingsoutheast.org.uk>