

Healthy eating at Sedgefield Community College

Why have school meals changed?

The Government has begun introducing a number of changes to the traditional school menu which will continue over the next few years. It aims to improve the standard of school meals and the health of teenagers across the country, which often isn't great as a result of them not eating healthily

Is it the end of students favourite foods at schools? Well it would seem that at Sedgefield students don't think so as a third more students are now taking school meals as compared to the same time last year.

School dinners are about to getting a makeover for the better!

The changes include meals that use fresh meat and fish, a wider selection of fruit and vegetables and we think (as do those who have taken part in taster sessions) tastier dishes. Plus now they are healthy too!

Why choose school meals at Sedgefield Community College?

- Our school meals offer a selection of freshly cooked main meals and desserts every day, often including pasta, salad, fresh fruit and yoghurt. And from only £1.80 a day.
- All our meals are cooked fresh on our premises using good quality local ingredients.
- All meals are nutritionally balanced over the course of one week and are served by our own catering staff. Children can sit down together and enjoy their meal whilst at the same time developing social skills of eating together that are so important in later life.
- A well fed and happy child is more likely to be receptive to participating in the afternoon's activities.
- Convenience. Someone else preparing and cooking lunch for your child saves you worrying about a packed meal every day.

Killer facts

In the last decade, the number of school children who are overweight or obese has nearly doubled. One third of our kids are now too fat.

- One quarter of teenagers are already obese.
14% of boys and 17% of girls between the ages of two and 15 are overweight.
- Nearly one quarter of adults are already obese.
- Children with obese parents are twice as likely to become obese.
- Children who are obese by the age of 12 are 85% more likely to remain obese into adult life.

- Children who are obese in their early teens are twice as likely to die by the age of 50.

Value for money

At just £1.80 (Meal deal) Sedgefield school lunches provide excellent value for money. You can pay for your school meals in the way that is most convenient for you – weekly, by term, or half-term. Many children qualify for free school meals. (see below).

Do you qualify for free school meals?

The government has given us clear instructions about who is entitled to receive free school meals.

Free school meals entitlement (tax credits)


Children are entitled to free school meals if their family receives Income Support, Income-based Jobseekers Allowance, an income-related employment and support allowance, support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 or the guarantee element of State Pension Credit.

Children are also entitled to free school meals if their family receives Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit), and their gross annual income is no more than £16,040 (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs).

Nursery-age pupils only qualify for help if they receive education both before and after the lunch period.

You can apply for free school meals for all your children by visiting your youngest child's school and completing an application form. However, you will need to take one of the following with you:

- Income Support Book
- Pension Credit M1000 Award Notice
- proof of Support under Part Six of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the letter of award from the Benefits Agency that shows who within your family is entitled to receive Income Support/Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Tax Credit Award Notice
- proof of your income-related employment and support allowance.

You can also apply for free school meals for your child by printing off and completing ^[PDF]  [Form FSM1](#) (1 pages,29kb).

To renew your child's free school meals entitlement download and complete [\[PDF\] !\[\]\(cead67df4d82d6c83effe4f8699a7d8f_img.jpg\) Form FSM2 \(1 pages,22kb\)](#). Completed applications should be returned to your child's school.

For advice about tax credits or benefits contact our Welfare Rights section on the number below or visit [HMRC - Tax Credits website](#).

Contacts

School Meals

County Hall
County Durham
DH1 5UJ

email:

freeschoolmeals@durham.gov.uk

Tel:

0191 383 4900

Tax credits helpline

Tel:

0845 300 3900 / textphone 0845 300 3909

Welfare Rights

Adults, Wellbeing and Health
Durham County Council
The Rivergreen Centre
Aykley Heads
County Durham
DH1 5TS

email:

welfare.rights@durham.gov.uk

Tel:

0191 370 8787

Text:

csd wr (your message) to 60003

So what's on the menu?

The current menu is running on a three week cycle until the Easter holiday 2010 and the menu below is available during this week.

Please note that fresh fruit as an alternative dessert, and additional bread, will be available daily.

We also accommodate students who prefer to bring a lunchbox...

Top tips for a healthier lunchbox

To help parents give their children varied and balanced lunchboxes, the Foods Standards Agency has put together some practical tips and suggestions.

Making sandwiches

- To avoid soggy sandwiches, make sure that you dry the salad with kitchen paper or a salad spinner. Alternatively, cut up some cucumber and add to cherry tomatoes in a separate sandwich bag.
- If your child refuses to eat brown bread at first, try buying 'whole white' sliced bread (white bread made with one-third wholemeal flour). Or you could make a sandwich from one slice of whole white bread and one slice of wholemeal/brown bread.
- Always keep a selection of breads in the freezer for sandwiches. Today there are many different types of bread that you can introduce your child to and by using a different type of bread each day make their lunchbox more interesting. Try granary, wholemeal and raisin breads; multi-grain and seed rolls; mini wholemeal baguettes and bagels and wholemeal pittas.
- Breads and rolls kept in the freezer will remain fresh. You can take out the frozen bread in the morning to make a sandwich. They defrost in about half an hour on a plate.
- Cut down on the amount of butter or margarine you use and try to avoid mayonnaise.
- Cut down on crisps, which are high in fat, and choose plain popcorn, breadsticks or dried mixed fruit (without added sugar) instead.
- Pick low-fat sandwich fillings, such as lean meats, including ham or turkey, fish (such as tuna or salmon), cottage cheese, Edam, mozzarella, or sliced banana. Always try to add a little salad to the sandwich/roll.

Alternative to sandwiches

- In the winter or on cold days you could make some home-made soup for your child's lunchbox. Tomato, chicken and sweetcorn, and vegetable soup are healthy options that are quick and easy to make. You could add lentils and barley to thicken the soup but try to avoid adding salt. It can be poured into a vacuum flask and eaten with some wholemeal or granary bread.
- In the summer, salads are light and refreshing and full of essential vitamins and minerals. Try sprinkling an assortment of seeds over the

salad (sunflower, pumpkin, sesame and pine nuts) or dried fruit such as sultanas, raisins or chopped apricots.

- Cook some brown rice salad with lentils, and chop up aubergine, peppers, spring onions and some turkey or chicken to add. Pasta salads are also a good option, such as pasta with tuna and avocado, or pasta with chicken, sweetcorn, cherry tomato and spinach leaves.
- Other options include adding a slice of home-made Spanish omelette with potato, courgette and tomato, or making a broccoli and tomato quiche. This could be made for an evening meal and a slice saved for lunchboxes the next day.
- Home-made pizza is also a favourite with children. Why not make a pizza together for an evening meal and save some for the next day's lunchbox? Add a tomato and basil sauce/paste, mozzarella cheese and plenty of chopped vegetables – peppers, onion, mushrooms and sliced courgettes. You could also make a mini pizza with a wholemeal muffin cut in half and topped with vegetables or ham. Toast this under a grill for a couple of minutes for a fun and different snack.
- Don't forget to add some vegetables to your child's lunchbox, such as cherry tomatoes, or sticks of carrot, cucumber, celery and peppers. Sugar snap peas are also a good choice because they are naturally sweet.

Sweets and snacks

- Include at least a portion of fruit or veg in your child's lunchbox as this will set them on their way to the recommended 5 portions a day. You could make an exotic fresh fruit salad with blueberries, raspberries, strawberries and grapes or a more traditional version with apples, bananas, grapes and oranges.
- Try adding a handful of dried fruit such as raisins, apricots, figs or prunes for vitamins and also to encourage your child to try new foods.
- Try different desserts, such as stewed fruit. You can add a spoonful or two of natural yoghurt, or you could sprinkle some rolled oats, nuts and seeds on the top for extra crunch and vitamins and minerals.
- Cut down on crisps, which are high in fat, and choose plain popcorn, or dried mixed fruit (without added sugar) instead. If your child finds it

difficult to cut out crisps buy low-fat versions, crisps that you can add your own salt to or vegetable crisps.

- Replace cakes, chocolates and biscuits with scones, currant buns and fruit bread.
- Make sure that your child gets enough calcium by adding a slice of low-fat cheese, a low-fat yoghurt (preferably free of sugar) or low-fat rice pudding.

Drinks

- Always make sure that your child is given a drink to go to school with as this will keep them hydrated and will help them to concentrate.
- Rather than drinks that are very high in sugar, such as fizzy drinks or 'juice drinks', go for unsweetened fruit juice or water.
- Add a fruit smoothie made from natural yoghurt, mixed berries and maybe a dash of honey, or maybe a home-made flavoured milk shake.
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Tips for reducing salt, fat and sugar

Reducing salt

- Always check food labels for the salt or sodium content. If sodium is listed and you want to convert this to salt, you multiply the sodium figure by 2.5.
- A product high in salt is one that has anything above 1.25g of salt per 100g or 0.5g of sodium per 100g. A product low in salt is one that has 0.25g or less of salt per 100g or 0.1g or less of sodium.
- Cut down on salty snacks, such as crisps and nuts, and heavily salted foods such as ready meals, bacon, cheese, and smoked fish.
- If you make your own foods (pasta, quiche, and bread) for your child's lunchbox cut down on the salt or do not add any.
- Buy low salt options wherever possible and if you are unsure whether something is high in salt, maybe put in some fruit or chopped veg instead.
- When making sandwiches, go easy with sauces and pickles because these are usually very high in salt.

Reducing fat

- Always check the food label for fat content. As a guide, 20g or more of fat per 100g is a lot; 3g or less per 100g is considered low in fat. In terms of saturated fat, 5g or more per 100g is considered a lot and 1g or less per 100g is considered low in saturated fat.
- Use butter, margarine, mayonnaise or salad dressings sparingly.
- Try to eat crisps sparingly and buy low fat crisps where possible.
- Use high fat cheese or cheese spreads sparingly.
- Cut down on cakes, chocolate biscuits, chocolate and confectionery.
- Limit eating meat pies, pasties, fried foods and salami.
- Avoid fatty cuts of meat or chicken with skin.

Reducing sugar

- Always read the label of any food you are buying for your child's lunchbox, whether snacks and biscuits or cakes (or dressings on ready-made salads).
- A product with a lot of sugar is one that has 10g or more of sugar per 100g. A product low in sugar contains 2g or less per 100g.
- Always check the ingredient list on food labels. Watch out for other words used to describe sugar such as sucrose, glucose (syrup), fructose, hydrolysed starch and invert sugar. The higher up the ingredients list they come, the higher in sugar the foods are.
- Avoid drinks that are very high in sugar, such as fizzy drinks or juice drinks. Instead, choose unsweetened fruit juice, water, milk, smoothies or yoghurt drinks.
- Replace cakes, biscuits and chocolate bars with scones, currant buns and fruit bread.
- Instead of sweets and chocolate, give your child fresh or dried fruit to snack on. Alternatively, you could try sunflower and pumpkin seeds or chopped up vegetables, cherry tomatoes or peppers.
- If your child insists on having sweets or chocolate, try to limit this to one day a week and never reward children with sweets.
- If you bake at home for your child's lunchbox, cut down on the sugar that you add. Try adding fresh strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, apricots or fruit purées.

Some ideas for varied and nutritious packed lunches

Three week's worth of packed lunch ideas that are in line with the standards for food served in schools.

The following table contains three weeks of packed lunch ideas that are in line with the food-based standards for school lunch. They have been designed to provide a variety of foods over the week, which also appeal to children.

The ideas have been analysed by price and time. This information demonstrates that to provide a week's worth of packed lunches that are as varied and nutritious as school food is a time consuming task. To achieve such a broad range of packed lunches would require a significant amount of preparation time and financial cost. Indeed, research has shown that packed lunches contain more unhealthy products.

For these reasons, the easiest way to ensure that your child is eating a healthy lunch every day is to give them school meals which must now comply with food-based standards.

Click [here](#) to download (Adobe pdf doc 144KB).