

**What is a SNAGs?**

SNAGs, or School Nutrition Action Groups, are school based alliances in which staff, pupils and caterers supported where appropriate by health and education professionals, work together to review and expand the range of food and drink provided through:

- the tuckshop
  - vending machines
  - the midday meal
  - catering at social functions
  - breakfast provision
- in order to increase the uptake of a healthier diet.

**EDITORIAL****Scotland leads the Way!**

I strongly recommend those of you in need of good news to peruse the summary of Scotland's "Eating for Health" action plan on page 5 of this newsletter - then send for the complete document and settle down for a very satisfying read. It is an excellent publication written in a matter-of-fact straightforward style. It strikes a nice balance between setting challenges and showing common sense pragmatism in outlining the way to achieve the changes needed. Refreshingly it is not frightened of the words "should" and "must" - whereas so many Government reports south of the border lean towards "might" and "may". Let us hope this action plan is now to be vigorously implemented and that England's Nutrition Task Force produce an equally dynamic, clear and comprehensive guidance document later this year (see page 4).

**Advertising in Schools**

It is to be hoped that the Government will do an about-face on their apparent backing for the

idea of advertising space being sold in schools.

More than 5000 Secondary Schools, Colleges and Universities have been approached by 'Imagination for School Media Marketing' an Essex company, to 'rent-out' empty space on walls. There has been a predictable and totally justifiable condemnation from a very wide range of organisations including the National Consumer Council, the Secondary Heads Association, Senior Churchmen, dentists, nutritionists, and the influential National Food Alliance who regarded it as 'an absolute scandal'. Rather more surprising even some advertising professionals distanced themselves.

Among the many questions we should all ask of such an initiative are:

- Who is most likely to be able to afford to advertise in these places - the fresh fruit and vegetable industry or the massively rich confectionery and soft drink giants?
- Where else, other than schools, do our children still have a reasonable chance of receiving a balanced view of nutrition where the motive for the information being offered is their health rather than company profits?

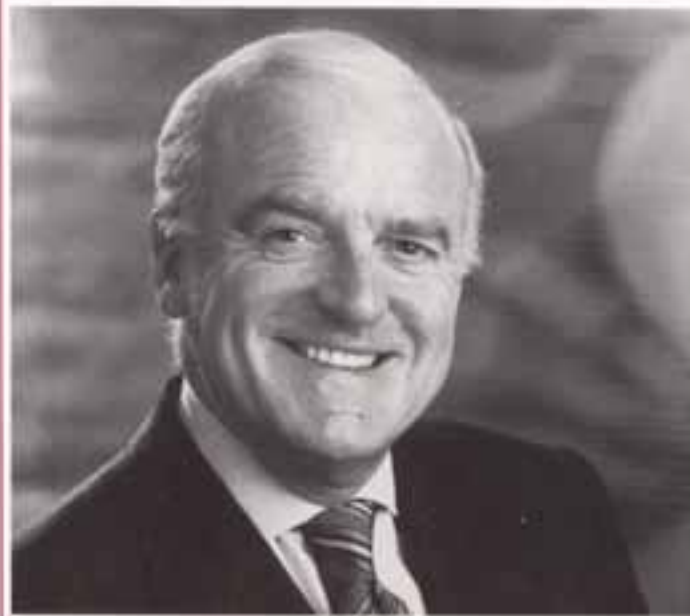
The Government should reflect on the vulnerability of schools to market forces and protect schools and the children in them from these pressures. They may recall that where food is concerned too often the amount spent on advertising a product is in inverse ratio to its nutritional value.

**Joe Harvey**  
Director Health Education Trust

"As a leading supplier of school meals Gardner Merchant must keep abreast of changes in children's eating habits and preferences. The 1996 Gardner Merchant School Meals Survey gives us this information about our customers, and for the first time indicates the significant impact that school food committees are having. Clearly children want to actively participate in decisions about their school food. The results suggest that such involvement, rather than leading to a deterioration in

standards, actually leads to positive improvements both for the caterer and the children. With such evidence Gardner Merchant will continue to endorse the work of school food committees or SNAGs, and promote them as vehicles capable of facilitating collaborative and continuous improvement to the understanding and provision of healthy school food".

**J G HAWKES**  
Chairman: Gardner Merchant Limited

**ADVANCE WARNING! ADVANCE WARNING!****SNAG INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

**July 3rd 1997, Birmingham**

Prof Philip James will chair this exciting conference for everyone with an interest in food and nutrition for young people in schools.

Put the day in your diary - to receive further details including information on posters and papers for parallel sessions, **please fax preferably** (or phone) the SNAG hotline - 01789 773915 - giving your name, address and tel/fax number.

**ADVANCE WARNING! ADVANCE WARNING!**

This newsletter allows a broad range of views to be expressed here and therefore they are not necessarily the views of SNAG (UK) and its editorial team. SNAG News is managed by the Health Education Trust - a registered charity dedicated to initiating and supporting work with young people to encourage the growth of healthy lifestyles.

# NEWS FROM SNAG GROUPS

## SHIRELAND HIGH SCHOOLS SNAG SUCCESS

Shireland High School in Smethwick in the West Midlands is reaping the benefits of the SNAG initiative.

To set the scene, the school until recently had no on-site catering. For over fifteen years school meals were cooked in a satellite kitchen, transported to the school and then served to pupils in a building aptly described as a corrugated hut. The uptake of school meals was very low; of the 350 pupils entitled to free dinners only 120 pupils were having them. Most pupils either left the school at lunch time to use one of the local take-away establishments or went home for lunch. Basically, the choice of food at school was very restrictive and the environment was not conducive to pupils wanting to stay and eat. Shireland High school is situated in a community where eating and sharing food are particularly important and in the words of the head teacher the school had "no social heart". Fortunately, the school was to undergo redevelopment in 1994 and an on-site kitchen and a modern restaurant were incorporated into expansion plans.

Shireland High's School Nutrition Action Group was established in April 1995, as a pilot, along with two other groups in schools in the Borough of Sandwell. With the approach of a new catering experience the head teacher was keen to develop a food and health policy for the school. Working with

the food policy adviser and the home economics teacher a SNAG was set up. At this stage the new kitchen and restaurant designed by the LEA and an architect was near to completion. However, the finer details such as menu content and some of the internal design had yet to be finalised. The SNAG gave pupils and staff at Shireland High an opportunity to voice their opinions on how they would like to see the new meal service operate. The group wanted a fast food environment and a menu that would allow staff and pupils plenty of choice and enable them to eat a healthy balanced diet.

A survey was carried out through the SNAG to gather opinions from a wider group of pupils and staff regarding services and choice of food and drink to be offered by the new restaurant. Responses were taken on board by Chertwell's, the school meal providers in Sandwell, and the Education Department. Advice was given when necessary by the health professionals in the group, namely community dietitians, the school health nurse and the oral health promotion team.

In September 1996 the new restaurant at Shireland High was opened to pupils and staff. The SNAG organised a competition for pupils to name the restaurant. The large number of entries of a very high standard indicated an overwhelming acceptance of the new eating area. The final name chosen "Shireland Big Bite" is proudly displayed over the entrance to the restaurant.

Benefits of the new restaurant and the establishment of a SNAG at Shireland High have been numerous. Over 400 pupils now visit the dining room at lunch time and the number of opportunities for pupils to purchase food and drinks has been increased with the provision of breakfasts at the start of the school day and snacks at

morning break-time. Eating habits have also started to change. Although there are many pupils still choosing the obligatory chips and beans the cook supervisor has observed an increase in the number of pupils trying out different combinations and becoming more adventurous in their choice. Sandwiches have proved to be popular, as have salads. In addition, less pupils are eating food from local take-away outlets, food that is notoriously high in fats and sugars.

Aside from the nutritional impacts the head teacher reports marked improvements in social behaviour and the working environment. More pupils are staying on-site at lunch time, which improves their safety, and the restaurant provides a warm inviting area for pupils arriving at school early. Perception by the community, staff and pupils of the new restaurant is very high. There

is also a sense of ownership of the new restaurant by pupils reinforcing the schools ethos of encouraging pupil involvement whenever possible.

The work of the SNAG did not stop when the new meal service started. Termly meetings tackle, amongst many issues, the promotion of healthier options, introduction of new menu items, curriculum issues, timings of the school day and vending machines. A recent evaluation of the Shireland SNAG found that all group members value the initiative and look forward to its continuing success.

### For further information contact:

Dr S Simpson  
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council  
Fleak Road  
Oldbury  
West Midlands B69 4AF  
Tel: 0121 569 6508



# S.N.A.G

## SNAG IN A SPECIAL SCHOOL

Mealtimes in a school for children with severe learning difficulties, a number of whom also have physical disabilities, can present problems. Striking the right balance between making facilities accessible and easier to use while providing a stimulating environment can be difficult.

Lindon Bennett is such a school and 18 months ago it formed a SNAG group to examine its requirements for catering provision. The newly appointed Headteacher had ideas that were revolutionary compared to the service then offered. He had had experience of the catering provision at several out-of-borough special schools but was looking for a service that gave his pupils greater involvement. We had already moved some way toward achieving this goal by re-furbishing the dining hall with a variety of mobile tables, which met the needs of the various age groups and abilities and improved access.

Following formal meetings with staff and informal discussions with the children the decision was taken to go all out to encourage the development of a system which allowed the children greater independence - so they could act on and influence their environment.

As is so often the case, the school dining hall was dual purpose and space was restricted. To overcome this problem, during the 1996 Easter recess the counter fascia was removed and a ceiling to floor shutter installed to separate the dining hall and kitchen. This

allowed the mobile serving counter to be moved back into the former kitchen area creating more space in the dining hall and allowing access to all pupils, including wheelchair users. Plates were replaced by snack trays enabling the former Family Service to become a Self-help Service. Pupils were encouraged to both collect their meals and return their empties so the catering staff could remain in the kitchen. The Headteacher assisted the transition with regular meetings with the catering and teaching staff, closely associated with student and classroom debate. The children loved it! The service was phased in and now the process is complete.

To allow this to happen the lunch break is staggered to accommodate all pupils, including the youngest, in the dining hall. A pictorial menu-board system is being devised, which the pupils will complete daily as part of curricular-linked activity.

Hounslow Education Department recently received a very appreciative letter from the Headteacher, Steve Line of Lindon Bennett School expressing his satisfaction with the philosophy of partnership and co-operation between the LEA, the school staff and the children to achieve these very important changes. The last word goes to Steve who said:

"I can't speak highly enough of the work of Hounslow LEA and their catering organisation working with the principles of SNAG and so ensuring the full involvement of my staff and children"

## NEWS FROM SNAG GROUPS

The founder members of the SNAG Group were:

- Health Liaison Officer
- Borough Dietitian
- Headteacher
- Dental Health Officer
- Head of Kitchen
- Client Officer
- Children/Pupils

### For further information contact:

Bruce Headford  
Principal Schools Catering Adviser  
London Borough of Hounslow  
Civic Centre  
Lampton Road  
Hounslow  
Middlesex TW3 4DN  
Tel: 0181 862 5341

Steve Line (Headteacher)  
Lindon Bennett School  
Main Street  
Hamworth  
Middlesex  
Tel: 0181 898 0479

## FOOD FOR HEALTH NETWORK

The Food for Health Network is a new multidisciplinary, individual membership organisation for everyone involved in working for good health through food. It aims to offer an opportunity to share

good practice with other people working in this area, support education, training and research, and promote initiatives to give people control over the way food and health affects their lives.

The new Network is seeking members from a wide range of professions including agriculturalists, caterers, community workers, environmentalists, food law enforcement officers, health workers, researchers, students and, of course, teachers, parents and consumers. All members are accepted on the understanding that they are committed to promoting good health through food, and the Network will accept funding from tobaccos, alcohol, pharmaceutical or food companies.

Already a registered charity, the Network's first national conference is being held on 1 October in London, at which more materials will be available.

### For further information contact:

Food for Health Network  
P.O. Box 972  
London EC2A 3JE

## New Pack Provides the Facts

"Milk and Children" is a pack for all those involved in decisions about the provision of milk within schools, nurseries and playgroups.

It has been produced in response to the requests the NDC nutritionists frequently receive for information to underpin the nutritional rationale for providing milk in schools, and on eligibility to receive free or subsidised milk. It is likely to be of interest to many sectors, including dietitians, school nurses, caterers, headteachers and other staff, governors, playgroup leaders and health promotion staff.



For a free copy, write to the Education Department (SNAGs), National Dairy Council, 5/7 Princes Street, London W1M 0AP.

Advertisement

# CATERING IN SCHOOLS

## BRAKE BROS

You see the lorries but do you know the company and its commitment to school meals?

Brake Bros Foodservice is the leading frozen food wholesaler in the UK, regularly delivering to schools throughout England, Scotland and Wales. Frozen food, delivered regularly in Brakes' own temperature controlled vehicles direct to school kitchens, comprises an important part of the menu for many schools. Brakes' products are safe, reliable and consistent in their quality. Important considerations for any school feeding.

Brake Bros' product range covers all aspects of school catering from the traditional hot dinner to snacks and cafeteria service, as well as foods which can be used to extend the food service throughout the school day.

Nutrition is critical when planning school meals and Brake Bros recognises this when developing new products, while never forgetting that children enjoy fun food and all food must taste good to be eaten. Brake Bros demands a good nutrition standard from all suppliers. Nutrition labeling is provided on packaging and ingredients are scrutinised for additives which may be considered undesirable by local authorities. Advice and information are also available from the Company Dietitian to help caterers plan their

meals, with the School Meals Assessment Pack (SMAP) analysis available if required.

Catering for special diets and allergies is now a regular feature in school meals, so Brake Bros can provide ingredient information for individual products or lists of suitable foods for the most common allergens such as milk, gluten and nuts. With the increasing popularity of vegetarian food in school meals, many new products have been developed with schools particularly in mind.

Brake Bros is keen to support the SNAG initiative and will do all they can to help schools who are trying to improve and develop the food provision as part of a whole school approach to nutrition and health. During 1997 the company will also be supporting **National School Meals Week** and at all times is committed to helping everyone in school meals to provide a service which encourages customers to keep coming back for more.

So remember, by the time you see another Brake Bros vehicle, you and many thousands of school children will have eaten some of their products within a school meal - we hope you enjoyed them.

### For further information contact:

Eileen Steintock Brake Bros  
Rose Lane  
Lerham Heath  
Nr Maidstone  
Kent ME13 2JH  
Tel: 01622 402080

Advertisement



## CATERING DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN SCHOOL MEALS

On May 23 this year MLC hosted a conference attended by nutrition and catering professionals concerned about the quality of school meals. As well as providing a first hand insight into the changes within the meat industry over the last few years, and specifically addressing the reductions seen in the fat content of red meat, the conference provided an opportunity to update on the SNAG initiative and a chance to discuss some successes and the way forward. There was unanimous consensus that the SNAG approach was working where determination to achieve change existed.

The highlight of the day was undoubtedly the chef demonstration which introduced some new ideas to the school menu. Colin Capon, a distinguished and highly successful chef, with a keen awareness of the importance of a balanced diet, yet with an ability to create exciting meals even within a tight catering budget, presented three concepts for modern, and appetising school meals, including a no added fat pastry! The recipes are listed here and anyone wishing to receive copies of the full recipes, please contact Sammie Harvey on 01908 844196.

### Colin Capon's recipes for school meals

*Baked Cornbread and Minced Lamb Fian, with no added fat pastry*

*Marinated pork with Noodles and Thai Stir-fried Vegetables*

*Poussins of Beef Stuffed with Leeks*

## APPLE DAY IN SCHOOLS

Apple Day, 21st October, is an annual celebration of the huge variety of apples and other tree fruits which we have developed over the centuries. It was launched in 1960 and since then schools have played an active role in Apple Day at all levels, from the simple tasting of different varieties through cooking apple based dishes to planting small orchards in the school grounds. County Caterers have also taken up the initiative and have used Apple Day as a means of promoting healthy eating throughout the schools which they serve.

Apples are wonderful cross curricular resources. They have been the inspiration for poets and painters, they have helped in formulating scientific theories, what would Newton have done without them? Their enormous variety also lends itself to the comparison and analysis of taste, texture, vitamin content, etc as well as a huge range of dishes. Apple Day provides an enjoyable way of introducing healthy eating, showing that variety matters and that there are strong cultural associations between the food we eat and the stories, songs, customs and traditions linked to the way we live.

### Apple Day 21st October

An annual celebration of the huge variety of apples we have developed over the centuries and the traditions, recipes, songs, stories associated with them which we are in danger of losing.

For more information on how and why to celebrate Apple day send a large size to Jane Kendall, Common Ground, Seven Dials Warehouse, 44 Earlsam St, London WC2H 9LA



THE SCOTTISH OFFICE

## SCOTLAND'S HEALTH A CHALLENGE TO US ALL

# Eating for Health

A DIET ACTION PLAN FOR SCOTLAND

### SCOTLAND'S HEALTH - A CHALLENGE TO US ALL

"Eating for Health" is a diet action plan for Scotland prepared by the Scottish Diet Action Group and led by the Scottish Office. In SNAG News Summer 1996 we promised you a summary on its main findings as they affect schools and young people - here they are!

#### Action Points

The Scottish Office Education and Industry Department and local authorities should vigorously encourage development of policies on health education, including nutrition and diet, and the progression of these through school development plans. These should be monitored, evaluated and reported upon by local authorities.

The Scottish Education and Industry Department should draw the attention of School Board chairpersons to the Action Plan, its targets and the benefits sought for children's health.

The Scottish Office Education and Industry Department should consider distributing to education authorities, self governing and independent schools the advisory material produced by the Guidelines for Educational Materials Project Team of the Nutrition Task Force in England.

The Scottish Office Education and Industry Department should introduce a short course on practical food preparation for healthy eating for all pupils post 12. This course should be supported by nationally produced materials and resources.

Local authority education departments should ensure that all staff involved in health education receive appropriate training in nutrition and diet.

The Scottish Office Education and Industry Department should ensure that all trainee teachers receive adequate training in health education, including nutrition and diet, appropriate to their course.

The Scottish Office Education and Industry Department should

distribute to education authorities and self-governing and independent schools The Model Nutritional Guidelines for Catering Specifications for the Public Sector in Scotland which can be taken into account when determining contract specifications for school meals.

In relation to meals provision in primary schools, the opportunity to provide, at all meals times, a limited range of menus with vegetables and fruit included in the price of the meals should be explored as a matter of priority.

Schools should be encouraged to set up School Nutrition Action Groups which offer a multi-agency approach to tackle food-related education and health issues.

Health Boards should explore the potential for partnership arrangements to facilitate the introduction of healthy eating initiatives tailored specifically to the dietary needs of children in schools in low income areas.

The report includes a separate and quite excellent "Model Nutritional Guidelines for Catering Specifications in the Public Sector in Scotland" which also references the importance of SNAG's in focusing on partnership and healthy alliances - and gives a clear summary of the principles of SNAG as a policy tool. **The only thing it fails to do is give the SNAG contact number and address so please pass these on whenever you can.**

**For further information:**  
Public Health Policy Unit  
Scottish Office, Dept of Health  
Room 14  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh EH1 3DG

**Copies of the report from:**  
HMSO Bookshop  
71 Lothian Road  
Edinburgh EH3 9AZ  
Tel: 0131 228 4181  
ISBN 0 7480 3138 3

# SCHOOL TALK

### NUTRITIONAL GUIDANCE ON SCHOOL FOOD IN ENGLAND

Readers of previous SNAG newsletters will recall reading that a project team of the Nutrition Task Force has been developing nutritional guidance for school food providers.

The guidance, entitled *Eating Well at School*, is now being pilot tested in a number of schools and with some Local Education Authorities in England. Comments are also being sought from headteachers and governors, contract caterers and suppliers, and voluntary organisations.

Key principles in the guidance are the importance of a balanced diet and focus on foods, rather than nutrients. These principles, we hope, will ensure consistent messages, based on the Balance of Good Health, are given to consumers of all ages.

Publication date is now likely to be November, rather than summer, as previously notified, it will be available free of charge. If you are interested in being put on the mailing list, please write to:

Dr Sue Martin Dept of Health  
Room 688B Skipton House  
80 London Road  
London SE1 6LW

*Editor's note: SNAG News will carry a full summary report in its January 97 edition.*

### ADVANCE WARNING! ADVANCE WARNING!

#### SNAG INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

July 3rd 1997, Birmingham

Prof Philip James will chair this exciting conference for everyone with an interest in food and nutrition for young people in schools. Put the day in your diary - to receive further details including information on posters and papers for parallel sessions, please fax preferably (or phone) the SNAG hotline - 01789 773915 - giving your name, address and tel/fax number.

ADVANCE WARNING! ADVANCE WARNING!

# S.N.A.G

# SNAG EFFECTIVENESS CONFIRMED

## 1996 GARDNER MERCHANT SCHOOL MEALS SURVEY

The 1996 Gardner Merchant School Meals Survey confirms the benefits of school food committees. Where such committees existed reported responses showed a very marked difference for the better. Improvements were seen in both support of the catering provision, and perception of school meals as healthy. In addition student understanding about healthy eating also appears to be enhanced.

- 71% of pupils thought the information they received on healthy eating was about right, but where there was a food committee this rises to 80%.
- The frequency of eating a school meal rises from 2.56 times per week overall to 2.63 where there is a food committee.
- The customers perception of healthiness of the school meals provided increases where there is a food committee from 66% overall who said they were either very or quite healthy to 82%.



## GARDNER MERCHANT

- The following findings illustrate how and where food committees are making their mark in schools.
- Respondents attending schools with food committees were more likely to give an accurate definition of healthy eating eg. 19% of children said healthy eating was having a balanced diet against 15% overall.
- The number of children aged 11-16 who said healthy eating was either very or quite frequently discussed in class has stayed the same. However, where there is a food committee the figures rise from 56% overall to 73%.
- Only 33% of pupils believed their school has a clear policy on healthy eating and 43% thought healthy eating was encouraged. Where there was a food committee the figures rise from 56% overall to 73%.

- The frequency of chip eating falls from an average of 2.9 times per week to 2.7 when there is a food committee.
  - The presence of a food committee enhances the numbers favouring fresh fruit for dessert from 6 to 16%.
- The evidence from the 1996 Gardner Merchant School Meals Survey confirms what in the past we only suspected - food committees of SNAG's can and do work. They positively contribute to the effective promotion of healthy eating in schools and offer identifiable benefits for pupils, teachers, parents and caterers. However, sadly only some 12% of children interviewed said that their school had a food committee or group. Gardner Merchant will therefore continue to offer their support to such initiatives, so that

the benefits to customers can be extended, and fully realised.

Maureen Strong, BSc SRD FRSH  
Cert. Ed (Accredited Sports  
Dietitian)

### For further information contact:

Maureen Strong  
Gardner Merchant  
Kenley House  
Kenley Lane  
Kenley  
Surrey CR8 5ED  
Tel: 0181 763 1212

## THE BRITISH NUTRITION FOUNDATION

The British Nutrition Foundation was established in 1967 as an impartial scientific charity providing reliable information and scientifically based advice on nutrition and related health matters.

Based in High Holborn, London, the Foundation's staff of experienced nutrition scientists and educators, provide an information service for anyone with an interest in nutrition - health professionals, teachers, consumers, the media, government departments and industry.

The Foundation produces a range of publications - from authoritative scientific reports and reviews of topical issues on nutrition to educational resources for schools.

The 'Food - a fact of life' food and nutrition programme for schools launched in April 1996, includes a range of colourful resources for 5-7, 7-11 and 11-16 year olds. Two further units for this age group, 'Diet and Health' and 'Food Technology' are currently under development. Both packs will contain colourful information sheets, data sheets, case studies, photographs, posters and videos. Each pack will be tested out in use in over 100 schools throughout the UK before publication in 1997.

The Foundation supports teachers by running in service training sessions, a modular Food Technology Training Course and regional and national conferences. In 1996 the National Nutrition Education Conference, 'Nutrition and Young People' held in Manchester, included presentations on:

- Food, growth and development
- Body image and disordered eating
- Vegetarianism
- SNAGs
- The role of nutrition in the school curriculum

### For further information contact:

Stephanie Valentine  
British Nutrition Foundation  
52-54 High Holborn  
London WC1V 6RQ  
Tel: 0171 404 6504



## INTERIM RESULTS FROM BIRMINGHAM

School Nutrition Action Groups enable pupils to influence the food provision in their school. A partnership between the pupils, caterers, teachers and school managers is needed for change to happen. What is also needed is knowing what changes you want to make. In Birmingham, to make sure that changes were relevant a questionnaire was used in each school. The minimum requirement was for two classes of Year 7 and two classes of Year 10 however many schools did more - either two classes from every school year or all of Year 7 and Year 10.

I analysed the questionnaires and reported back to the key staff member within two weeks. A full copy of the report goes to Citiserve (the school meals contractor) and Client Services.

The questionnaire is used to highlight two main areas: what changes pupils would like to make to the food provision pupils attitude towards health, food and weight.

### Key questionnaire results

The questionnaire is anonymous and there is an open ended question asking pupils 'What would be the first two changes you would make to the food and drink served in school?' The results from all schools (a pupil sample size of 3006) have been compiled.

### The top ten changes pupils wanted

TOTAL FOR ALL SCHOOLS	
1 MORE CHOICE/NOT THE SAME EVERY DAY	28%
2 CHEAPER PRICES	19%
3 MORE HEALTHIER FOOD	17%
4 MORE FRUIT/VARIED FRUIT	7%
5 MORE VEGETABLES/VARIED VEGETABLES	6%
6 FOOD TO BE WARMER	6%
6 LARGER PORTIONS	5%
6 LESS FATTY/FRIED FOOD	5%
6 MORE CHOICE OF FIZZY DRINKS	5%
10 HEALTHIER DRINKS	4%

Some of the more unusual suggestions were

- to have a waiter
- to eat as much as you want when you want

Some of the suggestions were excellent ideas but not always possible to achieve, such as self service, and cheaper prices.

Also on the questionnaire is a list of eight foods that pupils can tick if they want them to be sold in their school and the results for these foods are:

TOTAL FOR ALL SCHOOLS	
PASTA MEALS	68%
MEAT KEBABS	57%
FRUIT SALAD	54%
MINI SAUSAGE ROLLS	36%
STIR FRY VEGETABLES	35%
MEXICAN FOOD	28%
SALADS	28%
MINI SCOTCH EGGS	19%

There was definite gender bias in choice of food with meat kebabs more popular in boys' schools and fruit salad in girls schools but overall the top three choices were meat kebabs, fruit salad and pasta meals. Mini sausage rolls and mini Scotch eggs might seem a little odd but in fact are healthier alternatives to the present day jumbo sausage rolls. Pupils were also asked to give specific ideas on vegetarian choices and sandwiches.

## CHANGES IN ACTION

Each school's Nutrition Action Group decides which changes need to be acted on first. Quite often many of the foods the pupils have asked for are already available but the majority of the pupils do not realise this. So what is needed is improved publicity within the school about the range of choices available.

The School Nutrition Action Group works with the caterers to publicise changes amongst all the pupils either via assemblies, school newsletters, specially designed posters or notice boards. This is important for two reasons.

1. Pupils generally make up their minds about what they are going to buy before they reach the serving hatch therefore if new foods are available is it essential that they are well publicised.

2. There are only 6-12 pupils on the School Nutrition Action Group but they are there to represent the whole school so it is important that the whole school gets involved.

Changes are happening, improvements are coming in and this is due to the combined efforts and enthusiasm of the pupils, teachers, the caterers (Citiserve) and the HEA Client Services Officers.

### For further details contact:

Sandra Passmore  
Health Education Unit  
Martineau Education Centre  
74 Baldon Road  
Birmingham B32 2EH  
Tel: 0121 428 2262  
Fax: 0121 428 2363

 **Birmingham City Council**  
Education Department

**BIRMINGHAM**  
  
**HEALTH**  
EDUCATION UNIT



# NOTICE BOARD

## EAT YOUR WORDS - NATIONAL COMPETITION LAUNCH

Children today are surrounded by food messages and advertisements. But how can they be helped to make sense of these and make wise food choices? The National Heart Forum has produced Eat Your Words, a new educational resource, for children aged 7-11, that makes learning about food and health fun. Eat Your Words can help your school become a health promoting school.

To celebrate the launch, schools buying Eat Your Words will be able to enter a nation-wide schools competition, based on exercises in the resource. Full details of the competition and an entry form come with every Eat Your Words pack.

**For further information contact:** Samantha Church, National Heart Forum, Tavistock House South, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9LG

## NATIONAL DAIRY COUNCIL

Two one-day seminars organised by the National Dairy Council will address issues relating to vitamin and mineral intake in school age children. The seminars will be held in:

**London on Tuesday, 12 November 1996 at the Royal College of Physicians**

**Glasgow on Tuesday 11 March 1997 at the Kelvin Conference Centre.**

The registration fee for each seminar is £29.50 (inclusive of VAT) which includes lunch and refreshments throughout the day. For further information, and an application form please write to Jo Molyneux, Nutritionist, National Dairy Council, 5-7 John Prince's Street, London W1M 0AP

## GLASGOW CALLING!

### Re Smart Cards

In January/February 1996, Catering Direct, Strathclyde Region Catering Services, implemented their "Keep Your Balance" healthy eating initiative (British Dietetic Association's Adviser article, Spring 1995) in all 850 primary schools in Strathclyde.

As from 1 April 1996, Strathclyde was disaggregated into 12 new unitary authorities and the Dietitian has transferred to the new Glasgow City Council.

In the near future a cashless system of school meal payments will be introduced into some of our secondary schools. We have evolved equations using the original "Keep Your Balance" - yellow, green and blue pie which would credit "points" to individual pupils making balanced choices.

We would be grateful if anyone who has been involved with similar systems or who has any experience/knowledge of a "points" system, using an EPOS (electronic point of sale) for making balanced (healthy) choices, could please contact us.

Anna Dalziel/Margaret Robinson  
Dietitians  
Glasgow City Council  
Department of Clearing and Catering Services  
Blair Court  
Port Dundas Business Park  
100 Borron Street Glasgow G4 9XE  
Tel: 0141 353 9000  
Fax: 0141 353 9100

Now one and all, large and small - I'm ready for your contributions, complaints and concerns for the next issue to be published in early Spring 1997 - copy deadline - 13th December 1996.

Guidance Notes for contributors

Please supply  
1 Articles: 200/250 words  
Noticeboard: 50/75 words

2 A typed hard copy with name, title, address, tel/fax numbers as appropriate

3 A copy on disk (Wordperfect, Word or ASCII format)

For the disc copy please keep material in basic type face and avoid bold or underlining to save editing time this end. If you want your disc returned please print your name and address on it.

Please send all articles to:  
Joel Harvey, The Health Education Trust, 18 High Street, Broom, Alcester, Worcs., B50 4HJ  
Tel or fax 01789 773915

## DIGGING FOR HEALTH

"Growing Food in Cities" is a new report which promotes the health, education and environmental benefits of urban food growing projects. Published by the National Food Alliance and the Sustainable Agriculture, Food and the Environment Alliance, it is full of inspirational examples of projects by, among others, schools, where children have dug up their grey tarmac playgrounds and planted fruit and vegetables instead. These plots provide wonderful opportunities for hands on health and environmental education as children learn to grow and cook the produce, and to understand the links between dietary health and the health of the environment. Copies of "Growing Food in Cities" are available for £10 from the National Food Alliance, 5-11 Worship Street, London EC2A 2BH, or contact Tara Garnett, project officer on 0171 628 2442 for more information.

## SCHOOL FOOD ACTION

In October, the School Meals Campaign will be launching "School Food Action", an invaluable handbook for all those striving to provide healthy school food. The handbook will be priced £14 inc p&p (cheques payable to BSS). For copies send a cheque with order to School Food Action, PO Box 7, London W5 2GQ

For more information on the Campaign contact Samantha Church, School Meals Campaign, PO Box 402, London WC1H 9TZ

## Join the SNAGs Network (Free of charge!)

The School Nutrition Action Group (SNAGs) concept is a policy tool designed to help teachers, caterers, school managers, parents and children to work together in improving the provision of healthy food and nutrition education in schools.

Further copies of the SNAGs guide are available at £9.50 (inc. p&p) each.

### SNAGs Advice line offers:-

Membership of SNAGs Network and inclusion on our mailing list for SNAG News.

Further information on a range of services available to individuals and organisations including presentations and workshops from experienced health, education and dietetic consultants.

Free telephone advice on all issues to do with food policy development in schools.

Please telephone or fax the SNAGs Advice line on 01789 773915 or write to SNAGs, c/o Health Education Trust, 18 High Street, Broom, Alcester, Worcs., B50 4HJ for more information.

The Health Education Trust gratefully acknowledges the support of TESCO Stores Limited in their funding support for the SNAGs Advice line.

## ADVANCE WARNING! ADVANCE WARNING!

Do not forget the SNAG International Conference. Details on front page

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