

# WHY YOUR SCHOOL SHOULD SET UP A SCHOOL NUTRITION ACTION GROUP (SNAG)



A School Nutrition Action Group (SNAG) is a way to bring different members of the school community together to make positive changes to the school food environment. A SNAG involves:

- pupils
- teachers
- parents
- members of the catering team (cook, contract catering rep, kitchen staff)
- front-of-house staff from the dining room
- senior leadership members / governors

This helps embed Food for Life as a whole school approach.

## Why does a SNAG matter to our school food culture?

In 2010 Food for Life Partnership (FFLP) surveyed 111 schools on the benefits of running a SNAG. The result are as follows:

### FOOD CITIZENS OF THE FUTURE

- It was found that Year 5 and 6 children who have taken part in FFLP related education on sustainability **were more than twice as likely to hold very positive attitudes** towards organic, local, free range and fair trade foods, compared with children who had had no such education in the last year.
- For all primary school year groups involved in SNAGs, **17% more children rated school meals positively**, and over 24% more children rated their dining room positively compared with baseline respondents.

### THE TAKE HOME EFFECT

**77%** OF PARENTS REPORTED THAT THEIR CHILD DISCUSSED HEALTHIER FOOD CHOICES AT HOME.

- 42% of parents with children at FFLP schools reported that their child had raised the issue of fair trade at home.
- 27% of children had talked about locally grown food at home.
- Some children had been able to connect this with the **concept of food miles** with **15% of parents reporting this had been discussed at home** as a consequence of the programme.

These above figures suggest that children from FFLP schools with active SNAGs are able to understand social and environmental issues related to the food they eat and to discuss these important issues with those around them.

A SNAG is an opportunity to meet to discuss food culture within your school and hear from different people's perspectives. Children may have a completely different view of lunchtime than adults.

The SNAG is an opportunity to identify what can improve lunchtimes through problem solving as a group. Children are happy to suggest solutions to barriers to healthy eating.

Actions that are decided through the SNAG group are easier to implement through the school. For example, a packed lunch policy decided through the SNAG group is more likely to be adhered to by children and parents.

# Here are some examples of work achieved

## FOOD QUALITY

To improve the health of the whole school community

### MILTON SCHOOL - ROTHERHAM

After liaising with the midday supervisors, the SNAG organised a pupil questionnaire. Through this, they found out that only 41% of the children were happy with the school meals. The group put forward their suggestions of improvement in a meeting with the catering company managers. Following on from this meeting they were able to **have more topping choices on their jacket potatoes and started offering a salad bar, milk, and yogurt during lunchtime.** The new system is up and running and has positive feedback from the children.

### ST STEPHEN'S C OF E JUNIOR SCHOOL – SOUTH GLOUCESTER

The SNAC (School Nutrition Action Club) at St Stephen's have focused on photographing lunchboxes to build an overall picture of food consumption at lunch times. This helps towards drawing up a new **healthy eating school policy** that everyone was involved in, which is widely understood and valued.

The SNAC put together an after school food tasting event to recruit more members from the school community. Teachers, lunch staff, governors, parents and pupils were all invited. The school catering team made samples of the school lunches for invitees to try. Everyone had an informal discussion about food at St Stephen's and the SNAC presented their ideas for a new whole school food policy. Attendees gave feedback to everything covered via post-its and flip charts.

To follow up the successful event, the policy was sent to all school staff who reviewed it and provided feedback on key parts of the policy. This brought up **debates around how to monitor/encourage 'good' choices.**





To progress by developing projects

To bring together senior leadership, pupils, catering staff, governors and the school community to steer forward food and health issues

To provide high quality food education. Linking this with the curriculum, school life, health, climate, and sustainability.



## FOOD LEADERSHIP AND FOOD CULTURE

### COPTHORNE INFANTS SCHOOLS - DERBYSHIRE

The SNAG at Copthorne Infant School consists of children from EYFS up to Year 2, along with teaching staff, a lunchtime supervisor and a school governor. They have put together a pupil questionnaire for children to complete at home with their parents. This ensures parents are involved, whilst also raising pupil voice, allowing the pupils views and opinions to be heard and acted upon.

The group came up with a great idea for 'Table Manner Captains' to be on duty every lunchtime. **These 'captains' teach others on their table about how to use a knife and fork correctly and to ensure manners are being kept up.** Additionally, the group have been able to organise for **the staff to eat with children** at special events. One of which is called 'Book and Brekkie.'



# FOOD EDUCATION

## MANSEL PRIMARY - SHEFFIELD

Mansel Primary School use their SNAG meetings as the engine of their Food for Life School Award, with the **targets for the SNAG's activities linking to specific criteria**. The pupils range from Year 2 - Year 6 and there are 6 staff members including; teaching staff, catering manager and the headteacher. **They discuss elements of the award, such as sustainability topics**. Responses from parents and pupils also help direct their meetings and actions.

To broaden knowledge on sustainable food and farming



## COMMUNITY AND PARTNERSHIPS

To make relationships throughout the school community

Involving members of all parts of the community in decisions can:

- Bring together different viewpoints
- Empower catering staff, cooks and parents
  - Be a source of leadership development for pupils

### ST GILES CE PRIMARY – WALSALL

The school has set up the SNAG (made up of children, senior leaders, lunchtime assistants and kitchen staff) to ensure that **pupil voices from throughout the school are at the centre of their decision making**.

Throughout the SNAG meetings, lots of positives are identified, as well as **identifying areas for improvements**. The SNAG was well organised with a planned agenda and a really engaged group. The group takes time to **record what's discussed and share agreed actions with the rest of the school community**. A few examples of the actions taken:

- Conducting regular lunchtime surveys and presenting findings to the whole school
- Flower arrangements in the dining hall, supported by the church flower arranging team
- Rewards for clear floors around the tables (as a way of reducing food dropped)
- Special 'shout out' rewards for children helping each other and presenting polite behaviours to staff

To overcome issues surrounding these topics and take action as a whole community



### WESTHOUSES SCHOOL – DERBYSHIRE

Westhouses School have a number of 'SNAG ambassadors' who lead on implementing changes during their Food for Life journey. The **ambassadors change every 8 weeks** to make sure all are heard, and they include lunchtime staff, the council catering team, and the chef. They **document their Food for Life progress in the school newspaper** in order to reach all children and parents.

Furthermore, they have led a brilliant **pupil review via a suggestion box**. The suggestions are reviewed and actioned, benefiting their lunchtime dining environment and raising their pupil voice. From this they have decided to:

- Create bright food related signs or art for the school hall
- Display the choices for lunchtime and information in school and on their website
- A 'Parent Day' will be implemented for each school year
- Calming music will be used to promote a healthy, happy eating environment. Once a term (for good behaviour) children can chose the music.

To ensure knowledge and information circulates throughout the whole school community

