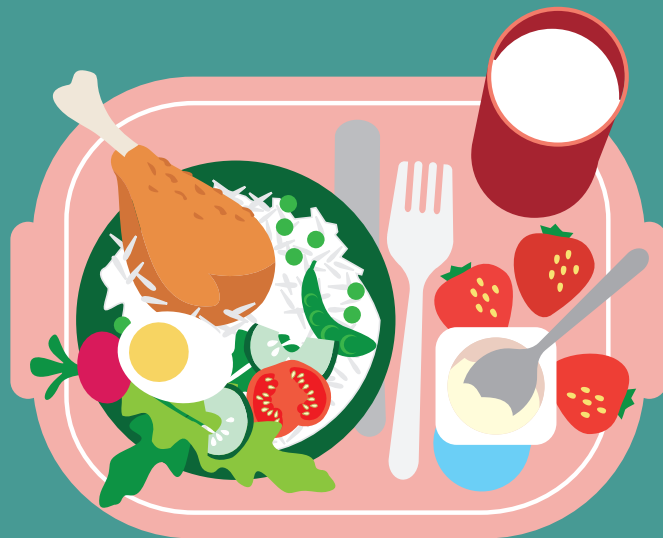


# How to increase your take up of FREE SCHOOL MEALS

This document provides 21 simple ideas to help maximise the number of pupils in your school who take a free school meal. It will also help to increase the number of pupils who take a universal infant free school meal or a paid school meal.

*This resource has been produced collaboratively by the Leeds Free School Meals Strategy Group members.*



1. Carry out a survey with pupils and parents/carers to identify barriers to uptake of free school meals.

2. Set up an advice stand or stall at events or parents'/carers' evenings.



3. Send letters home to parents/carers to remind them that they could be eligible for a free school meal.

4. Speak sensitively with individuals who bring a packed lunch to find out why they don't choose to take a school meal.



5. Build a good relationship with your catering provider and cook or chef.



9. School Food Ambassadors should meet regularly with catering staff to provide feedback for continuous improvement.

6. Invite parents/carers in to try your school meals with the pupils.

7. Have a comments box in the dining room for pupils to feedback on the food and lunchtime experience.



8. Recruit pupils as 'School Food Ambassadors' to represent the voice of their peers and lead the changes for better school food.



10. Send text messages home to remind parents/carers that a free school meal could save them up to £420 per year.



- 11.** Ensure you have an effective packed lunch policy or guidance in place that is aligned to the School Food Standards.



- 16.** Make sure your dining environment is sociable, happy, attractive, clean and inviting. Use table cloths, flowers or artwork on the walls to improve the atmosphere.



- 17.** Display a photo and phone number in the school reception of the member of staff families can speak to about school meals or free school meals.

- 18.** Implement promotions and incentives such as a day each year when school meals are free or £1 for everyone.



- 12.** Carry out tasting sessions for pupils or offer samples during the lunchtime.

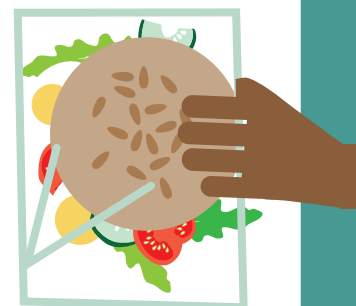
- 13.** Deliver an assembly on the benefits of eating a school meal.

- 14.** Cook and prepare dishes from the school menu as part of the design & technology curriculum.

- 15.** Hold exciting and creative school meal theme days. Ask pupils, cooks and/or parents/carers to choose the themes.

- 19.** Make sure you offer food that meets pupils' dietary and cultural needs as well as a range of taste preferences.

- 20.** Implement a pre-ordering system where pupils can collect a 'grab-bag' without the need to queue.



- 21.** Make sure your queuing times are kept to a minimum. Try a banding system or even a family service to reduce waiting time. Secondary schools could try adding extra service points or staggering the lunchtime for different year groups.

