

Parent and Carer Questionnaire – Food in School Summer 2016

As part of the review process of our Healthy School Award, this year, we have been reviewing our policy and practice this year related to improving our children's health and wellbeing. The review covers a number of areas including Healthy Eating, Physical Activity, Emotional Health and Wellbeing and our PSHE education curriculum etc. One of our key focus areas this term has been 'Food in School.' In our Summer 2016 parent questionnaire we asked parents/carers to give us their views on:

- School lunches and packed lunches;
- Healthy tuck shop;
- Food offered at Out of School Club;
- Food sent in by parents to share for birthdays and celebrations and
- Our food technology curriculum.

54 questionnaires were returned. The Leadership Team, Governors, School Cook and Senior Supervisor have reviewed these submissions. A summary of the written submissions follows and where appropriate a response from the school.

School lunches and packed lunches	
Positive comments	Ideas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are happy with the varied food choices provided for school lunches (and Out of School Club and tuck shop) • Lunch options look like healthy balanced meals • The school lunches are varied and healthy • The school lunch (and tuck shop) are all healthy with a good range provided. • The Joinos and meal selector for main meals is good • Happy with main meals • My child is extremely fussy about meals and I send him to school with a variety of foods to try. He has always been encouraged while at school. • School lunches offer a good range with suitable portion size • My children have school lunches with special dietary requirements – the lunches offered are varied and offer a wide selection of healthy food that the children mostly like. • School lunch choice is good and my child enjoys it • Food offered appears to be of a good variety • I am pleased with the food offered • My child enjoys school lunches and is happy with choices. • MPFS offers a great variety of healthy foods as part of school lunches and my children always talk positively about the food they receive. • My son is a fan of the school lunches • My child enjoys choosing his meal options and the option to alter is useful. • Happy with the food my child gets – she loves it all • Good variety of interesting dishes on offer as main courses. Good to see different flavours – curry and chilli etc. • Cook does a great job of making home-made interesting meals. Free school dinners is a great opportunity to encourage children to eat a wide range of foods that they may be unfamiliar with. • Schools around the country have tried various methods such as mixing ages of children eating together, having staff take turns and having meals with parents etc. In France some schools have just one option (plus vegetarian, dietary options) to encourage children to broaden their horizons. These ideas are limited by the particular logistical constraints of a given school but a creative and considered approach to lunches can reap great benefits. We are delighted that MPFS is undertaking this review. • My child has always had and enjoyed school lunches and they seem to be full of healthy things. • My children always talk positively about the food they receive • We are happy with the offer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm not sure the children should be offered a sweet desert every day for lunch • I would strongly disagree with offering a dessert of cakes, biscuits after every school meal – yogurt or fruit is plenty. Cakes should be an occasional treat not a daily norm • I find it frustrating that packed lunch children are discouraged from bringing in unhealthy items yet those on hot dinners are served a pudding every day • Better to offer cake or biscuit only on a couple of days. If its on offer every day, children will choose it over fruit. • Not necessary to have a pudding after lunch every day • Slightly concerned about the sugary desserts on offer – cake, giant cookies etc. Consider offering savoury dessert options – cheese or wholefood options such as flapjacks • Until school there is no way I would have fed my child cake each day. I don't think a child has the knowledge and self-control to balance the occasional cake day with choosing fruit and yogurt on other days. • Why are the puddings the children have every day so sugary? I would never give my child chocolate cake and custard every day for example. Things like sugar free jelly and milk lolly ice creams are lovely but with far less sugar. • Is it always necessary to have sweet dessert choices – could it perhaps be just yogurt, fruit or similar. • Brown bread should be offered as an option for lunches • My concern is that the healthy eating messages taught in the classroom doesn't seem to translate to the lunches - Does pizza need to be served with chips • Pizza is a choice every week - could it be every second or third? • Pizza and burgers on offer too regularly • My child has an issue with food and offering pizzas and burgers at school is inappropriate as is puddings. • Offer more vegetable/protein toppings for pizza • Sometimes the coloured band system limits choice on the day as the children would sometimes prefer something else – although I understand the need to ensure limited waste. • My child says that despite whatever her choice is, there is always pasta which has led to some very odd carb fuelled meals • Although it's good to have a salad bar, it seems possible for children to load their plates with extra carbs – bread and pasta alongside the potatoes on their plate • Pasta should not be on the salad bar as children choose more carbs instead of veg • Offer more options other than chips – boiled or mashed potato. • Fresh or plain fish could be offered instead of battered. • Meat-free choices do not include rice, new potatoes or mashed potato only oven baked wedges – more choice needed. • I have absolutely no idea how much of the more healthy foods my child actually has as we get no feedback - does he eat veg? • My child understands healthy choices but would always choose an unhealthy option • School dinners offer opportunity for children to eat together around a table that may not happen at home. I would like to see children eat around a table and served family style with fewer choices and less reliant on staples like wedges and pizza. • I think it's easy for children not to have fruit or veg – a greater range of fresh fruit would be an improvement • More variety needed. More options on jacket potato and sandwich fillings • My children prefers packed lunch – both said the quality of the cooked meals deteriorated when the provider changed. • Would like starter guidance from school on packed lunches – school may need to have more set guidance i.e. no chocolate • Some children bring in lunches with far too many treats and it's not fair • My child's speed of eating has increased and table manners decreased once starting school dinners – an investment in conversation around the table is important but pressures on numbers is understood • I am opposed to the 'one size fits all message on the NT Healthy Eating leaflets. Low fat is not bad for most children. Low sugar can cause diet choices linked to sweeteners which are potentially toxic • Children often say that there is not enough water with their lunch – make more jugs available especially in summer.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are pleased that generally we have very good daily feedback from the children and staff about the quality and variety of food on offer for lunch. Take up of school lunches is high. Our provider is North Tyneside Catering Services, an award winning provider who aims to provide healthy, well-balanced menus that pupils will enjoy. All meals are freshly prepared in school each morning and meet the rigorous school food guidelines set out by the Government. • A three week menu ensures that the children can experience a wide variety of foods. 	

- In addition to the hot meal and dessert of the day, seasonal vegetables and a choice of potatoes; a selection of homemade salads from the salad bar; a selection of sandwiches and oven baked jacket potatoes with choice of fillings and a selection of fresh fruit and yoghurts is available each day.
- Please see the new Autumn 2016 menu online [North Tyneside School Meals Menu](#)
- Questionnaire feedback is also generally positive, however although the school is currently not involved in the school lunch menu design, we have requested a meeting with Catering Services to discuss parental feedback about some of the food choices on offer. We will forward any feedback from NT Catering Services in due course.
- The school provides a helpful guidance leaflet for parents about packed lunches. This is available on the school website.

Healthy tuck shop	
Positive comments	Ideas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New changes to tuck shop in line with healthy eating is welcome and appreciated • Really glad to hear that this is now fruit • My daughter loves the fruit, especially the nectarines • Good now that fruit is available • My child enjoys what is on offer • My children are vocal and positive about being able to make healthy choices and about the responsibility of being able to spend money and the autonomy of making their own choices. • Helpful as it allows children to make good choices • Good idea – children love it • Pleased it's just once a week and its healthy • I am happy for my child to access to a healthy tuck shop • My child often talks about his healthy tuck shop purchases • We welcome the healthy tuck shop • Great having just fruit or veg • Happy with food available • I am happy for my child to access to a healthy tuck shop (but I think the key is moderation) • Healthy tuck shop – a good idea • My children are very keen to make their tuck shop choices and are aware that these are centred around healthy options rather than confectionary. They are vocal and positive about being able to make healthier choices and have more awareness that less sugar is better for their bodies and teeth. • My child likes the rice cakes sold in tuck shop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could a healthy drink be offered during warmer weather • Tuck shop is a good idea – how about trying vegetable dippers, cheese, dried fruit • I would like to see more fresh fruit and veg – lots of rice cake and crackers recently • Great concept – but sell only fresh fruit and veg • Introduce a prepayment system with names on a list – this could also help with noting children's dietary requirements • Fine but more fruit would be great • I'm not convinced that the fruit snacks are 'healthy' – for example some items brand themselves as healthy but have a high glucose and sugar content. 100% fruit sticks etc. would be better (although more expensive)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of a tuck shop seems to be popular with both children and parents. • The School Food Regulations now set out the requirements for food and drink other than lunch provided to pupils on and off school premises, including breakfast clubs, tuck shops, mid-morning break and after school clubs. Accordingly we have reviewed what we have on offer in tuck shop. • Prior to the end of the summer term, our School Council talked to the classes about their ideas to improve our tuck shop by moving to a fruit and veg only scheme. School Council members have sourced a new local provider who is now delivering an excellent range of fresh produce each week. The 'trial run' in the last few weeks of term was very popular indeed with all year groups. We feel that the small price increase will be accepted by parents. 	

Food offered at Out of School Club	
Positive comments	Ideas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food offered provides children with a good choice (including OSC) • It's great to have fruit and veg as a snack at OSC and that the children can help themselves. • Happy with food available • In club the healthy eating option is clear • OSC club food is healthy and interesting – my daughter adores it. • Good • Really happy with what is offered and the children enjoy the food • OOS snacks are fine as long as they are monitored 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast could be healthier – maybe porridge or Weetabix
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good feedback received regarding the food offered at Breakfast and Out of School Club • Breakfast now consists of breakfast cereals that contain wholegrains and are lower in sugar, fat and salt; wholemeal bread or toast and milk. Unfortunately, we have no facilities to make porridge in our small kitchen in Club. 	

Food sent in by parents to share for birthdays and celebrations	
Positive comments	Ideas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Its ok for parents to share treats • Happy with food sent in by parents as it is given out at the end of the day so ultimately parental choice whether it is given to the children • No issues with this – children should celebrate a friend's birthday • No problems with occasional sweets • Happy to share and receive birthday treats • OK if not eaten in school time and therefore its up to parents whether to eat it • Important for the children to learn that the odd treat is ok within a balanced diet. • We like the treats brought in – kept small • Birthday treats are fine as these are rare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I do not like sweets being offered and would prefer fruit, toys or home baking as an alternative • Hate the tradition of bringing in treats – it is unnecessary • I would definitely prefer my child not to have sweets to bring home – it really adds up. I would support a rule of no sweets • Sweet treats sent in by parents has been massively reduced this year but were abundant last year. My child also had occasional sweet treats from school which I thought went against the 'Healthy School Status'. • Concern about lollipops – some children may be too young to acknowledge the choking hazard these create. If possible a warning to parents that these are very high risk. • Not a fan of birthday celebration sweets – too many children and too frequent – no need. • Awful – totally against the distribution of sugar on birthdays – doesn't support the school's healthy eating message. • I believe there should be a ban on children bringing sweets in and other treats. Children come in regularly with sweets – this is then a cause for dispute if you choose not to allow them to eat them. They get enough opportunities to eat sweets at the many birthday parties. • Don't like sweets as celebration – not needed • My preference would be that they aren't allowed – not in keeping with the school's healthy eating policy – it is essentially the school then endorsing sugar, when children need as many anti-sugar messages as possible (so long as they are helped understand why is not good for them and not just told 'no' for no reason)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is great to have treats for birthdays – I'd hate to see this go • It is nice that parents bring in birthday sweets – nice to have an occasional treat • Ok for celebrations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would prefer the school to discourage parents from bringing food treats to share – it is usually sweets which counteracts the healthy eating messages. • I don't mind birthday sweets. We save them for weekend but some months there are a lot. I would encourage parents to think out of the box - my child recently got a 'stretchy man' which I thought was a great idea. • A great idea but something other than cakes or sweets • A nice idea to share in celebrations – good for children to understand that occasional treats are fine. I'd personally prefer cake to sweets due to sugar content • Happy for food to come in for celebrations but it can be a pressure for Reception parents to bring in a cake – its not really necessary.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have received mixed responses to food sent in by parents to share for birthdays and celebrations • Our current policy of allowing pupils to hand out birthday treats at the end of the day to enable parents to decide if they want their child to eat them or not has received generally more negative than positive responses. 	

Our food technology curriculum	
Positive comments	Ideas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My child has enjoyed learning about healthy eating • My child has always enjoyed what he has made and there always seems to be a healthy element to the dish • My child enjoys food technology lessons and also cookery club • Both children enjoy these practical lessons and the engaging way the topics are presented • I think the afterschool cookery club is fabulous – recipes are lovely and the children love knowing what ingredients make up the food and it makes them think about other aspects of food preparation. Perhaps there could be an additional cookery club for those who have already completed one. • My daughter is very aware about the importance of healthy eating and exercise • My daughter loves cookery classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haven't seen much about this • I'd like to see more afterschool cooking/baking and international food days maybe (Rec) • I don't have any knowledge of the food technology curriculum (my child is in reception) • Children should be made aware of the sugar content in products and how many laps of the playground it would take to 'work' off certain treats.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are pleased with the positive responses about the school's Food Technology programme. • Both our Technology Coordinator and Headteacher have led focus group discussions with pupils throughout the year as part of our programme of monitoring teaching and learning. Pupil feedback demonstrates that our children have a good understanding of nutrition and healthy eating and enjoy using the basic principles of a healthy and varied diet to prepare simple dishes. • Our 2x weekly cookery club continues to be extremely popular. We will continue to ensure that the club runs throughout the year to enable as many pupils as possible to take part. 	

General comments	
Positive comments	Ideas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSHE is one of my daughters favourite lessons • I have no concerns about food provision or education and feel that the school is doing well on this front. We are very happy with how the school manages these aspects • Happy with healthy eating policy • Generally happy with the food supplied in school • Happy with current provision • The school does a good job of encouraging my child to be healthy • The school has a brilliant approach to healthy eating • My child has been taught about food groups and what makes up a balanced plate • I truly believe that the school has fostered a healthy eating awareness in my child. He often educates us on healthy eating and a balanced diet and now eats food that we have battled years to get him to eat. He can tell you about the benefits of exercise and the consequences of poor eating and exercise habits. I have been very impressed with how the school has educated my child in relation to this area of the curriculum – he has great knowledge and confidence in this area. • My child often talks about food at school and what he has been learning about • Pleased that the curriculum allows children to talk about healthy eating and balanced diets. It would be great to investigate some of brands clearly marked at them so they can understand sugar content etc. It is also important to talk to children about looking after their bodies given all the pressure on children to look good and the culture of dieting. • I think the message should be balanced – nourishing with treat foods in moderation • It would be good to take the children to the fish quay or fruit and veg market to see where food comes from and gets to the shops • On the whole the school does a good job in promoting healthy eating. • Having 4 days of PE instead of two would be really good for children. • Offer a piece of fruit to children every day with their milk • I like the fruit and milk options offered during the day • I agree that this is an important topic but given the amount of young people developing eating disorders I think this needs to be handled very sensitively. I am happy for my child to access to a healthy tuck shop (but I think the key to a healthy lifestyle is moderation – the importance of exercise and how both can be important in mental and physical health). I feel that it is important that children understand that it is important that people come in all shapes and sizes and that health is a holistic issue – so it should be more a focus on healthy lifestyles than diet alone 	