

# How to set up and sustain your healthier tuck shop





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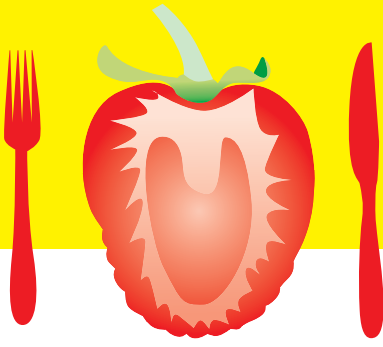
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# Introduction

Most children today eat a diet which is high in fat, sugar and salt and lacking in fruit and vegetables. Children from lower income families often have the poorest diets of all, eating more sweet foods, soft drinks and crisps and less fruit and vegetables than those from higher income households.

A recent survey found that the average child eats only two of the recommended five portions of fruit and vegetables each day, and one in five has no fruit or vegetables at all. In comparison 80% of children regularly eat snack foods such as biscuits, chocolate and chips. Combined with the fact that children today lead relatively inactive lives it is no surprise then that rates of obesity in children are increasing rapidly – currently 1 in 5 boys and 1 in 4 girls are either overweight or obese. It is also of concern that a poor diet in childhood contributes to the development of dental decay and diseases of adulthood such as coronary heart disease and certain types of cancer.

The increasing availability of snacks over the years has been blamed for encouraging poor eating habits. But there is some good news – it's not snacking itself that is bad for you it's what you snack on.

Children (especially younger children) have high energy and nutrient requirements for their size. Because of this they need to eat regularly, and nutritious snacks between

meals are an important part of the day.

Tuck shops have traditionally offered a selection of high fat and high sugar foods, and as such have been criticised for encouraging poor eating habits. However, they need not be unhealthy, and with a little bit of thought can be an important vehicle through which healthy eating habits are established.

In 2001 the Department of Health and the Department for Education and Skills launched the 'Food in Schools' programme with the aim of finding ways to enable schools to develop and implement sustainable strategies to improve the diets of children. As part of the programme, one of the projects is focussing on how schools can make healthier tuck shops a reality.

This pack has been put together for the South West Schools' Healthier Tuck Shops Project (part of the Food in Schools programme). It is based on survey results from over 1400 schools in the South West Region and in-depth focus group work in schools that already run a tuck shop, as well as information from other parts of the country. All the advice relates to operations selling food and drink at morning break.

Schools have found there are many benefits in running a healthier tuck shop. A big positive factor is that pupils get a nutritional 'boost' in the morning – especially important

for those who miss breakfast before school. Running a healthier tuck shop also:

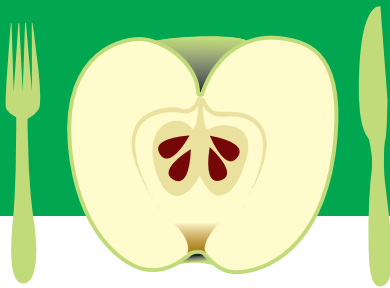
- Encourages healthy eating habits in early life
- Contributes to the future health of children
- Supports a whole school approach to healthy eating
- Is included in the criteria of the National Healthy Schools Award
- Shows parents you consider the health of their children to be important

A healthier tuck shop can also generate a small amount of additional income for the school. However, you still need to keep costs fairly low so that all children, regardless of family income, can use the tuck shop.

It has also been suggested that providing healthier alternatives in the morning:

- Improves performance and behaviour and reduces truancy
- Contributes to a healthy immune system, reduces illness and hence absenteeism
- Improves dental health due to a reduction in the amount and frequency of sugar eaten

So whether you are thinking of starting up a tuck shop from scratch or wanting to convert an existing tuck shop to a healthier one, this pack will make sure your project is successful, sustainable and stress-free.



# 1 Preparing for your healthier tuck shop

***"We had a backlash from a few parents at the beginning because they felt they hadn't been informed about what was happening and were being told how to feed their children. But we got through, and the staff supported me. Now we make sure all new parents know the policy"***

*Headteacher,  
primary school.*



## 1.1 What is a healthier tuck shop?

Healthier tuck shops are a way for schools to promote healthy eating as part of a whole school approach to food. Healthier options can be provided at breaktime, so schools provide consistent health messages in the classroom and at all school eating occasions. Making healthier snacks and drinks available to children in tuck shops encourages them to try new foods and makes it more likely that they will continue to make healthier choices for the rest of their lives.

Tuck shops can support other related activities, which fit in with the National Curriculum and the National Healthy Schools Standard, such as numeracy and literacy.

## 1.2 Setting up a planning group

A keen planning group is a necessary part of setting up and keeping a tuck shop going. It is important to have a named person leading the project, so that someone has ultimate responsibility. It's up to you to decide who is represented on your group – pupils should always be included (perhaps via the school council), and parents, teachers, governors, catering staff, school nurses can also provide useful input.

Senior management support and involvement will help the project along and ensure its

success. In addition it is always wise to keep your in-house caterer on side as they may be able to help you with equipment, storage etc. If they are to run the tuck shop for you a good relationship is essential to enable you to keep some control over what is sold and at what price.

## 1.3 Assessing demand

Before you go ahead with your tuck shop you need to make sure that it is something people want – otherwise there is little chance it will succeed. Make sure you have talked with the school community (pupils, parents, staff and governors) before you set up yours. A simple survey to assess their views will be time well spent. This doesn't have to be very difficult and could be done at an assembly, parents evening or through the school newsletter. It could even be carried out by pupils as part of a maths activity. A survey gives you the chance to find out what people would like to see the tuck shop selling, how much they would be willing to pay, estimate the number of potential customers and perhaps identify some willing helpers.

If you plan to change what your existing tuck shop sells or impose new restrictions on food brought into school at break time, you may meet some resistance. Discussion with key people early on can help prevent this.

## Determining what the tuck shop should offer

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Fruit and vegetable tuck shops	<p>General fruit &amp; vegetable consumption may be increased.</p> <p>Litter from crisp and chocolate wrappers may be less of a problem.</p> <p>The smaller range of items sold may make service more manageable.</p> <p>As there is usually only one supplier to deal with ordering is easier.</p> <p>Little equipment is needed.</p> <p>Seasonal produce are usually cheaper.</p>	<p>Cutting up fruit and vegetables for smaller children will increase preparation time.</p> <p>Some parents worry that fruit or vegetables do not provide enough energy to keep young children going until lunchtime. This is less of an issue if breakfast is eaten before or at school.</p> <p>Perishable fruits "go off" quickly which may increase wastage and reduce profit margin.</p> <p>To prevent this spoilage you may need to order more frequently or review storage arrangements.</p>
Healthier tuck shops	<p>Customer choice is increased.</p> <p>A wider range of products may attract more customers.</p> <p>Children who skipped breakfast can have a more substantial snack before lunch.</p> <p>Dry goods are less perishable and have a longer shelf life.</p>	<p>It is difficult to prevent "drift" towards unhealthy products.</p> <p>You may need to order or shop from a number of different suppliers, which will increase your workload.</p> <p>More storage may be needed.</p> <p>More preparation time and equipment may be needed, especially if you are selling items such as sandwiches, toast or milkshakes.</p>

### 1.4 What to sell – fruit and vegetables only or healthier snacks

In 2000 the government launched the National School Fruit Scheme, which entitles every 4–6 year old school child to a piece of fruit each school day. With the drive to increase fruit and vegetable consumption many schools have set up their own tuck shops selling fruit and vegetables only. Other schools, however, have chosen to offer a wider range of healthier snacks either in place of, or alongside the more usual 'tuck'.

Ultimately, the choice of what to sell should be decided by the planning group after consultation with the school community. It will also depend on a variety of factors such as time and staff available for ordering, preparation, service and clearing up, storage and preparation facilities and available equipment.

There are advantages and disadvantages to both types

of venture (see table above).

In practice, demand, cost and nutritional content are the main determinants of what is sold at tuck shops. The demand for 'unhealthy' products is the main reason for tuck shops closing down - and will ultimately undermine your attempts to make your healthier tuck shop a successful venture. This highlights the need for good promotion and marketing of the healthier products (see Section 3.2), as well as a change of culture to encourage children to start thinking of certain foods and drinks as suitable snacks, eg vegetables. Cost is also a strong tool for influencing purchasing decisions and competitive pricing of healthier products should also be considered.

### 1.5 Using the Balance of Good Health

The best way to ensure a healthy balanced diet is to eat a wide range of foods

from the five different food groups. The trick comes in knowing how much to eat. The Balance of Good Health plate model can help you with this – simply eat a variety of foods from each group in the proportions shown overleaf.

It is important to remember that there are no 'healthy' or 'unhealthy' foods. It is the overall balance of the diet that is important. However to achieve a balanced diet in practice this generally means:

- Basing your meals on bread, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles etc – preferably wholemeal.
- Eating more fruit and vegetables – aim for at least five portions of different fruit and vegetables each day.
- Choosing moderate amounts of lean meat, fish, beans and pulses.
- Having reduced fat dairy foods, eg milk, yogurts and cheese three times a day.
- Cutting down on foods that are high in fat and/or sugar.

# The Balance of Good Health



**There are five main groups of valuable foods**

(Reproduced by kind permission of the Food Standards Agency)

## 1.6 Choosing healthier snacks

Tuck shops have traditionally sold an array of high fat and/or high sugar foods such as crisps, sweets, chocolate bars and fizzy drinks.

However, in recent years there has been a move to provide healthier options, as schools recognise the need to adopt a whole school approach to healthy eating. It is difficult to say what constitutes a 'healthy' snack as there are many considerations to take into

account. Seemingly healthy items labelled as 'low fat' may actually contain a lot of sugar and vice versa.

This confusion is evident in schools as when asked to name 'healthy' and 'unhealthy' products there was some degree of overlap between the two lists. In particular, homemade items such as biscuits and cakes were considered much healthier than shop bought ones.

In general terms, the healthiest snacks are low in fat, sugar and salt and high in fibre. To help you decide what to offer in your tuck shop, the following lists categorise snacks based on their fat, sugar and salt content. In practice it is best to offer most foods from the green list, some from the amber list and none (or very few) from the red list.

### GREEN

These are the healthiest snacks to choose. All contain no added sugar or salt and are low in fat.

- Fruit and vegetables
- Sandwiches, without mayonnaise or fatty meat
- Toast, pitta bread, chapatti
- Crumpets, English muffins
- Crackers and crispbreads
- Plain popcorn or rice cakes
- Breadsticks
- Plain water
- Semi skimmed milk

### AMBER

These may contain a little sugar, salt or fat or damage the teeth, but contain other nutrients that have health benefits.

- Dried fruit
- Teacakes, scones or currant buns
- Plain biscuits, eg digestive, rich tea
- Low fat/low sugar cakes and biscuits
- Low fat fruit yogurts or fromage frais
- Salted popcorn
- Reduced fat crisps, eg twiglets
- Cheese & tomato pizza
- Pure fruit juice
- Sugar free squash
- Flavoured water
- Diet fizzy drinks
- Smoothies or milkshakes
- Low calorie hot chocolate

### RED

These are all high in fat, sugar or salt.

- Chocolate bars
- Chewy or boiled sweets
- Ordinary crisps and corn snacks
- Mints
- Meat based pizza with lots of cheese
- Hot dogs
- Ordinary squash
- Ordinary fizzy drinks



## 1.7 Funding and support

Often the hardest part of setting up a tuck shop is finding the initial funds and support to get it up and running. After this, most schools find their tuck shops easily become self-funding. Here are some suggestions to help you find your feet:

- Approach your school's Parent Teachers Association to see if they have any funds available or can arrange a special fund raising event.
- Contact local shops, supermarkets, markets etc to see if they would be willing to donate the first month's supplies free of charge – if the tuck shop takes off and you shop with them regularly this will be to their advantage.
- Hold a 'Bring and Buy' sale or a coffee morning to raise some money to start you off.
- Many people can help give you advice, information, training and resources – see appendices for some useful contacts.

At the start of the project you need to decide whether you want to make a small profit from your tuck shop or not. Obviously this will affect your pricing policy and may affect the ability of some children to buy certain produce. Even if you are not intending to make a profit you will need to sell your 'tuck' a little above cost price to allow for wastage etc. If you do make a profit, you will have to decide what to do with the extra money. You may want to fund other healthy eating projects, purchase sports equipment or other resources, eg books. Your decisions are best made by asking the school community for their ideas. Remember if you charge too much you may be disadvantaging children from lower income families.



## 1.8 Finding volunteers

The key to a successful tuck shop is to find willing volunteers to organise its day-to-day running, eg ordering, preparation, service and clearing up. There are a number of ways of attracting volunteers:

- Notices in the school newsletter
- Asking for help in school assemblies, parent evenings and PTA meetings
- Offering food hygiene training as an incentive
- Offering a free item of 'tuck' for each volunteer!

Your school may have a policy on who can work with children in school which you need to check out first. Usual volunteers are:

- parents
- grandparents
- teachers
- school nurses
- learning support assistants
- local youth workers.

And don't forget the pupils themselves. Many schools have a rota of children who help out and some tuck shops are run almost entirely by pupils.

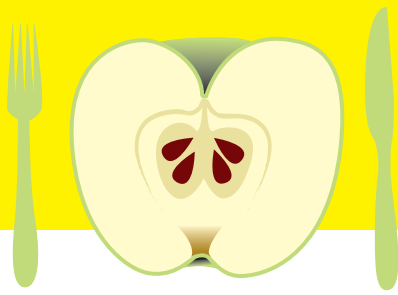
It is a good idea to make one person responsible overall – ideally an adult. Research has shown that an enthusiastic and willing adult in charge is vital to the success of a tuck shop. As the loss of key volunteers can lead to the closure of tuck shops try also to have a list of standby volunteers in case one of your regulars drops out, or develop a rota to share the work out. Make sure any procedures are well documented in case your main volunteer is unavailable.



***"It's mostly the children who run the tuck shop for us. They get so much out of it and it's a privilege to be a volunteer. It has worked well to team a quieter child with someone more outgoing."***

*Teaching assistant, junior school.*

You may decide to ask your in-house caterer to run the tuck shop. This means their staff take care of all the ordering, preparation, service and clearing up. It also means you won't have to worry about recruiting any staff, storage issues or buying any necessary equipment. However, if you choose this route you need to make sure that you lay down some rules regarding pricing and choice of 'tuck' to be sold. Otherwise you may find you have little control of either.



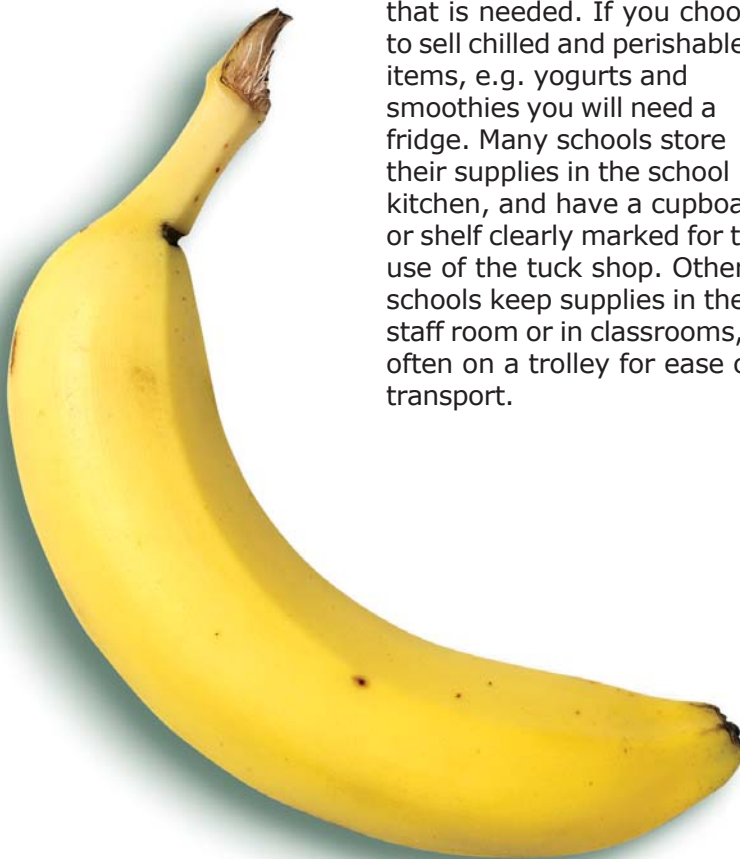
## 2 Day-to-day management of your healthier tuck shop

### 2.1 Facilities and equipment

These will depend on the types of food and drink you choose to sell in your tuck shop. It is important that everything meets with the appropriate health and safety requirements. This may sound daunting, but a chat with your local Environmental Health Department or school health and safety representative will sort out any potential problems.

#### 2.1.1 Storage

Ideally your storage area should be close to your preparation and distribution area. For dry goods a cool, dry area or cupboard is all that is needed. If you choose to sell chilled and perishable items, e.g. yogurts and smoothies you will need a fridge. Many schools store their supplies in the school kitchen, and have a cupboard or shelf clearly marked for the use of the tuck shop. Other schools keep supplies in the staff room or in classrooms, often on a trolley for ease of transport.



If you are selling fruit and vegetables:

- Store in a cool place, preferably off the ground.
- Discard any damaged items on delivery.
- Remove any plastic wrappings before storage as they encourage the growth of moulds.
- Remember that bananas ripen quicker in the dark.

#### 2.1.2 Preparation

Preparation time will depend on what you choose to sell in your tuck shop. Consider how long it will take you to set up shop at your chosen venue, as well as the time needed to wash and chop fruits and vegetables, make sandwiches, etc.

You may be able to prepare things in the school kitchen. If not, a table covered with a plastic cloth should be sufficient. Make sure you wipe it with an anti-bacterial spray before and after use. You will also need the use of a sink for washing your hands, and a separate one for washing any fruit or vegetables and washing up.

Other useful equipment includes:

- Aprons
- Chopping boards
- Knives
- Scissors
- Paper towels or napkins
- Paper bags
- Tea towels
- Plastic cups
- Tin for money
- Blender
- Toaster



### 2.1.3 Distribution

As most tuck shops operate in the same place each day, it makes sense for this to be somewhere close to your storage and preparation areas and easily accessible to the pupils. In many cases this may simply be a table or trolley placed in a convenient location – somewhere where there is adequate room for queuing and where it will not cause an obstruction, eg to fire exits.

Above all your chosen venue for the tuck shop should be warm and welcoming. There are a number of ways you can achieve this:

- Using brightly coloured plastic tablecloths.
- Displaying items in wicker baskets or coloured bowls.
- Having music playing in the background.
- Displaying colourful posters.

Some schools choose to have a mobile tuck shop on a trolley which can be wheeled around each classroom in turn at break time. A mobile shop has the advantage of being able to go outside when the weather is good.

## 2.2 Hygiene matters

Even though you may only be selling a small range of foods and drinks it is important to follow the simple hygiene tips below. In addition, remember that the main person responsible for the tuck shop should have a basic (Level 1) food hygiene certificate. You may be able to team up with other schools to have a joint training session – contact your local Environmental Health Department for information.

### Personal hygiene

- Always wash your hands thoroughly before you prepare food and after going to the toilet.
- Tie back long hair.
- Keep jewellery to a minimum.
- Don't cough or sneeze over food.
- Cover up cuts or grazes with a waterproof plaster – coloured plasters will be more easily seen if they fall into food.
- Always wear a clean apron.
- Don't handle food if you feel unwell or have any skin, nose, throat or bowel complaint.

It is also worth reminding pupils to wash their hands before they eat at the tuck shop.

### Food safety

- Spray work tables with anti-bacterial spray before and after use.
- Keep your preparation area clean and tidy as you go along.
- Clean everything thoroughly after use.
- Always wash fruit and vegetables and peel carrots.
- Young children should never be left alone with sharp knives and older children should be supervised if using them.
- Do not use any utensils used for preparing food for anything else.
- If you are using chilled goods, e.g. milk, yogurts, remember to put them in the fridge soon after purchase.
- Keep the coldest part of your fridge at 0-5°C.
- Check use-by dates and best-before dates.
- Put newly bought goods to the back of your storage cupboard or fridge and use the older ones first.



***"We haven't really had a problem with children bringing in money. We try not to encourage them to bring lots of money into school. A maximum of 40p is suggested. Some children will buy a piece for a friend but our staff always check it is a gift and that they aren't being forced into buying it for someone."***

*Teacher, primary school.*

## 2.3 Financial considerations

It is important to keep records of money taken and money spent on supplies. This is best done on a weekly basis, and can be done by pupils themselves and double checked by an adult. Encouraging pupils to be involved in this gives them a chance to improve their maths skills.

In secondary schools there should be no problem with children bringing money into school to use at the tuck shop. However a small number of primary schools report this may be an issue with younger children. Many schools have got around this problem by collecting money daily, weekly or even half termly from children and in some cases issuing vouchers which can be swapped for items at the tuck shop. In practice this will only work if things are similarly priced (a set price) and if you have someone who is willing to collect the money, eg teacher, office staff or parent.



## 2.4 Supplies

### 2.4.1 Ordering

There are a number of different options to consider when thinking about where to order your supplies from:

- Local greengrocer - one of the main advantages of using your local greengrocer is that you will be able to strike up a good relationship to allow you better deals in the future. Produce is usually of good quality and you may be able to arrange delivery. You may also be able to purchase local produce and take advantage of buying products in season.
- Local supermarkets - these are often keen to work with the local community, and many of the big names may have links with local schools already. Supermarkets have a wide range of products, usually of good quality and at reasonable prices. However they may not deliver and so you will need a volunteer to go shopping regularly.
- Market stall - prices tend to be lower on market stalls, although the quality of produce may vary. You will easily be able to get products that are in season. Delivery may be possible, but if not you will have to arrange for someone to go shopping, possibly quite early in the morning to get the best choice. This may cause problems in terms of transportation, especially if buying large quantities of fruit and/or vegetables.



**"At the start of the first week of the tuck shop we ordered as many pieces of fruit as we had children in the school, and we made sure we chose the ones that lasted well."**

*Headteacher, infant school.*

- Local grower, producer or farm shop – building links with local producers may be possible. Seasonal produce will be relatively cheap and might be delivered to you if the school is nearby or on a delivery route. Some producers will also be happy to visit the school to deliver assemblies or taster sessions and some will be happy for children to visit their farm or orchard. This allows for further educational work to support the tuck shop.
- Discount wholesaler – useful for low cost bulk buying, but remember to consider how much storage space you have first! Think about teaming up with other schools so that you can share out the products – and the cost.
- School meals contractor – you may be able to order what you need through the school meal contract suppliers. This may not be the cheapest option but it will be convenient as they will be delivering to the school anyway.

You may of course decide to get your supplies from more than one place. This will increase your workload, but you may be able to get better deals by doing so. Whichever supplier you choose, remember to think about back up should your usual supplier let you down. Also remember that if you get your supplies delivered someone will have to be around to receive them.

#### **2.4.2 How to reduce and manage wastage**

Factors such as the size of your school, storage facilities and the number of customers you expect make managing stock a very individual matter. If you have promoted and advertised your tuck shop well beforehand you can expect a high level of interest in the first few weeks. After this, customer numbers usually drop slightly. In general it is better to under order at first, but do have a back up plan if sales are much higher than expected, eg discuss extra deliveries with your supplier. Most schools get used to knowing how much and how often to order very quickly.

Whether you decide to shop or receive deliveries daily, weekly or on demand is up to you. However, there are a number of general issues to consider:

- Try to go shopping or arrange for deliveries at the start of the week.
- Run down your stocks before school holidays.
- Any perishable items left at the end of the week can be sold off cheaply to pupils, staff or parents. Some schools have an after school stall in the playground on Friday to catch parents picking up their children.
- Keeping records of what you sell will make it easier to judge your ordering needs in the future.
- Some products are available wrapped in individual portions, which will reduce wastage but may cost more initially.
- There may be seasonal variation in the demand for certain products.

**"We hit a bit of a problem when we realised that the children were queuing up in front of a fire exit. We had to find another site quickly."**

*Teacher, junior school.*

## 2.5 Troubleshooting

### 2.5.1 Queuing

This can be a big problem if your tuck shop is very popular and is one thing that children hate! However there are a few ways in which this problem can be managed effectively:

- Make sure you have everything ready before you open, e.g. fruit chopped up, sandwiches made.
- You may be able to have more than one queue to enable you to serve more people in the same amount of time.
- Consider splitting break times for different classes.
- Try to have a list of things available and prices clearly displayed where children queue so that they have made their mind up and have the money ready by the time they reach the front of the queue.
- Remember that your tuck shop could be a mobile one – many smaller schools have a trolley that visits the different classrooms before break.

### 2.5.2 Staffing

Finding (and keeping) people to run your tuck shop can be a big problem. As volunteers are usually unpaid you need to maintain a good relationship to be sure of their continued support. Consider the following:

- Advertise regularly for new volunteers – make use of school newsletters, assemblies, parent evenings etc.
- Encourage pupils to be involved as this gives you a very large potential pool of staff!
- Look to the wider school community for potential volunteers too – secretaries, janitors, classroom assistants may all be willing to help – not everything has to be organised by parents and/or teachers.



***"Litter is not an issue. In fact the complete opposite has happened. We used to have crisp and chocolate wrappers everywhere. We have a recycling programme too and the apple cores and other waste are composted or taken for the guinea pigs."***

*Caretaker, primary school*

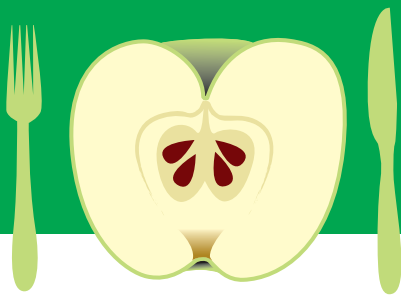
### **2.5.3 Litter**

Many schools that have replaced a tuck shop selling chocolates, crisps etc. with a fruit and vegetable tuck shop have found litter problems are reduced. However you still have to make sure that there are adequate bins available for waste. Some schools have introduced special bins to allow for recycling and composting. If you are collecting and storing organic matter for composting be sure to only use uncooked, unprocessed waste such as fruit, vegetables and eggshells. DO NOT include processed foods, meat or fat or you will almost certainly attract vermin. Free compost bins are available from some local councils, and special bins are available to keep compostable kitchen waste indoors so that you don't have to visit the compost heap constantly.

### **2.5.4 Other nuisances**

In coastal regions particularly, there have been problems with seagulls scavenging for food in the playground. If this is an issue in your area you should consider an indoor site for your tuck shop and provide hard, covered bins in the playground for waste.



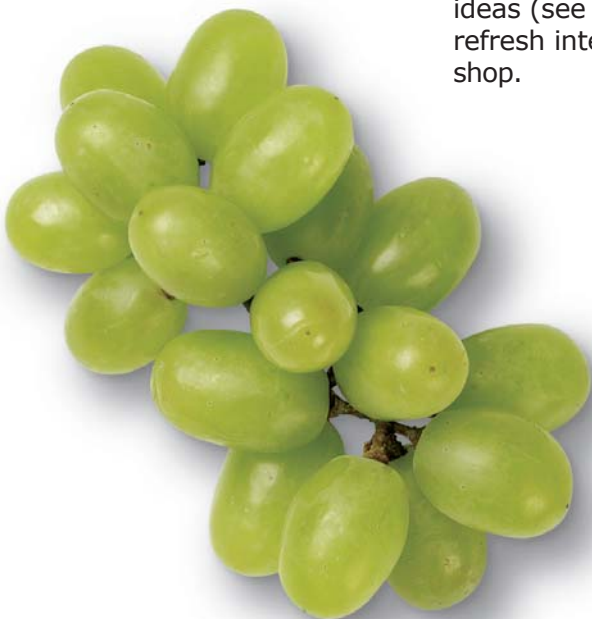


## 3 Keeping your healthier tuck shop going

### 3.1 Sustainability

As well as advertising and promoting your tuck shop at the beginning it is important to consider how to keep the interest going once the initial novelty has worn off:

- Review your progress regularly (see Section 3.3).
- Remember that willing volunteers may become less willing as time goes on! Make sure you regularly advertise for new volunteers, eg in school assemblies, parent evenings, on noticeboards, in newsletters etc.
- Introduce new products routinely – try to get ideas from pupils about what other healthier items they would like to see in the tuck shop.
- If you are selling fruit and vegetables consider what is in season – this will keep costs down.
- Keep trying new marketing ideas (see below) to refresh interest in the tuck shop.



### 3.2 Promoting your tuck shop

In order to encourage people to use the tuck shop and increase the demand for healthier products you need to consider employing a few simple marketing ideas:

- Write regular articles for the school newsletter, and promote the tuck shop at school council meetings and school assemblies.
- Display posters advertising the tuck shop around the school - these can be designed by pupils.
- Think about presentation – maybe invest in a few brightly coloured bowls or baskets and arrange things neatly on your table/ trolley.
- Make the prices of items obvious and consider making healthier products cheaper than less healthy ones to increase uptake.
- Start up a loyalty card scheme, eg for every four pieces of fruit bought a free piece is received.
- Encourage visitors to the school to visit the tuck shop – you could even invite local celebrities to see what you are up to.
- Link and promote with other events if possible, eg Harvest Festival, Food First Month, National Apple Day, National Sandwich Week.
- Special offers can work really well, especially if you are introducing a new product.
- If you can, try to offer pupils the chance to taste new or unfamiliar products before they buy.



- Consider highlighting the nutritional benefits of healthier products, e.g. produce signs indicating low fat, high fibre, low sugar items.
- Promote the tuck shop where possible in class, e.g. during lessons about healthy eating.
- Consider sending an information pack home to parents highlighting the benefits of the tuck shop. Give them information about what you sell and prices too.
- A healthier tuck shop can be a good tool to entice parents to send their child to your school – don't forget to publicise the fact in the school prospectus.

You may need to review any existing policy on snack foods in order for a healthy tuck shop to operate to maximum effect. For example if you still allow pupils to bring in whatever they like at break time this may undermine any attempt to encourage healthy eating via your tuck shop.

***"Our school has done assemblies on how cool it is to eat fruit and vegetables. We've had visits from our local orchard and we got to taste some different fruits. I think this made children more likely to choose their favourite in the tuck shop afterwards."***

*Pupil, junior school.*

### 3.3 Measuring your success

Starting up a tuck shop and keeping it going can be a lot of hard work and it is easy to get a bit bogged down in the day-to-day running. Don't forget to keep a check on your progress so that you can look back and see what you have achieved.

Keeping records along the way can help with this:

- Notes from planning group meetings.
- Numbers of people using the tuck shop.
- Money taken/profit made.
- The type and amount of produce sold to identify best sellers.
- Attitudes of pupils, staff and parents towards the tuck shop – this can be done by carrying out a simple survey designed and administered by the pupils as part of classroom activities, eg numeracy, literacy, PSHE.
- Records of mistakes made and lessons learnt along the way.
- Changes in the food choices of children, eg at lunch time.
- Improvements in the school environment, pupil behaviour and school attendance rates.
- Articles in school newsletters, etc.

## Summary

Schools provide an excellent opportunity to influence the eating habits of young people. If encouraged to enjoy attractive and healthy food early on, it is much more likely that these positive behaviours will remain with a child throughout life.

Setting up a healthier tuck shop is one of a number of initiatives that contributes to a whole school approach to food, and gives schools the chance to affect and improve children's eating habits.

By involving a wide range of people a healthier tuck shop project can help the whole school community. Pupil involvement is vital, and encouraging those involved to manage aspects of the project such as ordering, marketing and publicity offers the chance for them to learn new skills. Parents too are very important partners in any tuck shop venture, as it is essential that healthy eating messages learnt at school are backed up at home.

Setting up a healthier tuck shop is not only a positive step towards improving the long term health of pupils, but can prove a highly rewarding and beneficial experience for all involved.

## Local contacts

There may be a variety of people in your local area that can help provide help and/or information for your tuck shop venture:

Environmental Health Department – offers advice on health and hygiene issues.

Health Promotion Department – offers advice in all aspects of health promotion and may also be able to give guidance and suggestions for obtaining funding. Can often supply you with leaflets, posters and teaching packs on healthy eating.

Community Dietetic Department – offers advice, support and sometimes training on nutrition related issues. Can often supply you with leaflets, posters and teaching packs on healthy eating.

School nurses – can give advice and information on healthy lifestyle issues.

Healthy Schools Co-ordinator or Link Worker – provides advice and guidance on the local Healthy Schools Award Scheme. Contact your local education department to find out your co-ordinator.

## Suggested resources

- The South West Schools' Healthier Tuck Shops Project website – has been set up to provide schools with advice and information on setting up healthier tuck shops.  
*www.swpho.org.uk/tuckshops*
- 'Fruit tuck shops in primary schools – a practical guide to planning and running a fruit tuck shop'. Produced by the Food Standards Agency Wales and the National Assembly for Wales. Available to download from:  
*www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/fruittuckwales*
- 'Snack Attack Pack'. Aimed at promoting the eating and enjoyment of fruit in primary schools. Available from the Edinburgh Community Food Initiative.  
*Tel: 0131 467 7326* *ecfi@madasafish.com*
- 'Five a day' resources from the Department of Health to encourage 5 portions of fruit and vegetables each day. Leaflets, posters and postcard available to download from website. Order form also available on line.  
*www.doh.gov.uk/fiveaday/communications.htm*

- 'Give me 5' and 'Weight Wise' resources produced by the British Dietetic Association to encourage a healthy diet with plenty of fruit and vegetables. Available from the Comic Company  
Tel: 0208 675 1007. [www.comiccompany.co.uk](http://www.comiccompany.co.uk)
- 'Grab 5 Pack' produced by the charity Sustain and looks at ways primary schools can encourage increased consumption of fruit and vegetables at school, at home and in the community. Contact Sustain  
Tel: 0207 837 1141 [www.sustainweb.org](http://www.sustainweb.org)
- 'Eat your words'. A teaching resource for 7–11 year olds looking at healthy eating and the way food messages are disseminated. Available from the National Heart Forum  
Tel: 0207 383 7638 [www.heartforum.org.uk](http://www.heartforum.org.uk)

## Other useful contacts and websites

- The British Nutrition Foundation provides a wide range of education materials including posters and leaflets.  
Tel: 020 7404 6504 [www.nutrition.org.uk](http://www.nutrition.org.uk)
- The British Dietetic Association website provides a series of Food Facts – downloadable information sheets giving advice on general aspects of healthy eating.  
[www.bda.uk.com](http://www.bda.uk.com)
- Wired for Health is a website which provides health information for teachers and pupils. It includes information on the National Healthy Schools Standard, and contains four interactive sites for young people aged 5–16.  
[www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk](http://www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk)
- The Department of Health website provides information on the Food in Schools project, the Five a Day programme and the National School Fruit Scheme.  
[www.doh.gov.uk/public.htm](http://www.doh.gov.uk/public.htm)
- The Food Standards Agency provides leaflets and posters based around the Balance of Good Health and a CD-ROM 'Dish it up' aimed at giving a healthy eating message to 11–12 year olds. The website provides advice and information about various aspects of healthy eating.  
Tel: 0845 606 0667 [www.foodstandards.gov.uk](http://www.foodstandards.gov.uk)
- The Health Education Trust runs a network to support schools with School Nutrition Action groups (SNAGs). Produces a free quarterly newsletter.  
Tel 01786 773 915 [www.healthedtrust.com](http://www.healthedtrust.com)
- Milk for Schools charity aims to educate the public in the field of school-based nutrition particularly with regard to school milk legislation and schemes.  
[www.milkforschools.org.uk](http://www.milkforschools.org.uk)
- The National Dairy Council produces information on milk and dairy produce and their role within a balanced diet. It also provides information on school milk.  
Tel: 0207 499 7822 [www.milk.co.uk](http://www.milk.co.uk)

# Checklist of things needed to start your healthier tuck shop

- Planning group in place
- Consider the demand for a healthier tuck shop
- Funds available
- Venue identified
- Storage and preparation areas identified
- Necessary equipment available/purchased
- List of volunteers drawn up
- Health & safety issues drawn up
- Food and drink choices decided
- Suppliers identified
- Strategy for promoting tuck shop in place
- Start date agreed

## Personal hygiene

- Always wash your hands thoroughly before you prepare food and after going to the toilet.
- Tie back long hair.
- Keep jewellery to a minimum.
- Don't cough or sneeze over food.
- Cover up cuts or grazes with a waterproof plaster - coloured plasters will be more easily seen if they fall into food.
- Always wear a clean apron.
- Don't handle food if you feel unwell or have any skin, nose, throat or bowel complaint.

## Food safety

- Spray work tables with anti-bacterial spray before and after use.
- Keep your preparation area clean and tidy as you go along.
- Clean everything thoroughly after use.
- Always wash fruit and vegetables and peel carrots.
- Young children should never be left alone with sharp knives and older children should be supervised if using them.
- Do not use any utensils used for preparing food for anything else.
- If you are using chilled goods, eg milk, yogurts, remember to put them in your fridge soon after purchase.
- Keep the coldest part of your fridge at 0-5°C
- Check use-by dates and best-before dates.
- Put newly bought goods to the back of your storage cupboard or fridge and use the older ones first.