

Primary school dessert policy

October 2019

Context

At a population level too much sugar is being consumed, particularly amongst children. High levels of sugar intake increase the risk of tooth decay, with approximately one in six 5-year olds affected in Southwark¹. This is a significant cost to the NHS and families².

A high sugar intake is linked to excessive energy intake, which may increase the risk of overweight and obesity³. 25% of children in Southwark are already overweight or obese by the time they start school in Reception Year, which increases to 40% of children in Year Six⁴.

Data from the National Diet and Nutrition Survey shows that 'sugar, preserves and confectionery' contribute the most sugar to children's diets⁵. However, desserts containing a higher proportion of fruit, milk and cereals (such as rice or oats) can be included as part of a healthy, balanced diet for young children and can contain essential nutrients such as calcium and iron⁶.

Policy Introduction

Current school food standards for primary and secondary school lunches in England state that all fruit-based desserts should have a content of at least 50% fruit measured by weight of the raw ingredients (e.g. fruit crumble, fruit pie, fruit sponge, fruit cobbler, fruit jelly). Furthermore, no confectionery, chocolate or chocolate coated products are permitted throughout the whole school day⁷.

This policy is informed by best practice guidance and aims to reduce the amount of free sugar served at lunchtimes. The policy meets the government dietary recommendations for children and current school food standards (see Appendix 1 for further details).

Within this policy, free sugars are defined as "sugars added to food or drinks, and sugars found naturally in honey, syrups, and unsweetened fruit and vegetable juices, smoothies and purées"⁸.

¹ <https://www.southwark.gov.uk/assets/attach/7301/JSNA-2018-Oral-Health-CYP-20180718.pdf>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sugar-reduction-achieving-the-20>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sugar-reduction-achieving-the-20>

⁴ National Child Measurement Programme 2017-18

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/ndns-results-from-years-7-and-8-combined>

⁶ <https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Eat-Better-Start-Better1.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.schoolfoodplan.com/actions/school-food-standards/>

⁸ <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/how-does-sugar-in-our-diet-affect-our-health/>

The Southwark primary school dessert policy

This policy is applicable to all primary schools in Southwark, as part of the Council's Free Healthy School Meals (FHSM) programme.

Primary school lunches (main course and second course) should complement each other to ensure balance and variety, and to provide 30% of a child's daily nutritional requirements.

Primary school lunches are required to meet all of the following criteria:

- Each lunch to include a main course and a second course. A second course can be either a 'starter' or a 'dessert'.
- Only one second course dish to be made available at lunch (with the exception of a food allergen alternative option).
- Second courses served over a week to include:
 - **Three times a week** - fruit (such as seasonal fruit salad) with a dairy-based accompaniment such as natural yoghurt with no added sugar.
 - **Once a week** – low salt savoury crackers or breadsticks served with fruit or vegetables and a dairy item such as cheese.
 - **Once a week** – fruit based pudding or cake, containing minimal free sugars and a content of at least 50% fruit or vegetables when measured by weight of the raw ingredients (e.g. fruit crumble, fruit pie, fruit sponge, fruit cobbler).
- Dairy options with fruit could include natural or Greek yoghurt with no added sugar, or low sugar varieties of fromage frais, custard, rice pudding or semolina.
- No confectionery, chocolate and chocolate-coated products to be served.

In addition to the policy requirements above, the second course of primary school lunches should also meet the following:

- Canned fruit should be canned in juice and not syrup.
- Lower fat milk yoghurt and cheese should be used.
- Use fresh or dried fruit to sweeten dishes instead of sugar/alongside reduced sugar.
- If providing ice cream, choose dairy ice cream as it contains more calcium than non-dairy ice cream, and limit to once a week with fruit-based desserts at meal times.
- Avoid artificial sweeteners when choosing or preparing desserts, puddings and cakes.
- Vary the desserts you offer with lunch each week.
- Ensure age appropriate portion sizes (see Appendix 2 for links to portion size guidance)

Policy implementation

This policy will come into effect for all applicable nurseries and nursery classes from the start of the spring term (January 2020).

Appendix 1 - Government guidelines and recommendations for free sugars

Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) guidelines recommends that the average population intake of free sugars should not exceed 5% of total dietary energy for age groups from 2 years upwards⁹. This equates to a maximum free sugar intake of¹⁰:

- 20g for males and 18g for females, aged 4-6 years
- 24g for males and 23g for females, aged 7-10 years

Appendix 2 – Recipe and portion size guidance

The School Food Plan provides portion size guidance for different food types, with the most relevant food items for this policy extracted in the table below.

School Food Standards - A practical guide for schools their cooks and caterers – Page 9
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/786339/School-Food-Standards-Guidance.pdf

Portion Size	
Food	Primary 4-10 year olds
Fruit pies, sponge puddings or crumbles	80-100g
Fruit jelly (portion size excludes fruit)	80-100g
Cakes, tray bakes, muffins	40-50g
Flapjack	25-30g
Savoury crackers, bread sticks (served with fruit, vegetables or dairy foods); portion size excludes fruit.	10-15g 1-2 crackers

The School Food Plan website provides example recipes which have been checked by the Children's Food Trust against the School Food Standards, best practice guidance and recommended typical portion sizes. Ingredients are aligned to the Government Buying Standards for Food & Catering Services nutrition criteria (GBSF) and allergens are listed.

The recipe screenshots overleaf has been extracted from the School Food Plan, 'What Works Well' Recipe Hub and demonstrates dessert menu suggestions and typical portion sizes in practice.

<http://whatworkswell.schoolfoodplan.com/articles/view/517?title=%27what%20works%20well%27%20recipe%20hub>

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sacn-carbohydrates-and-health-report>

¹⁰ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/618167/government_dietary_recommendations.pdf



Number of portions this recipe makes:
10 primary servings (90g)
8 secondary servings (110g)



Prep: 20 minutes
Cook: 35 minutes



Allergy information:
Oats (gluten), sulphites, sulphur dioxide,
wheat (gluten)



Top Tips

Vary the fruit to what's in season.

OATY APPLE CRUMBLE

50% fruit-based dessert: This recipe counts towards the standard to provide a 50% fruit-based dessert at least twice each week.

Recipe adapted from: Eden Foodservice



Ingredients

100g unsaturated fat spread, cut into pieces
163g plain white flour
55g wholemeal flour
90g soft dark brown sugar
0.5g (½ tsp) ground mixed spice
0.5g (½ tsp) cinnamon
50g oats
50g dried apricots, diced
410g cooking apples, washed, peeled and sliced

Method

1. Pre-heat the oven to 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4. Grease a tart tin.
2. Gently rub the margarine into the flour then add the sugar, spices and the oats.
3. Place the apples on the base of greased tart tin.
4. Sprinkle the diced apricots evenly over the fruit.
5. Sprinkle the crumble mix over the fruit, level and push the mix into corners.
6. Bake in oven until golden brown.
7. Remove from the oven, portion and serve.

Serving suggestion: with yoghurt or custard.

Government Buying Standards for Food & Catering Services

Using the GBSF nutrition criteria to buy ingredients helps to reduce the amount of salt, saturated fat and sugar in children's diets.

For this recipe: choose oils based on unsaturated fats and ensure at least 50% of desserts provided are based on fruit.



Number of portions this recipe makes:
80 primary servings (100g)
65 secondary servings (125g)



Prep: 20 minutes
Cook: 30 minutes



Allergy information:
Milk, wheat (gluten)



Top Tips

Change fruits with the seasons.

PEACH & RASPBERRY COBBLER

50% Fruit-based dessert: This dessert counts towards the requirement to provide fruit-based desserts (containing at least 50% fruit) at least twice each week, and the requirement to provide fruit each day at lunchtime.

Recipe adapted from: Sam Ward, Catering Manager, Colinton St Mary Primary School



Ingredients

3.7kg peaches, sliced
1.5kg raspberries, plugged
100g caster sugar
1.4kg plain flour
90g baking powder
340g soft vegetable margarine
340g caster sugar
700ml semi-skimmed milk

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4.
2. Slice peaches and place into a deep tin with the raspberries and sprinkle with sugar.
3. Prepare the cobbler by sifting the flour and baking powder into a bowl.
4. Rub in margarine until it resembles breadcrumbs. Stir in the sugar and mix.
5. Add the milk slowly to form a dough.
6. Turn the dough onto a floured surface and roll to 1cm thick. Cut out 6cm rounds and arrange over fruit.
7. Brush with some extra milk.
8. Bake in oven for 30-35 minutes or until golden brown.

Serving suggestion: prepare the cobbler with half wholemeal flour.

Government Buying Standards for Food & Catering Services

Using the GBSF nutrition criteria to buy ingredients helps to reduce the amount of salt, saturated fat and sugar in children's diets.

For this recipe: choose spreads based on unsaturated fats and milk which is reduced fat (i.e. has a fat content of no more than 1.8g/100g).

END.