

FOCUS ON

Education

Bar & Kitchen

For
**BALANCED &
DELICIOUS**
school
meals



Did you know...



2.1 million pupils
were eligible for free
school meals in academic
year 2023/24



92% of UK school
chefs rate school meals as
highly important for
children's wellbeing



Obesity levels reduced
by **7%-11%** in reception
children having free
school meals

Sources:

gov.uk; UK School Chefs Survey Autumn 2024,
Panellitix.ai; Institute for Social and Economic Research,
University of Essex, 2024 (study of four London boroughs)



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When it comes to serving up rich, flavourful gravy that keeps diners coming back, only the best will do. Knorr Professional Gravy delivers the perfect balance of authentic taste, smooth texture, and reliable consistency, making it the go-to choice for catering and foodservice professionals.

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- ✓ Quick and easy to prepare, saving time in busy kitchens



GIVE YOUR CUSTOMERS THE COMFORTING, HEARTY TASTE THEY LOVE – WITH KNORR, THE GOLD STANDARD IN GRAVY.

*Censuswide survey of 250 UK chefs, November 2024 ^This product does not contain allergenic ingredients which require declaration under EU regulation 1169/2001 [Annex II]



**Unilever
Food
Solutions**

Focus On Education

Welcome to this guide to all things education in Foodservice. We've spoken to inspiring chefs and suppliers to collate the key information to help support your kitchens.

Gather new ideas on breakfast clubs before the nationwide roll-out and freshen up your seasonal events with our calendar of themed ideas. We know cost is always at the forefront of your minds so check out our feature on reducing food waste to save some pennies. Look on page 7 for an exciting idea from Great British Menu winner and school chef Amber Francis – it might be just the thing to develop the students' palates!

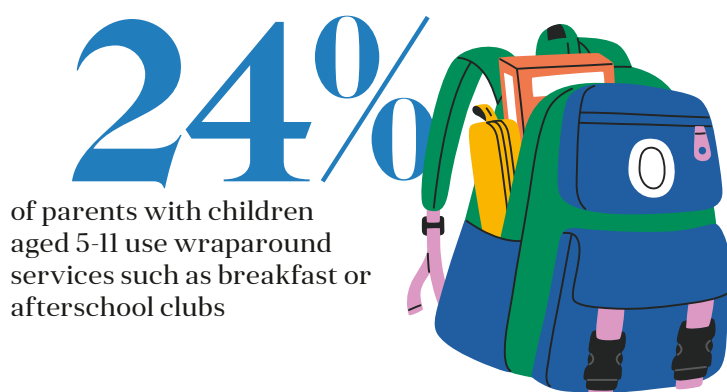
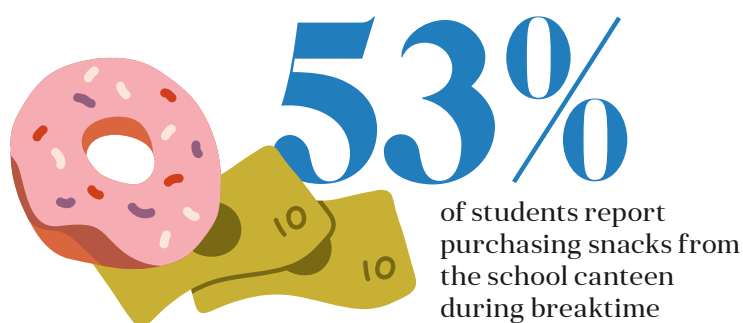
We wish you a positive year ahead.

Katie Hinchliffe & Phil Dawson,
Out of Home team, Unitas Wholesale



Bar & Kitchen

Insights



SEASONAL SCHOOL FEASTS

Inspire the kids with fun themed menus



30 JUNE - 13 JULY

WIMBLEDON

The famous tennis tournament provides a great opportunity to get more fruit into the children. How about strawberries and cream pots with lower fat no sugar yogurt, fresh berries and a sprinkle of crunchy oats or granola? Strawberry skewers with a yogurt dip would also go down well. Leftover strawberries can be stewed with a little honey and used as a sauce with other puddings that week.

2025

START
HERE

2026

NOVEMBER

WORLD VEGAN MONTH

More and more young people are interested in following a vegan, plant-based diet so taking part in this event is a must. Try twists on familiar formats such as a macaroni and veg bake or burritos. Make the month more interactive by putting up veggie-related quiz questions on the canteen walls and give a raffle prize out at the end of the month.



Scan for a
Butternut Burrito
recipe



9 FEB

NATIONAL PIZZA DAY

Pizzas have surely got to be one of kids' favourites so there's bound to be an appetite for this special day! If it's tricky or expensive for you to cook multiple large pizzas, look at alternative bases. Baguettes, English muffins, tortilla wraps and ciabattas all work well. For your topping, Homepride Everything Tomato Sauce is fantastic – bags of flavour and saves you time – win-win.

Find a Tuna and
Sweetcorn Ciabatta Pizza
recipe here



2-8MARCH

BRITISH PIE WEEK

Why not go all out for this classic week with a different pie each day and get the kids to vote for their favourite? The School Food Standards states that you should serve no more than two portions of food which include pastry each week so think outside the (pie) box. Shepherd's pie with sweet potato mash or fish pie with a crunchy topping? Don't forget the gravy for the classic pies – Knorr Gravy Granules are gluten-free and taste delicious.

Simple Fish Pie recipe



17FEB

PANCAKE DAY

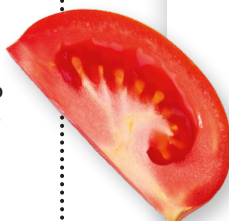
It's time to get flipping! You could go two ways with this (or both!) – savoury or sweet. Pancakes stuffed with cheese and roasted veggies, or sliced chicken, cheese and tomatoes would put a smile on pupils' faces. If you have the capacity, you could let children choose their own sweet toppings – offer fruit, low-sugar chocolate or caramel sauce, yogurt, a sprinkle of biscuit pieces and lemon juice.



18-24MAY

BRITISH SANDWICH WEEK

Encourage the kids to get their creative juices flowing the month before and ask them to design a sandwich. You could then bring their special idea to life for the week. In addition to this, you could serve a variety of toasties with salad, banh mi style baguettes and wraps with falafels or meatballs.



ALLERGENS FOCUS



With an increasing number of children having food allergies, it's more important than ever to ensure you and your team have the right information. Louise Wagstaffe, Senior Culinary Advisor at Premier Foods says "At the start of each term, reassess your audience – children and staff – and check with the school office if existing pupils or new intake have different dietary needs due to religion or allergies."

Almost 1 in 12 young children suffer from a food allergy

Source: allergyuk.org

TRAIN YOUR TEAM

You can't run a safe kitchen and comply with allergen legislation if your team aren't in the know. Follow these steps:

- Ensure all team members have adequate training and it's frequently revisited
- Make sure everyone knows where your allergen information is for all items
- Train staff on allergen cross-contamination risks. For example, cooking food in different oil for gluten-free meals
- Have procedures in place if you need to use different ingredients to the norm. Who will check the ingredients lists and update allergen information on your meals if necessary?



Read the Food Standards Agency guidance for schools



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ADDED
SUGAR**



**NATURAL
SOURCE OF
CALCIUM**

WITH ADDED VITAMIN D

**THAT'S
WHY WE'RE**

No.1
IN SCHOOLS*

**MADE IN
IRELAND**

*7 in 10 kids preferred
the taste of Viva
(GSR preferred taste
blind test - Dec 2024)

Try something new Tuesdays

Start this idea in your school or university to spike the kids' interest and taste buds

Did you watch the BBC's Great British Menu 2025? You may have seen Amber Francis being crowned the Champion of Champions, but did you know that her day job is Head Chef and Senior Food Educator at Christ's College Finchley? One of the initiatives the former fine dining chef has brought into her school is 'Try something new Tuesdays.' She says: "It's all about getting our students to be really engaged with the food they're eating. Trying something different that they wouldn't have either the opportunity to, or the bravery to eat." Here are some ways you can try Amber's idea in your kitchen:



Primary schools

Try 'tiny taste test' stations by offering mini spoonfuls of something new alongside lunch such as mango chutney, red pepper hummus or edamame beans. Use stickers as rewards for giving it a go. Or you could create a 'taste passport' that gets stamped each week when a child tries a new dish or ingredient. After a few stamps, they earn a prize or certificate.



Secondary schools

Build-your-own noodle boxes, burrito wraps, or salads with one new ingredient featured each Tuesday – try jalapeños, sesame seeds or beansprouts. Let them mix and match to make a personalised lunch. Run weekly taste competitions – get the students to guess the mystery ingredients in a sauce or smoothie. The winner gets a free lunch or snack.



Colleges/universities

Set up sample stands of a trending dish every Tuesday – could be jackfruit tacos or spiced chickpeas. Students this age are increasingly interested in nutrition so you could share the health credentials of dishes. Recruit student ambassadors to help spread the message. If you have the capacity, you could host short 'lunch and learn' demos showing how to prepare a dish.



Feeding the next generation



Louise Wagstaffe, Senior Culinary Advisor at Premier Foods gives her step-by-step guide to keeping the school dinner experience fresh

Failing to plan is planning to fail

Establish an initial three-week menu cycle with some favourites you know the children love but sprinkle in other ideas that might be trending. Consider where the children might have been on holiday or street food they've experienced during half-term to ensure it's a stimulating menu from the off.

Set your standards

Make sure you meet the minimum number of different starchy foods and protein sources in line with the Government's School Food Standards Practical Guide. This is the time to add seasonal produce and local ingredients according to your budget and supply chain.

Have fun with fruit... and veg

The trick with both is to prepare them well and cook them well. Four apples will sit in a bowl all week but chop them up and add them to other ingredients in a fruit salad and they'll be snapped up.

Introduce a salad cart where children can help themselves, it'll make them feel like adults. Try adding olives, feta cheese or fun dressings. Include sticks of carrots, celery, pepper and cucumber, and offer hummus... some people prefer raw veg to cooked.

Never overcook your veg. Crisp and al dente is always better than soggy, but above all, challenge the children to try something new.

What are the best healthy snack hacks?

Items such as low sugar cereal, toast, crumpets, yogurts, waffles and pancakes are a great way to incorporate different types of slow energy release food into a morning break. Food is the fuel that will set your children up for the day, so school cooks have a crucial role to play.

What standout products would you recommend as must-haves?

The new Homepride Everything Tomato Sauce allows chefs to work across cuisines and is packed with vitamins C and D plus fibre. No added sugar jelly offers better food nutrition and Butterscotch Angel Delight is a big retro hit which can be easily elevated if drizzled with caramel miso or toffee sauces.



If you do one thing, try...

Treating the children like adult restaurant customers. They have a more sophisticated palette than people think, so spices, herbs, oils and sauces are a great way to give your plates a new twist.

Savvy shortcut

Keep it simple and save time by creating one vegetable stock as a base for all your sauces. To get the right umami flavour, use Bisto Vegetable Bouillon or Gluten Free Granules.



And remember...

Peer pressure is a big thing so lay on taster sessions to get the children's opinions. They'll always be honest with you, and it will help you create a winning menu!



Katsu Rice Bowl

Serves: **10** Skill rating: **MEDIUM**



Ingredients

- 800g chicken breasts
- 1kg Sharwood's Japanese Katsu Cooking Sauce
- 400g 50/50 rice
- 200g frozen broccoli florets
- 200g frozen edamame beans
- 200g frozen peas
- 200g red peppers, diced
- 200g radishes, thinly sliced
- 20g fresh coriander, leaves picked

Method

1. Add the chicken to a bowl with 200g of the Sharwood's Japanese Katsu Cooking Sauce and stir so it is evenly coated.
2. Place on a tray and bake in oven at 170C for 20 mins until cooked to 75C.
3. While the chicken is cooking, steam the rice following pack instructions.
4. Place broccoli, edamame beans, peas and peppers in a steaming tray and steam until piping hot.
5. Heat the remaining Sharwood's Japanese Katsu Cooking Sauce.
6. To serve, slice the chicken and serve in bowls on top of rice, vegetables and sauce. Top with sliced radishes and coriander.



Chocolate
and Strawberry
Trifle recipe





Pasta Tray Bake

Serves: **30 small portions** Skill rating: **EASY**



Ingredients

- 1kg penne pasta
- 1 x 2.25l Homepride Everything Tomato Sauce
- Optional: meat-free balls, mixed peppers, tuna, sweetcorn.

Method

1. Preheat oven to 170C.
2. Place the pasta, 1l boiling water and Homepride Everything Tomato Sauce into a gastro tray and stir. If using any of the optional extras, stir them in now as well. Then cover and bake for 30-40 mins until the pasta is tender.



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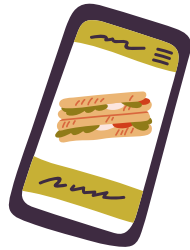


*Nielsen 52 w/e 26.01.25 - Total Coverage. **Iron contributes to normal cognitive development in children as part of a healthy diet & lifestyle. †School food compliant as part of a balanced meal. Advice applies to UK mainland only, not including Northern Ireland or ROI.



Waste not, want not

With tight budgets and hungry students, every bite counts. Plan menus carefully, sticking to popular core dishes with a couple of rotating specials. It'll reduce waste and still leave room to get creative. Use historical data to plan portions – how do numbers vary before holidays? On meat-free days? Or after sports fixtures? Build in flexibility so you can tweak ingredients based on what's left. After a few stamps, they earn a prize or certificate.



Share the surplus

Leftovers don't have to end up in the bin. Apps like Olio connect communities with volunteers who collect and dish out surplus safely. Olio already partners with 460+ schools, helping reduce waste and feed people nearby. You can also speak to local food banks or charities to set up regular pickups or collect waste after events where you've over-catered.

TOP MARKS FOR SURPLUS-SAVING

Track to tackle

Note down use-by-dates so short-life stock gets cooked first and long-life items aren't wasted. Most importantly, you can't fix what you don't measure. Use a spreadsheet to record what's thrown away – from offcuts to uneaten meals. Track it daily for a few weeks and look for patterns. Are certain dishes always left? Prepping too many portions? Tools like WRAP's Guardians of Grub tracker or Unilever's Wise Up on Waste can help pinpoint problems.

**150,000 surplus
school lunches saved
with Olio**

LACA – The School Food People. March 2025

Second-life scraps

Food waste often starts at prep. Look at what's being trimmed, peeled or binned and rethink how to use it. Broccoli stalks and cauliflower leaves can go in soups or pies. Stale bread or crusts? Try croutons. Freeze cooked veg in muffin trays for quick sides or mix into frittatas and pasta bakes. Most waste simply comes from not having a plan for what's left.

4 ways to boost your breakfast club

Are you ready for the new breakfast clubs in primary schools? The first phase of the government's free breakfast initiative starts the 2025 summer term in 750 early adopter schools across the UK. These schools will work with the Department of Education to shape the national rollout, the dates of which are to be confirmed.

These new clubs could make a big improvement to children's wellbeing and academic achievement. A huge 72% of educators notice a significant difference between students who eat breakfast and those who don't. The 2023 Magic Breakfast/Warburtons study also found that the students who didn't eat the first meal of the day on a regular basis tended to give up on tasks quickly, show signs of tiredness, and be easily distracted. Here's how you can put on an enticing and healthy offering to kick off pupils' days positively.



GET THE ESSENTIALS RIGHT

Cereal and toast are the mainstays of children's breakfasts so make these as appealing (and healthy) as possible. Cereals should be fortified and avoid those with lots of added sugar. Government guidance recommends corn flakes, rice pops, wheat bisks, no added sugar muesli and shredded wholewheat. Kids will love the familiar Weetabix, Kellogg's Corn Flakes and Rice Krispies. For toast, opt for higher fibre options. Always offer water and semi-skimmed milk to drink. Viva flavoured milks have no added sugar and are a great option.



1

INVOLVE THE KIDS

To encourage independence, set up self-service stations to allow the children to help themselves to cereal and milk. They can also spread their own butter on toast. Support the children in building skills and confidence by involving them in setting up the breakfast club and clearing away. Ask the older age groups to act as club leaders and they can help welcome and serve the little ones.



PERSONALISED PORRIDGE

If you have the provision to offer a warm breakfast, then porridge is the perfect choice as it's cheap, healthy and the kids can make it their own. You can offer tasty ready-made options such as apple and cinnamon or coconut and mango, or make a big batch of plain with a 'help yourself' toppings bar – toasted seeds, dried and fresh fruit, nut butters (if your school allows them) and a small spoon of honey or maple syrup is all you'd need.



SMART SAVES

A great way to stretch your budget is to use leftover lunch food in the next day's breakfasts. Fruit past its best can be stewed and added to porridge or stir it through lower fat plain yogurt or fromage frais. Whisk eggs and cheese with extra veg from lunch then bake in a muffin tin to create handheld frittatas. Serve cold or reheat in the microwave.



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*Finish - the trusted household detergent used in over 100MN+ dishwashers. ¹Source: Mulberry Marketing Communications, Quantum Professional Research Survey, 2024. ²IR Bureau 2023 survey.

HEALTHY BODIES, HEALTHY MINDS

Help your kitchen team focus on the food with this five-step hygiene guide

Behind every great school, there's a fantastic team fuelling students' success with tasty and nutritional food. A clean, germ-free kitchen that smells good even when you're not cooking is essential for a happy, healthy and high achieving environment. Nearly nine in 10 children say poor cleanliness at their school adversely affects their studies (APPA), while

pleasant smells boost their mood.

The kitchen is the heartbeat of the learning environment, so quick and efficient dishware, cutlery and counter cleaning lets your team get on with the fun stuff. Follow the Reckitt Pro Solutions hygiene hitlist for stopping the spread of viruses and bacteria in your school dinner area.

1



FILTHY FLOOR NO MORE

Constant foot traffic leaves a germ-laden cocktail of dirt, soap scum and grime. Dettol All Purpose Cleaner Disinfectant Concentrate's one-step hospital-grade cleaning formula kills 99.9% of bacteria yeast along with the hardest-to-kill non-enveloped viruses and makes up to 83 five-litre buckets.*

2



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Removing common stains, especially on a short dishwasher cycle, is vital for a smooth service. Quantum Professional Dishwasher Detergent & Glasswash Detergent shine when it comes to protecting dishware and appliances.

3



COUNTERS CLEANED

Hard surfaces harbour bacteria reservoirs that cause contamination and foodborne illnesses unless completely disinfected. Dettol All Purpose Cleaner Disinfectant Concentrate or Dettol Power & Pure Kitchen Spray gives peace of mind.

4



HANDY HABITS

Train your team to use a dermatologically tested antibacterial handwash to ensure school day-long cleanliness and hygiene.

5



BETTER BINS FAST

An easy-to-use application like Dettol Disinfectant Spray kills 99.9% of viruses and bacteria. It's quick too, so your team can manage their time better.



*1.2% concentration for cleaning stains.

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