

A Food and Health Strategy for Swansea Schools 2007 - 2013

*Working together to improve the nutrition of children
and young people through Swansea Schools*



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National Public Health
Service for Wales
Gwasanaeth Iechyd Cyhoeddus
Cenedlaethol Cymru



Bwrdd Iechyd Lleol
Local Health Board
Abertawe
Swansea



FOREWORD

**Dr Nina Williams, Public Health Director Swansea Local Health Board and
Richard Parry, Lead Director of Children and Young People.**

We are very pleased to support the Food and Health Strategy for Swansea Schools as an essential part of the local partnership priorities for health social care and well being in Swansea. We are committed to the long term aim of improving the health of our population and believe that the development and implementation of whole school approaches to food and health is central to this.

Good nutrition throughout life has a significant and positive impact on our health and well being and can contribute to decreasing the risks of today's leading health problems. Good nutrition also has an impact on behaviour and learning.

Schools are vitally important settings through which to promote good nutrition and there are already many excellent initiatives and developments established in Swansea schools which support healthy eating. We encourage our schools to become part of the Swansea Healthy School Scheme which supports whole

school approaches to health. Many local schools are already active members of the scheme and we plan that by 2010 all schools in Swansea will have gained Healthy School status.

In the City and County of Swansea, many staff and other key individuals across departments, organisations and communities have an important contribution to the achievement of the objectives within this strategy. By working together and combining our efforts, we will make best use of the skills, knowledge and commitment available to develop and implement whole school approaches to food and health.

This strategy and ongoing action plan will assist and enable schools to promote healthy food and nutrition through a broad health education curriculum supported by the environment and ethos of the school. It outlines the key issues and recommendations, provides guidelines and sets out a framework for action over the next five years.



**Dr Nina Williams,
Public Health Director,
Swansea Local Health Board**



**Mr. Richard Parry,
Lead Director of Children
and Young People,
City & County of Swansea**



1. AIM OF THE STRATEGY

- ❑ To improve the nutrition and the associated health and well being of children & young people (3-18) through the setting of Swansea schools.

2. STRATEGIC VISION

The strategy sets out the range of existing initiatives in Swansea and the proposed developments based on whole school approaches to health which aim to improve the diet of children and young people in Swansea through the school environment. It outlines the key priority areas and provides recommendations for food and health through the setting of Swansea schools.

This document provides a framework for promoting health and good nutrition in schools. Based on the latest research, programme experience and policy guidance, it is designed to help the Health Challenge Swansea partnership for Health, Social Care and Well Being to address the broad range of factors that can be modified to implement good nutrition as an essential element within schools.

3. OBJECTIVES

- ❑ To support all Swansea schools in developing and implementing a whole school food and nutrition policy by July 2008 by providing guidance on policy development and implementation
- ❑ To implement and support the new food and nutritional standards in schools through the school meals service. The nutrient standards implementation period in Primary Schools will be 2008-2009 and 2008-2010 in Secondary Schools
- ❑ To ensure that all schools provide clear and consistent messages about food and nutrition through the curriculum, curriculum materials and through meals provided in schools
- ❑ To develop and implement training for staff involved in food and health in Swansea schools including catering and teaching staff
- ❑ To ensure all schools are focused on achieving healthy school status by 2010



4. STRATEGIC BACKGROUND

In 2005, food and health in schools was identified as a key health improvement priority in Swansea. The Swansea Health Social Care and Well Being Strategy identified the development of a local nutrition policy as a priority for preventative action. A partnership group was set up under the Swansea Children and Young People Framework to develop an initial focus on healthy eating and nutrition in schools which would contribute to wider local policy development during 2006-2007.

5. NATIONAL STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The local partnership work to develop a food and health strategy for Swansea Schools set the focus of the strategy within the emerging national context for whole school approaches to addressing issues of health and well being based on identified local needs.

The Food Standards Agency Wales and Welsh Assembly Government produced a Nutrition Strategy for Wales, *Food and Well Being* in 2003 aiming to reduce associated health inequalities, (Food Standards Agency/Welsh Assembly Government, 2003).

The *Food and Fitness* 5 year implementation plan produced by Welsh Assembly Government in June 2006 promotes healthy eating and physical activity for children and young people in Wales and communicates the actions which will be put in place to improve the nutrition and levels of physical activity of children and young people in Wales, (Welsh Assembly Government, 2006).

The *Appetite for Life* consultation launched by Welsh Assembly Government in June 2006 is being developed into a national action plan for Summer 2007 to support more stringent nutritional standards being introduced with the aim of delivering a reduction in pupils' consumption of saturated fats, salt and sugar and an increase in the consumption of fruit, vegetables and other foods containing essential nutrients, (Welsh Assembly Government, 2006).



6. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE: FOOD AND HEALTH

Recent evidence of the increasing levels of overweight, obese and diabetic children and young people in the UK has led to a focus on the food and lifestyle behaviours of this population group. It is already widely established that the risks of these particular conditions and diseases are significantly reduced by a combination of eating a balanced diet and being physically active. Long term effects of poor dietary intake and lack of exercise are clearly linked to an increased risk of other diseases such as coronary heart disease and cancer.

Good nutrition helps to prevent some of today's leading health problems and enables healthier adulthood and ageing. Good nutrition also strengthens the learning potential and overall wellbeing of children.



In Swansea, there is evidence that poor dietary intake leads to local children and young people experiencing chronic constipation, anaemia and high levels of dental decay, (Swansea HSCWB Needs Assessment, 2003).

For this reason there is a considerable public health benefit in addressing the barriers to good nutrition and healthier eating choices, habits and behaviours early in life. The development and support of good eating habits in children and young people is therefore a lasting investment and worth prioritising as an effective public health intervention.

7. WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACHES

Schools are an influential setting and can make a significant contribution to improving both the environment and the health of pupils, staff and the wider community. Schools can increase knowledge and awareness of food issues and nutrition which can help to influence eating habits. Schools can provide nutritious, good quality food during the school day.

There is evidence to support whole school approaches as the best way to improve overall nutrition and healthy eating in the school setting, (Valentine, 2005). It is beneficial for children and young people to receive accurate and consistent messages throughout the school day, in the classroom, the school dining room and the immediate school environment.

Increasing the capacity of schools to promote healthy nutrition is an essential element of the local strategy in order to increase the health and learning potential of children and young people, families and other community members.

Schools provide an extremely effective and efficient way to reach large proportions of the population. Children and young people can be reached at influential stages in their lives, during childhood and adolescence when lifelong nutritional patterns are formed.



Supportive school policies provide an essential framework that guides schools in planning, implementing and evaluating efforts to promote health and nutrition.

8. HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT

As part of the recent partnership work a health impact assessment process was conducted to consult on and consider the potential positive and negative impacts on the health of children and young people. Head teachers, senior school staff and other key local stakeholders including school catering management services, Local Authorities and NHS Trusts and Public Health staff contributed to the consultation.

The impact assessment event included case study presentations of food and nutrition policy developments in local Primary and Secondary schools alongside contributions on the public health consequences of poor diets in children and young people, the current context of school meal provision and policy perspectives.

Recommendations were made on priority areas for action to address the nutritional, dietary and related health needs of children and young people in Swansea, (appendix I).

9. KEY LOCAL PRIORITY AREAS

Through the partnership consultation event on the health impact of food in schools, the following areas were identified as key priorities on which an action plan should be based.



The future development of local plans for action to address these priority areas in Swansea will take due regard of the particular circumstances of schools to ensure that the objectives set are realistic and appropriate.

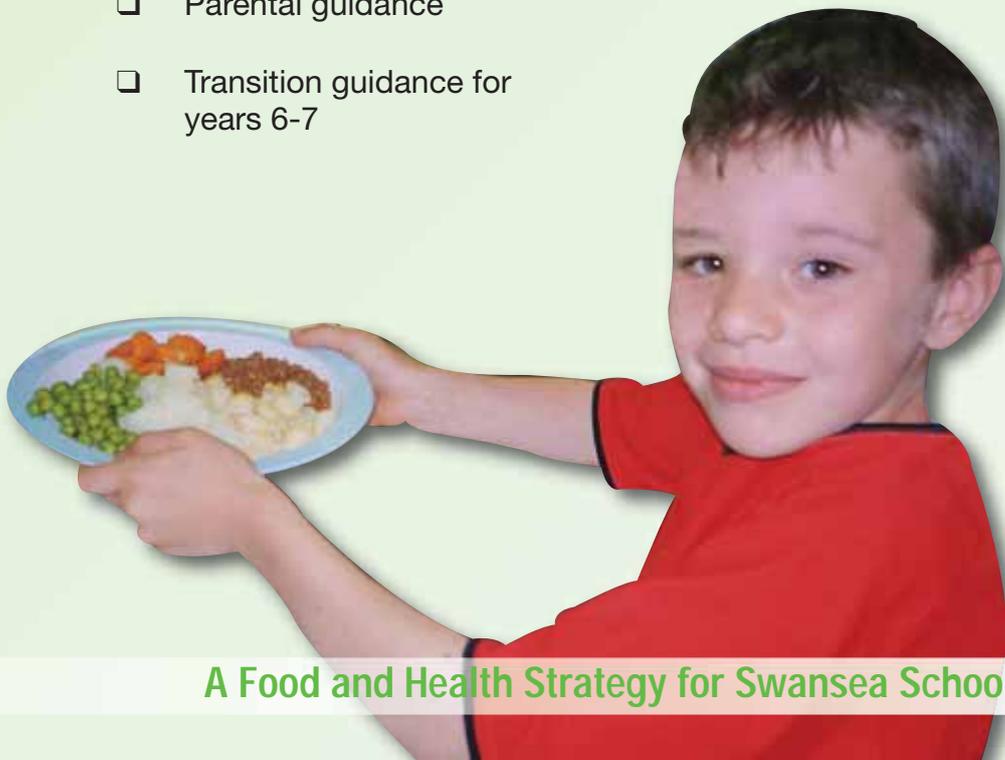
Culture/ethos

- Staff as role models
- Positive models of health
- Children & young people participation in decision making
- Reward systems
- Involvement in product marketing
- School events
- Lunchtime supervision
- Outside traders
- Off site policy
- Length of lunchtimes



Training

- Curriculum development
- Food safety
- Catering training programmes
- Linking practice to curriculum
- Parental guidance
- Transition guidance for years 6-7



Food provision

- Linking practice to curriculum
- Breakfast
- Fruit tuck shops
- Water
- School meals
- Milk (7-11 years)
- Lunchboxes
- Food sources/procurement
- Vending
- Other food outlets

Physical environment

- Catering facilities
- Dining area furniture, equipment and decor

Curriculum

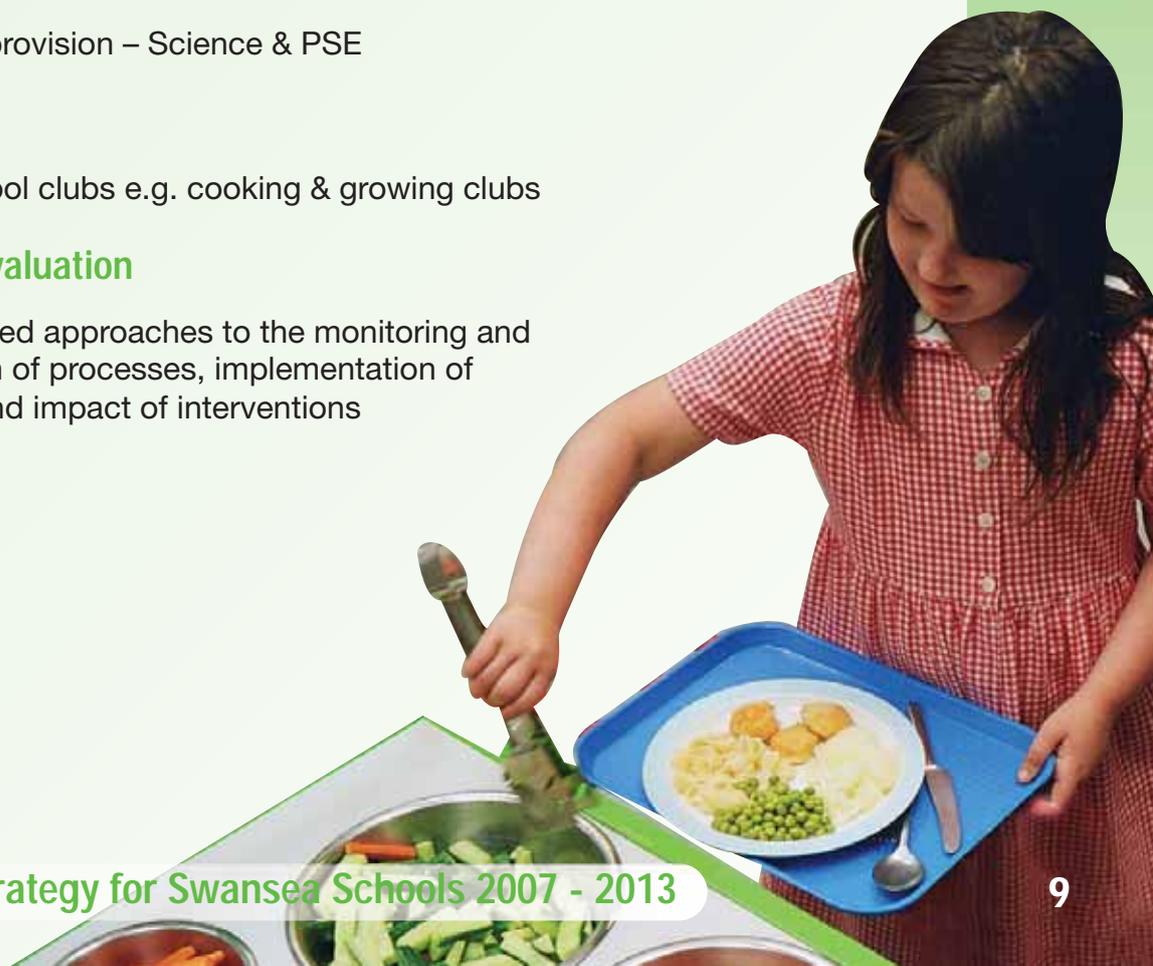
- Cross curricular provision – consistent messages
- Discreet provision – Science & PSE

Extra curricular

- After school clubs e.g. cooking & growing clubs

Monitoring & Evaluation

- Coordinated approaches to the monitoring and evaluation of processes, implementation of actions and impact of interventions



10. SWANSEA HEALTHY EATING IN SCHOOLS GROUP MEMBERSHIP & CONTACT DETAILS:

Sian Beddoe, Chief II Community Dietitian, Swansea NHS Trust

Telephone: 01792 516565 **Email:** sian.beddoe@swansea-tr.wales.nhs.uk

Mark Champion, Teacher Adviser for PSE, City & County of Swansea (CCS)

Telephone: 01792 562694 **Email:** mark.champion@swansea.gov.uk

Beti Ede, Senior Health Promotion Specialist, Swansea Public Health Team,
National Public Health Service (NPHS)

Telephone: 01792 784842 **Email:** beti.ede@nphs.wales.nhs.uk

Jo Evans, Coordinator Healthy Hearts Team, Swansea NHS Trust

Telephone: 01792 475063

Bet Jenkins and Alison Cosker, Catering Managers. Catering Department, CCS

Telephone: 01792 773473 **Email:** bet.jenkins@swansea.gov.uk

Email: alison.cosker@swansea.gov.uk

Debbie Jones, Management & Compliance Officer, CCS

Telephone: 01792 636207 **Email:** debbie.jones@swansea.gov.uk

Rob Jones, Head Teacher, Glais Primary School

Telephone: 01792 842627

Email: Glais.Primary.School@swansea-edunet.gov.uk

Sandra Joy, Deputy Head Teacher, Morriston Comprehensive School

Telephone: 01792 797745

Email: MorristonComprehensiveSchool@swansea-edunet.gov.uk

Angela Latimer, Healthy Schools Officer, Swansea Public Health Team, NPHS

Telephone: 01792 784858 **Email:** angela.latimer@nphs.wales.nhs.uk

Cindy Marsh, Head of Health Promotion, Swansea Public Health Team, NPHS

Telephone: 01792 784858 **Email:** cindy.marsh@nphs.wales.nhs.uk

Amanda Taylor, Head Teacher, Cwm Primary School

Telephone: 01792 774519

Email: Cwm.PrimarySchool@swansea-edunet.gov.uk

Gaynor Thomas, Oral Health Promotion Officer, Swansea NHS Trust

Telephone: 01792 645882

Alan Twelvetrees, Children & Young People Framework Partnership Manager, CCS

Telephone: 01792 637170 **Email:** alan.twelvetrees@swansea.gov.uk

Sue Walker, Head Teacher, Mayals Primary School

Telephone: 01792 402755.

Email: Mayals.Primaryschool@swansea-edunet.gov.uk

Daniel Warm, Parent Governor, Cilâ Primary School

Telephone: 01792 202775

Nina Williams, Public Health Director Swansea Local Health Board, NPHS

Telephone: 01792 607367 **Email:** nina.williams@nphs.wales.nhs.uk

11. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This strategy was written using supporting information from the following publications;

Eat Well Feel Well, 2006,
Glasgow City Council's Food
and Health Policy for
schools

Food and Health Strategy
for Pembrokeshire Schools
and School Site Leisure
Centres, 2005

WHO information series on
school health, 1998, Healthy
Nutrition: An Essential
Element of a Health- Promoting School



12. REFERENCES

Food Standards Agency Wales and Welsh Assembly Government (2003),
**Food and Well Being: Reducing Inequalities through a Nutrition Strategy
for Wales.** Cardiff.

Swansea Local Health Board and City & County of Swansea:
Health Social Care & Well Being Needs Assessment (2003)
<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/Documents/267/Swansea%2DLocal%2DHealth%2DBoard%2DHealth%2DNeeds%2DAssessment%2Epdf>

Valentine, S (2005) **British Nutrition Foundation Bulletin**
'Where to next for food in schools?', 30 209

Welsh Assembly Government (2006),
**Appetite for Life,
Consultation Document,** Cardiff

Welsh Assembly Government (2006),
**Food and Fitness – promoting
Healthy Eating and Physical
Activity for Children and Young
People in Wales 5 Year
implementation Plan,** Cardiff



13. Appendix I

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CONSULTATION EVENT, NOVEMBER 2005

1. There should be increased support for the implementation of whole school approaches through healthy school scheme membership, partnership and multidisciplinary working
2. Every school in Swansea should be supported to adopt a whole-school food and nutrition policy covering teaching of nutrition and provision of food within the school environment.
3. Children and young people should be involved more in decision making about school food in Swansea through Schools Councils, School Nutrition Action Groups, audit processes and other planned opportunities.
4. Consistent, evidence based messages on healthy eating and nutrition should be coordinated across sectors and agencies at a Swansea wide level.
5. Targeted intervention strategies at a local level should be based on current knowledge of what is effective.
6. The Swansea Partnership should take strategic opportunities to lobby Welsh Assembly Government for increased investment in school meals.
7. A rolling programme of training, as part of a skills development plan for school meal catering staff should be jointly planned and delivered to include whole school approaches, healthy catering, nutritional standards and the health benefits for pupils.
8. Access to healthier foods should be increased (for example fruit, vegetables and wholemeal bread) and the availability of less healthy foods reduced or eliminated (for example confectionery, pre-packaged savoury snacks and high-sugar or sweetened fizzy drinks).



9. Choices of school meals should be restricted to a healthier range of options, based on menus balanced over one week.
10. Sales of foods high in fat, sugar and salt should be restricted in all school vending machines and also in community leisure centre machines on school sites.
11. Water should be made available throughout the school day to all pupils.
12. Menu changes should be introduced incrementally and innovatively, working with relevant partners across Swansea to promote best methods for success.
13. Support for appropriate marketing and presentation of healthier options should be available to the school meal catering services and other providers.
14. All schools should have written documentation on how they meet the nutritional standards and these should be rigorously monitored.
15. Detailed monitoring requirements should be included in all school catering contracts.
16. Improve dining room environments.
17. Develop further local information for parents on school meals to include clear guidance on diet and health connections.
18. Clear supportive guidance made available to parents on healthy packed lunches.
19. Pupils should not usually be allowed to leave the premises at lunchtime.
20. Structural and socio-economic factors should always be considered when developing local policy.



This strategy forms part of a wider local strategic approach to promote health and well being under the Health Challenge Swansea Partnership.



Your food, your future...

Involving children and young people themselves in the implementation of this strategy is very important. The posters pictured above have been designed to help communicate the key messages of the strategy to all children and young people in schools. They will be displayed in dining areas and other appropriate places.