

School Nutrition Action Group Briefing Sheet

What is a School Nutrition Action Group (SNAG)?

A School Nutrition Action Group is a school-based alliance in which teaching staff, pupils and caterers, supported, where appropriate, by health and education professionals and the local community, work together to review and improve the school food service and adopt a truly whole school approach to food education and culture.

A SNAG is an important part of the Food for Life Partnership Mark and goes beyond lunches, to include the quality of snacking services, breakfast provision and vending. It will also include food growing, cooking activity and links being made to local farms and food producers so that pupils find out more about where food comes from.

It is advisable to have nominated champions for each of the different elements of the Food for Life Partnership (FFLP) programme. These could include a champion for updating your blog on the FFLP website, and then champions for growing, cooking and farm links. They could also be members of your SNAG.

Typical membership of a SNAG includes:

- A member of the Senior Management Team
- Member(s) of the teaching staff (e.g. PSHCE or science and in secondary schools food technology must be represented). This could be your cooking champion.
- Pupils
- Parent / Governor
- Catering supervisor or area manager
- School cook
- Midday supervisor
- Representatives from the community as appropriate

To ensure an efficient working group and structure, ideally the SNAG should have a maximum of 10 members. However, the following could be co-opted as required:

- Healthy Schools Coordinators
- Primary Care Trust Health Promotion Specialists
- Community groups, local producers / farmers

When will you need a SNAG?

Your SNAG will be very important in supporting your school in going for Gold, and building support among pupils, parents and the wider community.

One of the first jobs of the SNAG will be to review what is happening in your school on food issues, and put an action plan together to make improvements. The SNAG working group will need to meet regularly to push the actions forward.

What support will you receive from the Food for Life Partnership?

If you are working toward the Food for Life Partnership Mark:

Enrol with the Food for Life Partnership and we'll give you your very own web page on which to record your progress towards Bronze, Silver and Gold Marks. You can easily link to this webpage from your school website so that pupils and parents can get involved in planning how to make progress.

Visit www.foodforlife.org.uk/in_your_region to find out how you can contact flagship schools and communities in your region. Flagship schools and communities represent every kind of school situation and school catering model, so that you can learn from their mistakes and successes. Case study information will be made available on the website from right across England to help you with creative ideas and inspiration.

You will also find information about upcoming networking events in your region.

If you are a flagship school and community:

The Food for Life Partnership team will support your school in setting up a SNAG and drafting a school food policy with actions plan for improvements. The School Food Policy Development Officers will work with your school to look at what is happening in your school around food quality, cooking, growing and farm links. This will be a fact-finding exercise and the whole school community can be involved. The results of this fact finding will then help your school to set the agenda for the SNAG and look at creating a food policy and action plan.

For more information on food policy in schools and SNAGs try the following websites:

www.foodinschools.org - Food in Schools toolkit

www.learning.wales.gov.uk - whole school food and fitness policy guidance

www.fsa.gov.uk - FSA policy guidance for governors

www.healthedtrust.com – SNAG case studies and 'The Chips are Down'