

## Pupil Participation in School Nutrition Action Groups

Pupil engagement in action groups plays an important part of embedding sustainable successful changes within school settings. If pupils are not fully involved within the decision making process, the changes within the school may not be accepted and could cause disruption. Occasionally it may be difficult to maintain pupil engagement within meetings whilst ensuring actions and tasks are being discussed. This document will provide you with some activities and ideas to assist you with your meetings.

### Ideas to assist with pupil engagement

- ❖ **Provide plenty of chilled tap water on the tables and have your meeting in a cool airy and spacious room.**
- ❖ **Mix up the seating positions of SNAG members at meetings.**
  - ✓ Go around the room and give people the name of a food pair for example if you have 12 people in your action group tell 6 people sitting in the circle they are a 'rhubarb' and 6 people they are 'custard', then ask everybody to sit next to their food pair.
  - ✓ Ask the group to sit themselves in alphabetical order in a clockwise manner or in order of birthdays.
- ❖ **Start the meetings with a warm up activity.**
  - ✓ Ask people in turn to talk about their favourite foods or foods they have started to grow / would like to grow at home.
  - ✓ Ask people to think of the name of a fruit or vegetable with the same first letter as their name.
  - ✓ Ask participants to sit in a circle. Introduce a statement such as, "I eat fruit every day", then ask anyone for whom this statement applies to stand up and swap places with someone else who has stood up. If they find they are the only one standing they can simply sit down again. Other statements might include:
    - 'I compost at home'.
    - 'I grow fruit or vegetable at home'.
    - 'I ate breakfast this morning'.
- ❖ **Integrate a feedback section on your agenda after your warm up activity.**
  - ✓ Ask the pupils and or staff members who are leading on a particular area of the FFLP to inform the group of any areas of progress or activities which have been taking place.
  - ✓ You might like to provide an open forum for pupils to give feedback from their peers or classes and also their ideas to add to the agenda.
- ❖ **Have a debate on a particular FFLP topic.**
  - ✓ Provide everybody with 3 cotton wool buds or another item such as crayons. Pose a question for debate/discussion e.g. how do we improve school dinners? Those present proceed to discuss the issue, but must pay with a cotton wool bud before they speak. Once someone has used up all their cotton wool buds they may not speak again unless someone else is prepared to donate their cotton wool bud. Similarly if someone interrupts, moans, jeers, heckles or simply takes too long to make their point they should be fined a cotton wool bud.

❖ **Provide a task for each pupil to complete before the next meeting.**

You might ask pupils to:

- ✓ Find out the definition of organic, fair trade or seasonal produce.
- ✓ Bring an item of food their family has grown at home.
- ✓ Design a logo or name for the school garden.
- ✓ Take pictures of the things they would like to change in the dining hall.
- ✓ Interview their parents on particular food issues.

❖ **Use a buddy system in your meetings.**

- ✓ Link one pupil to an adult member. The adult could support this pupil in the meetings and also complete tasks and actions together in between meetings.

❖ **Nominate pupils to be Champions for particular Food for Life Partnership areas.**

These might include a 'Dining Room / Lunchtime Champion' or a 'Gardening Champion'.

- ✓ Develop a notice board for these Champions and have an assembly to present them to the school. These Champions will lead the pupil voice for this particular area. These Champions could be part of the SNAG and school council and feedback information and development for their areas.

❖ **For infant school pupils invite pupils to attend part of the meeting to get their views and thoughts.**

- ✓ Some meetings may require in-depth discussions which could be difficult to complete if trying to engage young children. You may wish to include pupils for part of the meetings ensuring they are fully updated at the beginning of the next meeting.

❖ **Invite a guest speaker to one of your meetings.**

- ✓ You could invite a local farmer, baker or allotment holder to give a short talk or demonstration. These people might be able to bring in samples of produce or pictures which explain their jobs.

❖ **Go on a short visit to the local shops, supermarket or community allotment.**

- ✓ Ask pupils to write a short report on their visit and take pictures to report back to the school.
- ✓ You could have your meeting at the venue instead of on the school site.

❖ **Develop SNAG suggestion boxes.**

- ✓ Get pupils to make some suggestion boxes and comments slips. Pupils could take the responsibility to feed comments back at the SNAG meetings.

❖ **Involve pupils in communicating and updating the whole school and community on the SNAG and FFLP progress.**

- ✓ Ask pupils to develop a SNAG newsletter or website blog with updates on actions being taken.
- ✓ Have regular assemblies involving pupils from the SNAG.
- ✓ Have SNAG pupil representation at parents evenings and school meal tasting sessions.

❖ **Involve pupils in typing up the actions and minutes from the meeting. Older pupils maybe able to take on the roll of secretary.**