School Nutrition Action Group (SNAG)

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What is a School Nutrition Action Group (SNAG)?

This is a school-based working group drawn from school management, teaching staff, pupils and caterers, supported were appropriate by relevant health professionals, to manage the review of the whole school food provision and drive forward improvements and initiatives to promote healthier eating throughout the school.

Possible membership of the SNAG

There is no set formula. Successful SNAGs can differ quite widely in this respect. The composition will depend on your school needs and what already exists e.g. school council.

- **Representative from Senior Management** – Principal / Vice Principal
- **Representative of teaching staff.** An enthusiastic teacher is ideal. Particularly someone with an interest in health e.g. health education co-ordinator
- **Representatives from the pupils.** For the SNAG to be successful it is essential that the pupils are represented. The school council or representatives from the council are often ideal. In the absence of a council, pupils with a genuine interest in health and healthy eating are beneficial
- **Representative from the catering department.** This is usually the Unit Supervisor accompanied by their Area Manager

Further to the above the following can be co-opted, as required

- Parents / representative from Board of Governors
- School Nurse
- Community Dietitian / Community Schools Dietitian
- Dental Health promotion officer
- Environmental Health Officer
School Healthy Eating Policy

The SNAG can establish, monitor and evaluate a consistent Healthy Eating Policy. The policy is a shared, evolving document that encourages a whole school approach to food in schools.

A School Healthy Eating Policy can focus on a range of issues e.g.

- **Provision of food in school**: breakfast club, vending machines, tuck shops, school lunch, break time provision, fluid consumption
- **Consumption of food at school**: time allocated to breaks and lunches, dining environment, service style, packed lunches, litter
- **Events at school**: school trips, prize days, rewards, parent/teacher evenings

**Benefits of a SNAG**

- Promotes a healthier environment in school
- Offers children, staff and parents an opportunity to voice their concerns about the provision about healthier food
- Promotes healthy choices
- Empower children and staff to make informed choices about food
- Supports and inform the curriculum
Step by Step Guide

**Stage 1 Week1** Initial meeting

- All members of SNAG meet to introduce themselves
- Aims, objectives agreed
- Draft healthy eating survey

**Stage 2 Week 2-3 Healthy Eating Survey**

- Survey carried out with random sample of students
- Results of survey compiled
- Initial nutrition initiatives identified from survey

**Stage 3 Week 4 Action Plan**

- Agree initial nutrition initiatives
- Put steps in place as how to address these

**Stage 4 Week 5 Healthy Eating Policy**

- Initial Healthy Eating Policy can be drafted and piloted

**Stage 5 Week 9 Monitoring and Evaluation**

- SNAG meet to discuss success and effectiveness of initiative
- Suggest alternatives if necessary
- Healthy Eating Policy altered as necessary

Weeks 4 -9 can be repeated throughout the school year as able. Week 9 should be carried out at a minimum of once per term to ensure sustainability of the Healthy Eating Policy.

**For Further Information**

School Food: The Essential Guide. Published by the Public Health Agency for Northern Ireland.

Copies available: Tel 90311611

[www.neelb.tv](http://www.neelb.tv) ‘What’s on the Menu?’
SAMPLE SNAG QUESTIONNAIRE (Post Primary)

YEAR GROUP – Please circle which year group you are in:
Year 8     Year 9     Year 10    Year 11    Year 12    Year 13/14

BREAKFAST (This section can be included if you have or are planning on starting a breakfast club)

Do you take breakfast on a regular basis (more than 4 school days)?
Yes     No

If you answered no, why do you not take a breakfast?
_____________________________________________________________________

If a breakfast club was available in school, do you think you would use it?    Yes     No

BREAK TIME

What do you eat for break?______________________________________________

Do you buy break from the canteen? (if applicable to your school)    Yes     No

LUNCH TIME

How many days a week do you use the canteen?   1       2     3     4     5     never

What would make you use the canteen more often?
_____________________________________________________________________

What is your favourite dish in the canteen?
_____________________________________________________________________

Are there any foods that you would like served that are not currently available?
_____________________________________________________________________

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