What do the new standards look like?

This table shows a summary of the key standards which school food will have to meet.

	At lunchtime	At other times (including breakfast, mid-morning break, tuck shops, vending machines, after-school clubs)	Why has this standard been introduced?
More fruit and vegetables	At least one portion of fruit and one of vegetables available every day	A variety available in all outlets	▪ To increase children's fruit and vegetable intake – currently many eat less than half the recommended '5 a day' ▪ Fruit and vegetables are vital sources of vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and fibre; they also replace less nutritious foods
More oily fish	Available once every 3 weeks		▪ To increase the intake of beneficial omega 3 fatty acids
Bread	Available every day as an extra		▪ So children can fill up on starchy food which is a healthier source of calories than fat or sugar
Drinking water	Free, fresh water to be available at all times		▪ To help children switch to drinking water instead of less healthy sugary or sweetened soft drinks ▪ Water promotes hydration and has no calories ▪ To promote water availability in schools so children do not have to rely on taps in toilets for a drink ▪ Children do not have to pay for tap water, so it is a drink which is equally accessible to all
Healthier drinks	Only plain water (still or sparkling), skimmed or semi-skimmed milk, pure fruit or vegetable juices, soya drinks enriched with calcium, yoghurt or milk with artificial sweeteners or less than 5% added sugar, or combinations of these (artificial sweeteners or less than 5% added sugar permitted only in combinations containing at least 50% milk or yoghurt). Also tea, coffee, low calorie hot chocolate		▪ To remove sugary or sweetened drinks which have limited nutritional value and can cause tooth decay

	At lunchtime	At other times (including breakfast, mid-morning break, tuck shops, vending machines, after-school clubs)	Why has this standard been introduced?
No confectionery	No sweets, chocolate, items containing chocolate, cereal bars, processed fruit bars		▪ These products tend to be high in sugar and calories. Many are also high in fat. They are not nutritionally valuable ▪ Children tend to choose sweet things in preference to more nutritious food – some even swap a balanced meal for sweets or chocolate at lunchtime
No savoury snacks	No packets of crisps or crisp-like products. Nuts* and seeds with no added salt, sugar or fat are allowed		▪ To remove products, such as packets of crisps, which tend to be high in fat and salt. These types of snack products, like confectionery, displace more nourishing foods ▪ To encourage children to eat a balanced meal at lunchtimes
No salt; condiments restricted	No salt on tables or at the counter; condiments, e.g. ketchup and mayonnaise, in small portions only		▪ To reduce the amount of salt children eat – most consume more than they need ▪ High salt intake increases the risk of high blood pressure, which can lead to heart disease
Deep-fried foods restricted	No more than twice a week across all school food services		▪ To cut down on the number of times that deep fried food is served in order to reduce the amount of fat children eat. This will help to control calorie intake as fat is a very concentrated source of calories
Meat products restricted	Foods such as burgers and sausage rolls can only be served infrequently at lunch and infrequently at other times, and must meet standards for minimum meat content		▪ To improve the quality of meat and poultry products in schools ▪ To cut down on how often they are served, as many tend to be high in salt and fat
Cakes and biscuits restricted	Available as part of a meal; can be bought in or made by caterers	Not available	▪ These products tend to be high in fat, sugar and calories – often as high as confectionery – and so they are best eaten as part of a balanced meal

* Be allergy aware, see page 6 of this guide

School lunches

TABLE 1: Nutrient-based standards for SCHOOL LUNCHES for children and young people aged 5–18 years: SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The table below summarises the proportion of nutrients that children and young people should receive from a school lunch. The figures are for the recommended nutrient content of an average lunch provided for children and young people over a one-week period.

TABLE 1

Energy	30% of the estimated average requirement (EAR)
Fat	Not more than 35% of food energy
Saturated fat	Not more than 11% of food energy
Total carbohydrate	Not less than 50% of food energy
Non-milk extrinsic sugars	Not more than 11% of food energy
Fibre	Not less than 30% of the calculated reference value*
Protein	Not less than 30% of the reference nutrient intake (RNI)
Iron	Not less than 40% of the RNI
Zinc	Not less than 40% of the RNI
Calcium	Not less than 40% of the RNI
Vitamin A	Not less than 40% of the RNI
Vitamin C	Not less than 40% of the RNI
Folate	Not less than 40% of the RNI
Sodium	Not more than 30% of the SACN recommendation
Fruit and vegetables	Not less than 2 portions
Oily fish	On the school lunch menu at least once a week
Fried or processed potato products	Not on the school lunch menu more than once a week

Salt: Salt should **not** be made available at counters or at tables.

Water: Free, fresh, chilled water should be available to children and young people at school.

* For details of the calculated reference value for fibre, see Appendix on page 26.

EAR = Estimated Average Requirement **RNI** = Reference Nutrient Intake **SACN** = Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition
For an explanation of EAR and RNI, see below.

Estimated Average Requirement (EAR)

This is the average amount of energy or nutrients needed by a group of people. Half the population will have needs greater than this, and half will have needs below this amount.

Reference Nutrient Intake (RNI)

This is the amount of a nutrient which is enough to meet the dietary requirements of about 97% of a group of people. If people get more than this amount they will almost certainly be getting enough.