

# **FREE FRUIT IN SCHOOLS INITIATIVE FOR PRIMARIES 1 AND 2**

## **DETAILED GUIDANCE**

**Scottish Executive**  
March 2003



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### INTRODUCTION

1. The Scottish Executive wants to give every child a good start in life, a healthy start that will encourage healthy eating habits that will stay with them throughout life. Improving children's diet can make a major impact on the health of children with beneficial outcomes for educational attainment and improved health in later life. That is why the Scottish Executive has embarked on the revitalisation of school lunches as part of the drive to improve the health and social well being of children in Scotland. The recently published *Improving Health in Scotland – A Challenge* sets out a vision of “well-nourished, well-balanced children who are well prepared to benefit from education”.
2. As part of the drive to improve health in Scotland, a public health education campaign to promote healthy eating – the Healthy Living Campaign, was recently launched. The key messages of this campaign are simple – eat more fruit and vegetables and cut down on fat, especially saturated fat.
3. To help and support this, free fruit for every local authority school pupil in primaries 1 and 2 is being introduced. This will offer a natural progression for children from pre-school education who in many instances are used to having fruit at nursery. This initiative targets the youngest children, where eating fruit is most likely to be habit forming and where the health gain might be greatest in the long term. It complements the good work going on in many schools with older children to encourage the habit of snacking on fruit through the establishment of school fruit shops and healthy tuck shops.
4. The new revitalised school meals accompanied by the free fruit initiative will form a key part of our Healthy Living Campaign inspiring and encouraging all Scots as they move to change their diet, improve their health and well-being and make Scotland a healthier, happier place to live.

## **SECTION 1: BACKGROUND**

### **Improving Health in Scotland**

1.1 As part of the overall approach to improving diet, the Scottish Executive recently launched its national Healthy Living Campaign to promote healthy eating. The campaign offers education and advice on all aspects of healthy eating to the general public via advertising a call centre and website and aims to educate, inspire and support people who wish to change their diets. The campaign is promoting 2 key messages – eat more fruit and vegetables and cut back on fat, especially saturated fat.

### **We Need to Eat More Fruit and Vegetables**

1.2 The Scottish Diet is largely deficient in fruit and vegetables and at national level Scotland does not meet the WHO recommended adult daily intake of 5 portions of fruit and vegetables (400grams). This means a portion for an adult is about 80 grams or one glass of juice (only one glass of juice a day counts). For children a rough guide is what a child can hold in one hand. Consumption of fruits and vegetables has long term beneficial impact on ill health including certain cancers, stroke, heart disease and diabetes. A diet rich in fruit and vegetables, starchy foods and low in saturated fat, sugar and salt can also help to reduce conditions like obesity and high blood pressure.

### **Fruit and Vegetables and Children's Health**

1.3 The new nutrient standards for school lunches require the school lunch to provide one-third of the daily nutrient requirement for children and to include 2 portions of fruit or vegetables. In addition, fruit schemes in schools and nurseries can make a valuable, hands-on contribution to promoting and encouraging healthy eating habits at an early stage as part of the whole-school approach to nutrition education set out in *Hungry For Success* – the report of the Expert Panel on School Meals. Through the introduction of school fruit schemes, children are given the opportunity to explore tastes and textures of a range of fruits and vegetables and to become accustomed to eating and enjoying fruits and vegetables every day.

### **Giving Children an Equal Start**

1.4 The Scottish Executive has made a commitment to eradicate child poverty in a generation, a commitment shared with the UK Government. As part of their commitment to supporting children living in poverty, the Executive wants to maximise the number of children who have access to a nutritious meal and fresh fruit during the school day. There are clearly established links between health and educational achievement – children who are hungry or poorly nourished are less likely to fulfil their educational potential. The provision of free school meals and fresh fruit will improve children's physical well being and help discourage them from snacking on high fat, high sugar or salt alternatives. Improving the up-take of school meals and fresh fruit is an essential part of supporting children most in need.

## **SECTION 2: THE FREE FRUIT IN SCHOOLS INITIATIVE**

### **Introduction**

2.1 The free fruit in schools initiative is funded to provide one portion of fruit, 3 times per week during the school term, to every pupil in primaries 1 and 2 in local authority managed schools. In devising this guidance we have drawn heavily from the experiences of similar schemes in some parts of Scotland and south of the border.

2.2 It is important that any scheme offers sufficient flexibility to meet local needs and local supply and distribution arrangements. Many local authorities, often working in partnership with their local NHS Board or with local community food initiatives and co-operatives are already providing fruit to schools. We are therefore setting out a national framework of guidance within which local authorities should work to devise and implement a scheme in their area building on any valuable experience they may already have gained in taking forward local initiatives. Local community food co-operatives, community food initiatives and healthy living centres are often valuable sources of advice and experience and can provide an appropriate context to a school fruit scheme linking it to other relevant work in the community as a whole.

2.3 This initiative is intended to offer a natural progression for children from pre-school education who in many instances are used to having fruit at nursery. Targeting the youngest children where eating fruit is most likely to be habit forming will be more likely to bring the greatest health gain in the long term. Many schools are working with older children to encourage the habit of snacking on fruit through the establishment of school fruit shops and healthy tuck shops and we would encourage that good work to continue and be further developed.

2.4 The free fruit scheme will involve key stakeholders within the school community as part of a wider programme to support access to healthy food for children. The main aims, objectives and outcomes from the scheme will be:

- local authorities working in partnership with producers, retailers and other key stakeholders to provide and deliver a selection of free fruit for all children in primaries 1 and 2 three times per week
- for local authorities/schools to increase fruit awareness and consumption through education leading to better health and health-related behaviour overall for children in Scotland where food is concerned
- to influence children's eating habits and help make a healthy diet a real option for them
- to complement and support the implementation of the nutrient-based standards for school lunches being introduced to all local authority primary, special and secondary schools.

2.5 To enable this to happen it will be important to: present the fruit to pupils in an attractive way; encourage them to try new tastes; integrate the provision of fruit with a positive learning experience; link to the curriculum and adopt a whole school approach.

## **Funding**

2.6 Ministers have made £2m per year available over the next 3 years (2003/04 - 2005/06) to finance this scheme. Distribution of the funding is based on primary 1 and 2 pupil numbers as at the September 2002 school census. A breakdown of this funding between authorities together with brief details of the information about spending that will be required is shown at Annex A. Education authorities will be provided with grant funding via the National Priorities Action Fund (NPAF) and in line with normal practice, payment will be made in arrears in November and March upon receipt of the NPAF payment claims forms. In devising their scheme, local authorities must ensure that the costs associated with the scheme are focused on fruit uptake.

## **Timescale for implementation and monitoring arrangements**

2.7 Funding is available with effect from 1 April 2003 and local authorities are expected to have their schemes in places as soon as possible after this date and in any event fully operational in all schools by December 2003.

2.8 Initial evaluation of the pilot of the National School Fruit Scheme in England found that where uptake of the free fruit was high (80% of children took the fruit) there was a positive impact on children's attention levels, behaviours and learning ability and on the ethos and atmosphere of the classroom.

2.9 Authorities may wish to introduce their own local monitoring arrangements but should be aware that the Scottish Executive will be commissioning a research project designed to both monitor the introduction of local schemes and also to evaluate the impact of the initiative. This monitoring will examine issues of supply and distribution both to the school and within schools as well as the impact on consumption of fruit and changed eating habits.

## **Whole school approach and the link into teaching and learning**

2.10 A whole school, whole child approach is the central and singularly most important aspect of any successful policy on nutrition in school and should be considered as the core of health promotion in the school.

2.11 The success of a whole school, whole child approach is dependent upon effective partnership working and the development of a participative and consultative ethos. Partners or stakeholders may vary depending upon the size, location and remit of individual schools. However links should be made between the local authority, school management, teachers, pupils and parents and with wider stakeholders as relevant to individual schools.

2.12 Experience both south of the border and in Scotland where similar schemes have been developed re-inforces the need to adopt the whole school approach and integrate the provision of fruit with a positive learning experience for all children. The importance of teacher involvement is seen as a major element of any successful scheme, as part of an

integrated approach linking teaching and learning. Factors for consideration in developing local schemes include:

- involvement of staff/pupils/caterers to share implementation of the scheme and lighten the burden on any one individual
- incorporating healthy eating messages into different parts of the curriculum
- lessons based around the fruit consumed and its role in a healthy balanced diet
- classroom teaching linked to fruit tasting sessions
- training of staff to elementary food hygiene level
- using positive and fun role models and posters
- fruit-only tuck shops / vending machines

### **Making it work**

2.13 This initiative will provide and deliver a selection of fruit for children in the early years of primary school. There are already several successful programmes in schools aimed at encouraging children to eat healthy diets. Examples of these are set out in Annex B. Making use of and seeking support from partnerships with local community food co-operatives, community food initiatives and others within the community is to be encouraged. The overarching principle is that what works is what works – there are no hard and fast rules. However clearly having fun and from time to time introducing small incentives or rewards for children can help maintain interest and success.

### **Practical guidance for authorities and schools**

2.14 There are practical issues that authorities will need to take into account when devising their schemes. The following sections highlight the main issues and provide guidance.

#### *Quality and variety of fruit*

2.15 In determining purchasing strategies, local authorities should take account of:

- the need to seek local procurement, wherever possible maximising advantages of short food miles, seasonality and freshness
- the need to include a wide variety of fruits and soft fruits. These can be substituted with suitably prepared raw vegetables e.g. carrots, tomatoes
- methods of minimising wastage
- the size and presentation of fruit appropriate to this age group.

2.16 Local authorities in setting up procurement arrangements for fruit to schools may wish to take into account:

- distribution of fruit to schools
- storage and preparation of fruit within schools
- distribution of fruit within schools and consumption in class
- health and safety issues

### *Distribution of fruit to schools*

2.17 Fresh fruit is perishable. In determining the most appropriate distribution method, consideration should be given to:

- who should be involved
- distribution timescales that ensure product quality
- the best means of distributing fruit to schools i.e. through the existing school meals service or by other means
- supplier food and safety standards
- how the best quality and value can be obtained
- how much local flexibility is needed.

### *Storage and preparation of fruit within schools*

2.18 The correct storage and handling of fruit on its arrival in schools is of paramount importance. The Food Standards Agency and local authority environmental health officers can advise on statutory obligations and good practice in connection with food quality (e.g. pesticides etc) and food safety. To maximise operational effectiveness, consideration should also be taken of:

- who should be involved e.g. catering staff may be best equipped with the appropriate facilities to store and prepare fruit and if necessary to portion fruit prior to serving
- time demands on those involved

### *Distribution of fruit within schools and consumption in class*

2.19 Funding is based on the provision of one piece of fruit per child in primaries 1 and 2 three times a week during the academic year. Local arrangements should take account of the following:

- who should be involved
- presentation of fruit for very young children
- establishing a routine for fruit distribution and eating that suits daily routines
- location of fruit consumption – to ensure the social and educational benefits of the scheme are not lost, fruit should be eaten in the classroom
- ensuring that it is additional and not replacing fruit or vegetables that might have been eaten at lunchtime - the free fruit must not be given out at lunch time as part of school lunches
- how fruit waste, skins and cores are disposed of.

### *Health and safety issues*

2.20 Schools have an important role to play in educating pupils about safe food handling and food preparation. School routines, where pupils develop good habits of personal hygiene and food preparation are important in helping them develop a healthy lifestyle. The National Guidelines 5-14, covering health education, recognise the need for pupils to understand the importance of hygiene in storing, preparing and consuming food and drink. In addition to ensuring that health and safety requirements are followed regarding the storage of fruit on its arrival at individual schools, local authorities should take advice from their local

environmental health departments in connection with statutory requirements such as hazard control. Effective health and safety management of the school fruit scheme:

- demonstrates the importance to children of hygiene in storing, preparing and consuming fruit as well as for disposing of fruit waste
- encourages children to wash their hands before eating for immediate hygiene purposes
- reinforces messages to children about food safety and hygiene
- ensures current procedures within schools for children with allergies apply to the fruit scheme

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**Local authority free fruit scheme allocation of funding 2003-06**

Aberdeen City	68,597
Aberdeenshire	94,346
Angus	43,950
Argyll & Bute	34,063
Clackmannanshire	20,560
Dumfries & Galloway	58,012
Dundee City	55,304
East Ayrshire	48,492
East Dunbartonshire	48,282
East Lothian	40,194
East Renfrewshire	41,889
Edinburgh City	139,833
Eilean Siar	10,743
Falkirk	58,361
Fife	140,199
Glasgow City	213,391
Highland	85,192
Inverclyde	33,574
Midlothian	34,535
Moray	36,631
North Ayrshire	57,365
North Lanarkshire	139,116
Orkney Islands	8,367
Perth & Kinross	50,186
Renfrewshire	72,021
Scottish Borders	42,675
Shetland Islands	9,398
South Ayrshire	41,854
South Lanarkshire	122,714
Stirling	34,954
West Dunbartonshire	39,094
West Lothian	76,109

2. Education authorities will be provided with grant funding via the National Priorities Action Fund (NPAF) and in line with normal practice, payment will be made in arrears in

November and March upon receipt of the NPAF payment claims forms. Claims forms are likely to ask authorities to report on the following aspects of their local schemes:

- amount of funding spent on free fruit schemes
- the main elements of funding costs - management of the initiative
  - supply of fruit
  - distribution costs
  - handling costs e.g.
    - curriculum materials
    - wastage and spoilage
    - other costs
- uptake levels e.g.
  - number of schools and eligible pupils in area
  - number of schools and pupils involved
- a brief description of the development of the scheme so far and future plans.



## Snack Attack

Funded by City of Edinburgh Council Education Department and managed by Edinburgh Community Food Initiative, the Snack Attack programme was established in 1999,. It is currently working with over 92 primary schools throughout the city to make fruit the preferred option at playtime.

Under the scheme, pupils entitled to pre- paid (free) school meals qualify for four pieces of fruit a week, while all others can buy four pieces a week for the subsidised cost of 40p. What's more, all of the city's Primary 1 pupils are entitled to free fruit four days a week.

Using a structure designed to suit a school's particular circumstances, the programme has had an impact on fruit consumption for the whole school community, and beyond. Children who used to say they didn't like fruit are now tucking into over 32,000 apples, bananas, kiwis, melon, pears and plums along with the rest of their classmates, every week.

Our initiative aims not only to deliver free and subsidised fruits to schools but also to build and expand ways of working with schools to encourage fruit consumption. For example: Fruit tasting sessions, fruit stalls, tuck shops, health weeks, competitions and road shows.

The positive outcomes from our primary 1 evaluation show that we are in fact making a difference to the children's dietary habits. Primary School Teachers report that children are not only eating more fruit and less sugary or fatty snacks but also children are more aware of different fruits. Moreover, teachers report fruit is accepted as part of the school day, children's concentration levels have improved and in fact fruit has a calming affect on the classroom! For a number of children it's the only fruit that they will get. One teacher from an Edinburgh school said,

*"Not everybody can afford fruit and this scheme allows for that".*

Additionally, to complement and support the initiative, there is a new updated edition of the Snack Attack Pack, containing practical advice and information on running your own school fruit shop, based on three years hands-on experience of working with Edinburgh's primary schools. As well as practical examples of how Snack Attack can be adapted to suit a school's particular circumstances, the Pack contains imaginative ideas and activities designed to complement and re-enforce the health messages taught in the curriculum.

The Pack can be purchased at a cost of £30, including postage. For more information, please contact:

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## Fruit Plus

Fruit Plus is a cross body initiative implemented by Glasgow City Council in partnership with NHS Greater Glasgow to provide a fruit service to all Glasgow's local authority pre-5 and primary school pupils. The objective is to increase fruit consumption within the educational environment and within the home.

Fruit is offered free to the pupils 3 days a week over the academic year as part of the educational curriculum which is designed to give fruit a value and to underline the role that fruit can play in the pupil's current and future life development. A 5-week fruit cycle incorporating red and green grapes, red and green apples, pears, satsumas, cherry tomatoes and bananas has been developed. To ensure variety, soft fruits, vegetables and dried fruits are options that will be considered as the service evolves.

Emphasis is placed on integrating the principles of healthy eating into the curriculum. An ideas/activity pack has been developed to support the current curriculum. Aimed at providing maximum flexibility in the classroom, the learning experiences deliver the messages in a fun way on topics like Environmental Studies, Expressive Art, Drama and Music, English Language and Mathematics. An incentive award scheme has also been implemented in primary schools.

Currently over 400 locations receive free fruit 3 times per week throughout the school year. This equates to an annual delivery of over 7 million items. From April 2003 this figure will increase to over 11 million pieces as Fruit Plus moves to 5 day provision.

Market Research Scotland is conducting an ongoing evaluation of the initiative. Latest information shows:

- 86% of children really enjoy the scheme
- 17% now eat 5 pieces of fruit a day as a result of the project
- Overall fruit consumption is up by 135%.

If you would like further information about Fruit Plus, please contact:

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