Ideas for Increasing School Meal Uptake in Primary and Secondary Schools

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Know your figures |  | Involve the catering team |  | Involve and promote to pupils |
| * Audit your current uptake figures, being clear about:

-Percentage uptake for UIFSM-Percentage uptake for benefit-related FSM-Percentage uptake for paid meals* Use the figures to focus your efforts e.g. on those entitled but not claiming UIFSM or FSM.
* Set yourself a target for each group.
 |  | * Engage catering team in reviewing provision and analysing what meals work well.
* Review uptake data with catering team/contract caterers identifying trends over the year and considering improvement ideas.
* Ask for ideas around menu, service and presentation of food.
* Ask contract caterers what other schools are doing and how they’re increasing uptake.
 |  | * Consult on food/service using school council
* Run a 'design a dish' competition for pupils to design a new meal to feature on the menu.
* Include themed days.
* Promote meals through whole class/year groups/school council.
* Use pupil ambassadors (who currently eat a school meal) to encourage other pupils/families.
 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Engage and promote to parents/carers |  | Improve menu and food on offer |  | Embed into a whole school approach to good food |
| * Consult on current views and what would encourage them to choose a meal for their child.
* Ensure menus appeals to families on paper e.g. they understand what the dishes are by their name/image.
* Make meals high profile through the newsletter, website, texts/emails, events.
* Share photos of meals, quotes from children or kitchen staff.
* Target promotion to families eligible for a free meal by highlighting quality of meal, PP funding, plus additional benefits e.g. reduced trips/uniform costs.
* Consider offers such as sibling discounts.
 |  | * Ensure meals are balanced, interesting and look appetising.
* Make menu appealing with clear names of dishes and images.
* Consider more plant based/vegetarian dishes.
* Ensure hot options are always available and encouraged over sandwiches.
* Encourage staff to eat a school meal on occasion - paid for if possible.
* Present food in an appetising way and ensure young children can see it – consider what might work in an outside café/restaurant.
* Review ‘branding’ of secondary canteens, service areas and food presentation.
* Run taster sessions for pupils and parents e.g. at parents’ evening.
 |  | * Ensure service is consistent with provision across the day e.g. breakfast/after-school menus.
* Review whole school food policy alongside lunch improvements.
* Ensure packed lunch policy and school meal provision is consistent – do not allow items in packed lunches that are not allowed in school meals and vice versa e.g. crisps, juice drinks, chocolate sponge.
* Embed meal service into good food education on the curriculum e.g. growing food for lunches, kitchen staff doing demos/cooking, planning/ creating meals for lunch menu.
 |