

## **Adhering to the School Food Standards**

### **Ensuring that children in your school receive the benefits of milk**

#### **Advice for school governors**

The government's *Requirements for School Food Regulations 2014*, which came into force in January 2015, require that schools *must* provide milk at least once during the school day. Milk is a healthy, nutritious and natural drink for children and young people, providing them with the nutrients and other benefits needed to help them thrive in school. The School and Nursery Milk Alliance is keen to ensure that as many children as possible benefit from milk in school, and so has compiled advice for school governors on complying with the standards, as well as background to the legislation itself.

The scientific community, the European Union and the Government all recognise the value of milk. From January 2015, all schools – with the exception of academies or free schools founded between September 2010 and June 2014 – **are legally required to provide milk to children once during the school day**. Over 1,400 academies and free schools that are not legally required have also signed up to the standards voluntarily.

#### **Your duties as a school governor: milk must be provided once during the school day**

Regulation 9 of the *Requirements for School Food Regulations 2014* outlines that:

- *Lower fat milk and lactose reduced milk (sub-group D1) must be made available on every school day at a time during school hours.*
- *For the purposes of this regulation, “school hours” means any time during a school session or during a break between school sessions.*

Source: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/1603/regulation/9/made>

A school's governing body is responsible for ensuring compliance with the standards, according to the Department for Education's guidance, *School food in England: Departmental advice for governing bodies (2015)*.

The EU School Milk Scheme can assist with cost of providing milk to children over five, with schools receiving a subsidy of 4.4p per 250ml (Oct. 2015) and parents financing the difference. Free milk can be provided to under-fives via the Nursery Milk Scheme. Further information: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/the-school-milk-subsidy-scheme-guidance> and <http://www.nurserymilk.co.uk/>.

#### **Getting the most out of milk: advice and action for ensuring uptake**

The School Food Standards recognise the benefits of milk to children during the school day. The School and Nursery Milk Alliance would like to see school governors ensuring that their schools comply with the

standards, and that they actively work to ensure that as many children as possible drink milk during the school day. Better uptake is likely if the milk is:

- **Provided as a mid-morning snack** – Milk is an ideal mid-morning snack due to its high satiety effect (it is filling and combats hunger) – conversely this makes it less suitable as a drink provided with lunch. Milk is also refreshing, providing children with extra energy needed to focus effectively through to lunch time. For some children it may be their first meal of the day, with 2013 research by Kellogg's finding that 10% of children go to school hungry at least once a week.
- **Chilled** – Chilled milk tastes nicer, which makes it more appealing to children. Some Alliance members have reported that some children find the taste of warm milk off-putting. Simply providing a jug of milk on the side at lunchtime is unlikely to make it appealing to drink.
  - Get in contact with local suppliers using DairyUK's Find Me A Milkman ([www.findmeamilkman.net](http://www.findmeamilkman.net)), and they will assist you with supply. Alternatively, visit [www.coolmilk.com](http://www.coolmilk.com).
  - Ensure that you have fridges available to keep milk chilled. Schools participating in the Nursery Milk Scheme may receive a free fridge from some suppliers.
- **Appropriately packaged** – Cartons enable easier milk consumption. Pouring milk takes up more time and leaves more washing up for staff.
  - Purchase single-serve cartons of 189ml (1/3<sup>rd</sup> of a pint). This is a suitable quantity for a primary school child, as determined in the *Welfare Food Regulations 1996*, with less chance of spillage and the packaging can be recycled.

### **Beyond legislation: the health, educational and societal benefits of milk**

Milk has an array of benefits which should be considered alongside the legal requirement to provide it:

- **Vitamins and minerals that ensure healthy teeth, bones and skin** – Vitamins A, B<sub>1</sub>, B<sub>2</sub>, B<sub>3</sub>, B<sub>6</sub>, B<sub>9</sub>, B<sub>12</sub>, and C, as well as minerals like zinc and calcium. These minerals help guard against gum disease and tooth decay, as well as mouth sores and bleeding gums.
- **Natural and filling** – Milk has a high satiety value (it is filling and therefore ideal as a mid-morning snack), is free of harmful free sugars and has a relatively low fat content (1.7% for semi-skimmed milk). These factors make it ideal an ideal element of a healthy diet, which combats childhood obesity.
- **Good for the British countryside** – School milk is an additional market for the many British farmers who help maintain Britain's green countryside.



## **About the School and Nursery Milk Alliance**

The School and Nursery Milk Alliance was formed in 2011 with the long-term aim of ensuring as many children enjoy the health benefits of milk as possible. It works with the government, public health bodies and organisations across the health, dairy and children's sector to encourage the uptake of milk.

### **Contact:**

For more information about the School and Nursery Milk Alliance, please contact [snma@snma.org.uk](mailto:snma@snma.org.uk) or get in touch via 020 7089 2607. You can also visit our website at [www.snma.org.uk](http://www.snma.org.uk).