

NSBP top tips for setting up or improving a breakfast provision in school

There are many options to consider when you choose to offer a school breakfast. An important first step is to decide which breakfast model is best for your school. There are a number of factors you may find helpful to consider, such as your building layout, school day, childcare needs, level of disadvantage and staffing availability. It is also important to consider the additional benefits that each model offers, such as early arrival in class, low mess feeding of many children in a short time, or the option to combine with fitness or academic interventions.

These models are very flexible, many schools **combine models to deliver optimal value**, whilst ensuring no child is too hungry to learn!

Here is a brief overview of some of the tried and tested models for offering a school breakfast provision:

Traditional Breakfast Club

The classic sit-down breakfast with activities in the school hall or canteen is popular with schools who can make use of the school kitchen. Ideally make it free for all, but if not, targeting of children for free places is vital - it is important to ensure there is no barrier or stigma for any child.

Two-Track

Keep the revenue for childcare but avoid stigma by inviting families to pay for childcare if they want to use breakfast club before, say 8.20, but breakfast is free to all after this time.

Classroom Breakfast

A low staff cost, high reach option, classroom breakfast ensures children are in the right place and ready to learn at the start of the day. A 'soft start' allows children 15 minutes to share any issues and have a chat whilst eating breakfast before learning starts right on the bell!

Grab and Go

Schools with high levels of disadvantage can need to offer food to large numbers of children in a short space of time. Healthy fast-food items such as bagels and fruit can be offered on trays at entrance points to school or in a hall or central space. Low mess, low fuss and popular with children, this is another low staff option.

Playground

A great way to engage with parents on arrival, healthy fast-food items can also be offered from trays under covered areas outside school. Low mess and fuss, and a great welcome to school for families, with opportunities for pastoral staff to make that all important contact.

Don't forget to think about your children arriving late...

It's vital to remember that the children who need breakfast most are often those who rush in just as the bell goes. Keep a tray of healthy breakfast items at the office for children to take as they sign in or rush to class.

To help you decide which model or combination of models would best suit your school and highlight key considerations for a successful breakfast provision, below are a series of key questions to ask yourself.

1. Location and timing

- Where will breakfast be offered (hall, classroom, canteen, grab and go)?
- Have you considered offering in multiple locations/using different models so all children can access without barrier or stigma?
- Will breakfast be at or before the start of the day to maximise impact on learning?
- Will breakfast be offered every day so children (and parents) can rely on it (if a child needs breakfast one day, they will probably need it every day)?
- What time will breakfast start/end? What about children who arrive later than the end time and are hungry?
- Will children have to pre-register? This can be a barrier to disadvantaged children having breakfast.

2. Reach

- Will the breakfast offer be accessible to all children?
- Will all the parents know the breakfast is available for their children? How will they know?
- Will the children know breakfast is available to them? How will they know?
- Will there be any barriers to access, especially for disadvantaged children? (What might prevent a child attending? Or a family from taking up the offer?)
- Will there be any stigma around taking up the offer? (What might make a parent or child feel uncomfortable?)
- Will you identify the children you think most need breakfast? How will you check take up of the offer?
- Are all staff aware that disruptive behaviour and lack of concentration might be due to hunger? Do they know about the breakfast offer and can they help promote take up?

3. Food

- What food and drink will you offer? Are you sure the items meet School Food Standards (SFS)?
- Do you need advice on School Food Standards or training for staff?
- Where will the food be sourced from?
- Are you comfortable predicting take up to get your food order right? Have you considered asking about interest and/or doing a trial day to assess interest and predict uptake?
- Can you make fruit available as part of breakfast also? (It is part of SFS.)

4. Logistics

- Do you have the support of your lunchtime catering provider?
- What facilities will you have for food preparation?
- Do you have the appliances or equipment you will need to prepare the food?
- Do you need to buy additional equipment?
- Do you have sufficient storage space for equipment and food?
- Do you have sufficient freezer and fridge space to store food and drink for the week?
- Do you have the equipment/items you will need to distribute and serve the food (including trolleys, trays, cereal dispensers, bowls/spoons, napkins, etc)?

5. Staffing

- Who will be in charge of breakfast food ordering?
- Who will prepare food for in school use?
- Do you need to pay extra staff? Have you considered volunteers? Can children self serve and clear up?
- Who will supervise the children and/or lead/monitor activities?

- Will there be washing up/clearing up and how will you do that?

If offering breakfast in class:

- Is food being prepared centrally? Who will take food to class?
- Who will clear up and tidy away?

6. Promotion

- How is breakfast promoted to parents (through newsletters, website, text, ambassadors, social media, etc)?
- How is breakfast promoted to children (through assemblies, posters/displays in school, sample breakfast days, talks from breakfast ambassadors?)

- How will you promote the *benefits* of breakfast ?
- Have you considered a regular or one off family breakfast event?

7. Activities

- What activities will children be able to do during breakfast time (Social? Educational? Physical? Wellbeing?)

- Have you asked children what they would like to do?

- Will these activities be varied?