



## Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) Programme

### Food, Nutrition and Nutritional Education

An integral part of children and young people's growth and development is the quality and variety of food and nutrition they have access to. In Kent approximately 46,000 children and young people are accessing benefits related free school meals. This means that during the school holidays they are more likely to experience food insecurity and potentially have limited access to regular nutritional, well-balanced meals.

Included in this document there is a variety of links to websites to support partners to meet the food and nutrition requirements for the HAF Programme delivery. This is by no means an exhaustive list and programme partners should also carry out their own research, training and processes to support their practice.

#### School Food Standards

As part of the HAF criteria for funded places, programme partners must provide at least one meal a day (breakfast, lunch or tea) and all food provided at the programme (including snacks) must meet school food standards. The School Food Standards are intended to help children develop healthy eating habits and ensure that they get the energy and nutrition they need across the whole day. They are the benchmark that the Department for Education (DfE) has used as part of the criteria for funding the HAF Programme. The guidance for the School Food Standards provides a broad range of information and links to websites that

will support partners in their food provision. 1.

The School Food Standards state that: 'Eating in school should be a pleasurable experience: time spent sharing good food with peers and teachers. It is just as important to cook food that looks good and tastes delicious; to talk to children about what is on offer and recommend dishes; to reduce queuing; and to serve the food in a pleasant environment where they can eat with their friends. As a general principle, it is important to provide a wide range of foods across the week. Variety is key – whether it is different fruits, vegetables, grains, pulses or types of meat and fish. Children love to hear the stories behind their food. Use fresh, sustainable and locally sourced ingredients (best of all, from the school vegetable garden) and talk to them about what they are eating.' Although this is written in the context of schools, the same will apply to the HAF Programme across Kent. This will be considered when applications are submitted, and monitoring of programmes is undertaken.

The provision of meals and snacks may vary between programme partners however the expectation from the DfE is that the majority of meals served by programme partners (or third-party food providers commissioned by the programme partners to produce meals and snacks) will be hot, but it does recognise that



there will be occasions when this is not possible and that a cold alternative may be used. It is important to purchase, prepare and provide foods that constitute a varied, well-balanced, nutritional meal. This means that careful consideration needs to be given to deciding what food to purchase. There will be a cost which will be taken into account in the funding but there are also organisations such as FareShare that programme partners can access for further support, for example direct regular access to supermarket surplus food items, no cost implications for your organisation and an opportunity to build a relationship with your local supermarket.<sup>2</sup>

All food provided as part of the programme must comply with regulations on food preparation and hygiene and must meet the requirements of the Environmental Health inspections for the Food Hygiene rating scheme. Those people who are preparing and serving food should complete relevant food safety training.<sup>3,4,5</sup>

When welcoming children and families into the HAF Programme, it is vitally important that programme partners obtain as much information about children and young people as possible. Partners must have up to date records of children and young people's health, allergies, dietary requirements and preferences as well as any religious or cultural requirements for food. Developing positive respectful relationships with families and gathering all relevant information prior to opening, will support partners in

their planning and preparation of meals that meets the individual dietary and nutritional needs of all the children and young people accessing their programme. Some parents, carers and families may not be able to give this information to partners in a written format, it is important partners take this into consideration when asking for details and respectfully offer support where appropriate.<sup>6,7,8</sup>

### Nutritional Education

Programme partners must include an element of nutritional education each day which must be aimed at improving the knowledge and awareness of healthy eating for children and young people. These do not need to be formal learning activities; they can be integrated throughout the day. The following are example activities.

- Getting children involved in food preparation and cooking including their meals or snacks, with partners/staff giving them information, guidance, and support where appropriate.
- Cooking activities on site with menus, recipes and/or enough food to take home to cook and share with families.
- Growing fruit and vegetables, even in grow bags or small pots, which they can either keep at the programme or take home with growing and care instructions.
- Taste tests of a variety of foods, including discussions about where the food comes from, how it is produced and how the food can be included in everyday snacks and meals.



Programme partners must include age-appropriate discussions and education regarding what constitutes a balanced nutritious meal. This can be done by using resources such as the Eatwell Plate with supporting information and guidance regarding nutrition and health.



These sessions should also teach children and young people the basic principles of hygiene and safe practices when preparing, cooking and storing food.

There are many websites such as 'Food a Fact of Life' that give partners an extensive range of resources and activities to support children and young people's knowledge and understanding of food and nutrition. 9,10.

### Engaging Families

To further enhance and support children, young people and families' knowledge of nutrition, programme partners are expected to offer at least weekly training and advice sessions for parents, carers or family members, which provide advice on how to source, prepare and cook nutritious, low-cost food. This aspect of the criteria will take a lot of thought and planning. Programme partners should consider how they will offer this element of their

programme in a respectful, inclusive way that does not stigmatise or patronise parents, carers, families or their children and young people. If face-to-face engagement is difficult it is down to the programme partners to establish more creative ways of supporting and advising parents, carers and families. Examples may include providing daily or weekly information online or hard copies of food programmes for families which include affordable menus or recipes, and where to purchase the food at low cost. Providing links to websites with supporting material, useful resources and support groups also provides information. Families could come in to share a cooking activity with children and young people with coaching from a staff member. Providing a recipe with a box of ingredients for the family to cook together is another creative way of supporting families at home. 10,11,12.



### Useful Websites

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools>
2. <https://fareshare.org.uk/fareshare-centres/kent/>
3. <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/register-a-food-business>
4. <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/safer-food-better-business-sfbb>
5. <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/online-food-safety-training>
6. <https://www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/food-allergy-and-intolerance>
7. <http://whatworkswell.schoolfoodplan.com/articles/category/16/catering-for-special-diets>
8. <http://archive.foodafactoflife.org.uk/Sheet.aspx?siteId=19&sectionId=135&contentId=819>
9. <https://www.foodafactoflife.org.uk/>
10. <http://whatworkswell.schoolfoodplan.com/articles/category/32/growing-fruit-and-vegetables>
11. <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/healthy-eating-children>
12. <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/tips-healthy-lunchbox>
13. <https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/care-and-support/benefits/home-essentials-in-a-crisis/find-a-foodbank>
14. <https://wellbeinginfo.org/self-help/wellbeing/>
15. [www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk)
16. <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>