

What is a SNAGs?

SNAGs, or School Nutrition Action Groups, are school based alliances in which staff, pupils and caterers, supported where appropriate by health and education professionals, work together to review and expand the range of food and drink provided through:

- the tuckshop
- vending machines
- the midday meal
- catering at social functions
- breakfast provision

in order to increase the uptake of a healthier diet.

planning and procedures which recognise some basic truths frequently denied or ignored:

- food presented must be enjoyable to children or it will not be eaten
- children need to be involved in a service essentially supplied for their benefit.
- schools and caterers have a joint responsibility for ensuring an appropriately high quality food service for children.
- a whole school approach is good practice and a SNAG group is an ideal forum to deliver this.

The whole of the guidance is shot through with common sense, it encourages all major players to work together and points out the clear benefits for all in doing so.

There have been those who despair of school catering - I disagree with them. There are clear signs that the tide is turning and there is new investment in training and development as well as a fresh vision in management. The concepts of customer care and quality are emerging. The best school caterers understand that increasing turnover and profit come from a service sensitive to the needs of their customers and that an opportunity to improve long-term health via a balanced and varied diet is one of those needs.

So thanks to all those on the working group who produced national guidance which is both principled and practical - now let us all make use of it to help bring about the changes young people deserve.

Joe Harvey
Director Health Education Trust

The National Food Alliance was established to bring national organisations together to meet, work and campaign to make food a national priority. The Health Education Trust has, through the SNAG initiative, been a major influence in creating awareness of the need for national and progressive school food policies. Such policies require partnership at

national, local and school level which SNAGs have strived to create and foster. The National Food Alliance endorses this philosophy and these aims and is pleased to have the Health Education Trust as a member.

Jeanette Longfield
National Co-ordinator
National Food Alliance

EDITORIAL

The Nutrition Task Force Report - Worth Waiting For?

The Nutrition Task Force (NTF) has finally published its guidance on catering in schools (full report on page 2) after considerable delays and a real worry that impending political events might delay it even further. It follows the recent national guidance documents from Northern Ireland and Scotland which have reflected the pressing need for some quality guidance for school catering across the UK. So has it been worth the wait and is it a document you can snuggle up with on a cold night with a mug of cocoa?

The answer I believe is a very firm YES! Often guidance coming from large committees is a muddled compromise published because it has to be rather than because it has a sense of purpose and direction. NTF's offering on the other hand has rejected impossible idealism on one hand and thoughtless commercial exploitation on the other. It sets out with healthy pragmatism steps for



This newsletter allows a broad range of views to be expressed here and therefore they are not necessarily the views of SNAG (UK) and its editorial team. SNAG News is managed by the Health Education Trust - a registered charity dedicated to initiating and supporting work with young people to encourage the growth of healthy lifestyles.

NEW NATIONAL GUIDANCE FROM NTF

EATING WELL AT SCHOOL:

Food is a pleasure to be enjoyed. Eating healthily and well should be fun.

These are key messages running through guidance for school food providers to be published in February 1997. **Eating Well at School: Dietary Guidance for School Food Providers** is a joint publication by the Department of Education and Employment, Department of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and is intended for use in schools in England.

The challenge facing all schools, whether primary or secondary, is to provide food which pupils will enjoy and which also promotes good eating habits. This new guidance - which is part of the Nutrition Task Force programme to help to achieve the diet and nutrition targets in the Health of the Nation white paper - aims to support schools in providing healthier food choices.

The guidance has been developed by a project team, including representatives from the catering, health education, school meals and local authority fields as well as from government. The project team agreed that the guidance needed to be practical: it should focus on foods, rather than nutrients; it should promote a balanced diet in which all foods can have a part; and it should be realistic about what pupils like to eat. If certain lower fat items or certain vegetables are on the menu but not selling, they are not worth offering!

Get the customers involved!

The guidance also emphasises the importance of delivering what the 'customers' of food service want. Gradual changes based on a simple survey of what pupils, teachers and parents say, are likely to be better received than radical changes made overnight. A SNAG is an ideal forum for finding out what improvements need to be made, both to the food and the eating environment.

Three parts

Eating Well at School is in three parts, each of which is self-contained. Part 1 is for governors and head teachers in schools, which do not manage their own school meals contracts but who can still play a key role in bringing about change by promoting a whole school food policy. This part includes 10 steps which governors and head teachers can take to encourage healthy eating. For example, they can agree the value which the school places on eating well in a written policy statement; they can involve pupils, teaching staff, the caterer and parents in decisions about the food and the eating environment by setting up a school food committee; they can demonstrate their support by taking a lead in making improvements, in evaluating the school food service and by ensuring that pupils are taught the benefits of good nutrition in their curriculum.

Part 2 is for governors and head teachers and local education authorities who do manage school meals contracts. Those with responsibility for drawing up contracts for school food provision can promote the principles of healthy eating in the contract specification as well as encourage a "whole school" approach to food and nutrition. The contract, which needs to be realistic and flexible, should ensure that the food on offer is balanced and varied.

The **Balance of Good Health** is a good basis for menu planning, for making modifications to menus and recipes, reviewing portion sizes and implementing healthy catering practices.

Part 3 is for catering contract managers and caterers. It gives caterers information about practical steps to help make school food healthier by: encouraging them to find out what customers think of the service; looking at the environment in which the service operates and identifying some realistic and achievable changes and suggesting a variety of ways of offering a selection of foods from each food group, both as individual food items and as dishes.

Any or all parts of the guidance are available free of charge. Anyone who has previously expressed an interest in receiving a copy will be sent one on publication.

Dr Sue Martin
Senior Policy Manager
Nutrition Unit
Department of Health

For further information contact:

Department of Education and
Employment Publications Centre
PO Box 6007
London E3 3NZ
Tel: 0171 510 0150
Fax: 0171 510 0196

EATING WELL AT SCHOOL

DIETARY GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL FOOD PROVIDERS



PART ONE: FOR GOVERNORS AND HEAD TEACHERS IN SCHOOLS WHO DO NOT MANAGE THEIR OWN SCHOOL MEALS CONTRACT

D/EE
Department of Education and Employment

HEALTH
NATION

S.N.A.G

EDITOR'S NOTE

This publication from the Nutrition Task Force provides an invaluable guide to all those who have an

interest in food and nutrition in schools. So please do send for your copy as soon as possible.

AWARD WINNING STUDENTS CELEBRATE SUCCESS

The Annual Luncheon of the British Nutrition Foundation was held this year at the Royal College of Physicians, in London, on 26 November. This was attended by the Foundation's patron, Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, and other distinguished guests.

At the reception before lunch, Her Royal Highness presented the GCSE prizes (BNF Standard Grade Prize for Scotland) to the winning pupils at schools. These awards are given each year for the highest marks obtained in Home Economics food examinations for each of the Examination Boards in the UK.

The 1996 BNF Annual Lecture followed lunch and was given by Dame Barbara Clayton, Scientific Governor of the BNF, and Honorary Research Professor in Metabolism at the University of Southampton. She addressed an interested audience on Nutrition Tasks: Achievements and Challenges for the Future.

For further information about the British Nutrition Foundation please contact:

Stephanie Valentine
BNF
High Holborn House
62-64 High Holborn
London WC1V 6PQ
Tel: 0171 404 6664

S.N.A.C

MILK PROVISIONS IN SCHOOLS

The National Dairy Council would like to hear from anyone who is interested in developing local partnerships to facilitate milk provision in schools. We are in the process of identifying obstacles to milk provision in schools and our aim is to assist those people who are trying to improve milk intake among children. Please contact Jo Molyneux at the National Dairy Council (0171 499 7822).

THE 1997 LACA CONFERENCE

This year's LACA Conference will look at the asset that never appears

on a balance sheet - people. The conference theme is People, your key to success and will involve human resource speakers looking at effective teams and individual performers in success driven situations. The conference is taking place on Thursday 10 and Friday 11 July at the Moat House Stratford. Also, there will be an exhibition of food and equipment suppliers. Full details will be available in late March.

For further information contact:

Arnold Fewell
32 Ainderby Road
Romanby
Northallerton
North Yorkshire DL7 8HG
Tel: 01609 775695

NATIONAL SCHOOL MEALS WEEK MAY 1997

This is the fourth National School Meals Week but will be the biggest and best yet. Cost Sector Catering magazine is supporting the campaign and will provide regular updates on the events and competitions each month. To obtain a copy of the magazine please phone 01322 270110. The week will promote the need for a good diet with regular exercise using the slogan 'Keeping the Balance'. Five sports personalities will be assisting. They are Alan Shearer, Sally Gunnell, Nasser Hussain, Tim Henman and Paul Palmer. There will be fun-to-enter competitions in which pupils can

win a trip on Eurostar to Disneyland Paris, and schools will be trying to win a mini-bus. This week provides an ideal opportunity for health educators and caterers to work together, so why don't you contact your local education catering provider today.

For further information contact:

Arnold Fewell
32 Ainderby Road
Romanby
Northallerton
North Yorkshire DL7 8HG
Tel: 01609 775695

NOTICE BOARD



NEWS FROM SNAG GROUPS

EIGHT SCHOOLS IN HULL GO FOR SNAG

A target to set up SNAGs in 10 schools is quite a challenge. That is my remit as a community dietitian in Hull, and to achieve this in 45 days seems no mean feat. However I have been delighted by the response.

In response to an enquiry letter accompanied by an overview of the SNAG project, eight schools to date (seven primary and one secondary) have registered their interest and committed precious time.

The food issues vary as each school is different, but the beauty of SNAG is that objectives can be tailored to meet individual needs.

Action plans include initiatives to address:

- the health content of tuck shops
- cross-curricular activities to target healthy eating
- the dining room environment
- increasing parents awareness
- induction of year seven pupils to the catering service
- personal and food hygiene
- promoting healthier choices at the point of sale

Every SNAG has adopted the belief that:

- there must be a group member with the authority to implement decisions (a talking shop achieves nothing)
- the involvement of the pupils is the key to success (ownership)
- only one issue at a time must be tackled (realism)
- healthy eating must be included in the school's development plan (commitment)

The consensus is that time must be invested in the planning stage. SNAG is an on-going long term

venture and the champion for the holistic approach - food is for living - not just for lessons.

For further information contact

Bronwyn Hunton
Community Dietetics
Boothferry Clinic
Bethune Avenue
Hull HU4 7EL
Tel: 01482 640111

Join the SNAGs Network (Free of charge)

The School Nutrition Action Group (SNAGs) concept is a policy tool designed to help teachers, caterers, school managers, parents and children to work together in improving the provision of healthy food and nutrition education in schools.

Further copies of the SNAGs guide are available at £9.50 (inc. p&p) each.

SNAGs Advice line offers:-

Membership of SNAGs Network and inclusion on our mailing list for SNAG News.

Further information on a range of services available to individuals and organisations including presentations and workshops from experienced health, education and dietetic consultants.

Free telephone advice on all issues to do with food policy development in schools.

Please telephone or fax the **SNAGs Advice line** on 01789 773915 or write to SNAGs, c/o Health Education Trust, 18 High Street, Broom, Alcester, Warks., B50 4HJ for more information.

The Health Education Trust gratefully acknowledges the support of **TESCO Stores Limited** in their funding support for the **SNAGs Advice line**.

SNAG ACTION AT FRANCIS ASKEW PRIMARY SCHOOL

As Community Education Teacher at Francis Askew Primary School, Hull, I am launching an active campaign to involve parents in the education of their children. I believe that parents and teachers must work together as co-educators of the pupils and the issue of partnership is vital in today's society if we are to rid ourselves of some of the social diseases of our time.

We have initiated many projects here at the school in order to fulfil our objectives and we see Health Education as a necessary

ingredient in our recipe for success. We firmly believe that a healthy body can produce a more healthy mind and we are delighted to be involved with SNAG.

We are in the process of setting up an Action Group to look at our tuck shop and school meals provision and we are promoting personal and food hygiene through courses for parents within the school. The pupils are part of the Action Group and we believe a sense of ownership by parents, teachers and pupils will bring success to our project.

John Buttrick
Community Education teacher
Francis Askew Primary School



Now one and all, large and small - I'm ready for your contributions, complaints and concerns for the next issue to be published in Summer 1997 - **copy deadline - 11th July 1997.**

Guidance notes for contributors

Please supply:
1 Articles: 200/250 words
Noticeboard: 50/75 words

2 A typed hard copy with name, title, address, tel/fax numbers as appropriate.

3 A copy on disk (Wordperfect, Word or ASCII format).

For the disc copy please keep material in basic type face and avoid bold or underlining to save editing time this end. If you want your disc returned please print your name and address on it.

Please send all articles to:
Joe Harvey, The Health Education Trust, 18 High Street, Broom, Alcester, Warks., B50 4HJ
Tel or fax 01789 773915

BALANCING CASH AND CONSCIENCE

At this moment many hundreds of schools up and down the country are supplementing their income with extra cash earned through vending machines. These are making available to students - on the premises - confectionery, snacks and drinks that they would probably otherwise purchase elsewhere - usually in local shops nearby during breaks and lunch times.

No doubt schools derive great benefit from these additional funds (and they can amount to several thousand pounds a year) and use them for a myriad of good purposes. Furthermore, few would argue that any measure that helps to keep children safely on school premises while not in class must be encouraged.

The area of contention lies in what is being consumed. Historically, children automatically recoil from perceived 'healthy' products, grouping everything described by adults as being 'good for you' in the same category as cod liver oil and greens. At the same time, there is a substantial body of opinion which says that there is no place in schools for machines which encourage consumption of confectionery, crisps and fizzy drinks.

The Automatic Vending Association of Britain (AVAB) asked the authors of the SNAG initiative to advise them on a way forward.

The results on the jointly produced AVAB Code of Practice for Vending in Schools, which calls on AVAB Members to work with schools to identify particular needs and to help ensure that balanced and wide variety of food and beverages are available within the school environment.

The key points are:

- AVAB Members are aware that vending is just one part of the total provision of food, snacks and drinks in schools and should not be viewed in isolation, but as a support to the catering services available at meal times in the form of hot and cold drinks, confectionery and snacks.
- A criteria for the delivery of food provision should be the consumer's health.
- AVAB Members are conscious of their responsibility to provide a choice of products.

- Decaffeinated coffee and sugar-free drinks will be available as options when hot drinks are supplied. Where practical AVAB Members will also consider additionally the supply of soft drinks including low-calorie drinks, juice, milk and water.
- Snacks such as nuts and dried fruit will be available to schools.
- When crisps are supplied, low fat options will be available too.
- AVAB support and endorse the SNAG project, which recommends that a Schools Nutrition Action Group is set up in every school to develop a clear and comprehensive policy on the provision of food and nutrition.

Neither a vending service company nor a school can be expected to site a machine that only sells products that the 'customers' don't want - nobody would be satisfied. However, there is a solution in the form of intelligent buying which ensures that there is a choice of low-calorie, low sugar and low fat products, plus fruit drinks and water, alongside the top-selling lines.

Furthermore, there is an increasing range of chilled, glass-fronted 'carousel-style' merchandisers that can sell sandwiches, rolls and other freshly made food items which can be made daily in the school kitchen or supplied by the vending service operating company. The same machines can also vend fruit.

So, while there may still be some way to go, the situation is improving.

The way forward is through partnership and planning between supplier and customer with both taking responsibility equally for the outcome!

For further information contact:

Janette Gledhill
Director
AVAB
Tel: 01737 357211



VENDING A CHALLENGE

MAJOR VENDING EXHIBITION

Everyone looking at the opportunities that are available to schools through modern refreshment vending would be well advised to visit AVEV '97, the world's largest dedicated vending exhibition, which takes place at G-Mex Centre, Manchester from 9-10 April 1997. Among over 125 exhibitors from all sectors of vending will be manufacturers of the latest equipment; vending service operating companies; and the major beverage, confectionery and snack makers who will be showing their latest lines and

demonstrating how well their brand-leaders perform in vending machines.

For more information on AVEV '97, readers should contact the Automatic Vending Association of Britain, who organise the event, on Tel: 01737 357211.

EDITOR'S NOTE

I know there are some exciting initiatives underway in 'fresh food vending' in schools. Please send me copy and we will feature it both in the next newsletter and at the SNAG Conference in July.



DEVELOPMENTS IN BIRMINGHAM

BIRMINGHAM SNAGS - THE SECRETS OF SUCCESS!

The success of School Nutrition Action Groups has been shown in Birmingham with the setting up of groups in the majority of secondary schools and changes starting to happen with the range and choice and sales of food and drink. So the question now is, why do they work?

I have found that the reasons why SNAGs work is to do with:

- Enabling pupils to have a leadership role in changing food provision. This is fundamental to the groups. However, it is not as easy to do as it sometimes first

seems. In order for pupils to have a true leadership role it is necessary that everyone within the SNAGs feels 'comfortable' with this. This means that the groundwork has to be carefully laid so that there is a clear focus for the group.

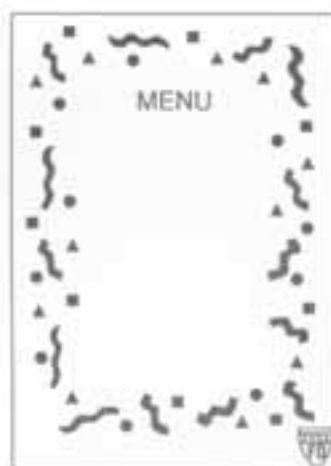
- Communication in many forms is needed. Although the pupils on the groups are important, they are not expected to have all the answers. The majority of the school needs to feel that they have some small part to play in deciding what changes happen in their school - otherwise all we are starting is an exclusive dining club for selected pupils.



Methods of communication vary according to the school, but the favourites so far have been either the use of dedicated notice boards or specially designed posters. The purpose of these is to highlight what is going on in their school, who is on the group and how to contact them to put forward new suggestions.

Designing posters to be printed is a powerful communication method as it has a multiplier effect due to its many stages. One way of achieving this could be through a whole school competition, thus giving more opportunity for a greater number of children to understand and be involved with the SNAG. Once the judging has happened the winner needs to be announced - more publicity for the SNAG. So then, when the posters are printed and used pupils are more aware of what is going on. A selection of the posters designed by pupils in various Birmingham schools is shown on this page.

Word of mouth is an excellent communication method. Food is something that most people talk about and the pupils are no exception. What happens on many



SNAGs, is that the pupils need to gather more information, ideas and thoughts about the food and drink. So they are set small tasks such as, everyone going to talk to at least ten people to ask what sort of pasta they want and what sort of sauce to have with the pasta. This serves two key functions - to gather more precise information about what is wanted and to start more people talking and thinking about the food in their school and realising what is possible.

Small changes can have a big effect on how people think about their school's food provision. The success of the work in Birmingham is due to the combined efforts and enthusiasm of the pupils, teachers, school managers and caterers - both Caterserve and LEA Client Services.

For further information contact:

Sandra Passmore
Health Education Unit
Martineau Education Centre
74 Balden Road
Birmingham B32 2EH
Tel: 0121 428 2060
Fax: 0121 428 2363

S.N.A.G



SNAGs INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Food for Health & Profit in Schools

Thursday 3 July 1997

National Motorcycle Suite

Bickenhill

West Midlands (JB, M42)

INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE

PROGRAMME

09 15

ARRIVAL, COFFEE AND EXHIBITIONS

10 00

WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

Professor Philip James, Director, Rowett Research Institute

10 30

A VIEW FROM THE NUTRITION TASK FORCE

Speaker to be confirmed

10 50

SNAGs - PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

Joe Harvey, Director, Health Education Trust

11 15

COFFEE AND EXHIBITIONS

11 45

A BROADER PERSPECTIVE

Jeanette Longfield, Co-ordinator, National Food Alliance

12 15

A PERSPECTIVE FROM EUROPE

Dr Jelte Snel, Netherlands Bureau for Nutrition

12 40

QUESTIONS

13 05

COOKING FOR HEALTH & PLEASURE

(to be confirmed)

13 30

LUNCH AND EXHIBITIONS

14 45

EXERCISE & DIET - THE RELATIONSHIP

Dr Andrew Prentice, Dunn Clinical Nutrition Centre

15 05

THE BIRMINGHAM EXPERIENCE

Sandra Passmore, Birmingham LEA Health Education Nutritionist

15 25

CATERING CAN LEAD THE WAY

Steve Sylvester, Managing Director, Chartwells

15 45

QUESTIONS

16 05

CLOSING REMARKS

Professor Philip James

16 15

CLOSE & TEA



HEALTH
EDUCATION
TRUST

TESCO

CONFERENCE THEME

This conference is aimed at all those caterers, health professionals, educationalists, governors, parents and children who have an interest in food and nutrition in schools.

Its aim is to show how, through partnership, we can develop a high quality food service in schools where the health of the child and the commercial success of the caterer are mutually compatible objectives.

Further information & booking details overleaf

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

BOOKING FORM

(BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE)

FULL NAME

(MR/MRS/MISS/MS/OTHER)

JOB TITLE

EMPLOYER

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

TELEPHONE

NAME AND ADDRESS TO WHICH INVOICE SHOULD BE SENT, IF DIFFERENT TO
INDIVIDUAL NAMED OPPOSITE:

FULL NAME

(MR/MRS/MISS/MS/OTHER)

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

TELEPHONE

PLACES REQUIRED:

@ £55 (INCLUDES ALL REFRESHMENTS)

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

DIET (TYPE)

OTHER

DO YOU REQUIRE INFORMATION ABOUT LOCAL ACCOMMODATION? (PLEASE TICK)

YES

NO

PAYMENT AND AUTHORISATION (PLEASE TICK APPROPRIATE BOX)

INVOICE IS REQUIRED I CONFIRM THAT AUTHORISATION HAS BEEN GIVEN FOR PAYMENT OF THE COURSE FEE(S) AND THAT THE
INVOICE SHOULD BE SENT TO THE APPROPRIATE ADDRESS ABOVE

PAYMENT IS ENCLOSED

AMOUNT ENCLOSED

CHEQUE NO:

(CHEQUES MADE PAYABLE TO HEALTH EDUCATION TRUST PLEASE)

SIGN:

DATE:

PLEASE PHOTOCOPY THIS FORM IF THERE IS MORE THAN ONE DELEGATE ATTENDING PER BOOKING - FULL DELEGATE DETAILS MUST BE GIVEN FOR EACH PERSON ATTENDING

RETURN COMPLETED BOOKING FORM TO: JEANIE ROBERTON, RIGHT ARM CONFERENCE BOOKINGS, THE BUSINESS CENTRE,
LLANGARRON, ROSS ON WYE, HEREFORDSHIRE HR9 6PG TEL: 01989 770701/0378-559202

INTERESTED IN EXHIBITING OR DISPLAYING POSTERS?

IF YOU WOULD LIKE FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT EXHIBITION SPACE AND COSTS OR WOULD LIKE TO PUT UP A POSTER (NO CHARGE), PLEASE RING JEANIE ROBERTON,
CONFERENCE ORGANISER ON 01989-770701/0378-559202