

**This is a copy of the criteria for the Healthy Schools'  
Food Environment Award**

**Please use this as a guide only as we will only  
accept online submissions via our [website](#).**





## Food Environment Specialist Award

Welcome to the Bristol Healthy Schools' Specialist Food Environment Award.

### What is the Food Environment Specialist Award?

This award gives best practice advice on food and nutrition in schools. It includes guidance on:

- Food provision at school
- Creating a food policy
- Cooking and growing in the curriculum

### Is this the right award for us?

Typically schools decide a topic of focus based on health need. The School Health Data packs provided by Bristol City Council/ Healthy Schools provide a good insight and schools may also have their own data and insight.

### How long does it take?

Each Specialist award takes up to a year but it may take only a few months if you already have good practice in place.

### How does the online system work?

Throughout your journey you can log in and out as many times as you like, updating your evidence as you go. Your email address becomes your login. Please keep saving your changes as you go.

Most of the criteria require a Yes/No response, others ask for more detail via a text

box. We never ask you to upload documents or provide additional evidence. Only this form is needed.

**IMPORTANT:** Do not click the back button at the top left of your browser as you complete the form. To go back to the previous section, click 'previous page' at the bottom of the survey.

### **Do I get guidance?**

Yes, there is guidance throughout. This will either help you make sense of what we are asking for, or signpost you to helpful documents. For example, we might ask you to write a policy about something. In that case, we have provided you with an example policy and that should save you time.

At any point, you can email us for help or further guidance on [healthy.schools@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:healthy.schools@bristol.gov.uk).

### **How do I know if I've passed?**

To pass this award, you need to be able to answer 'yes' or 'correct' to every question (other than the text box questions) as they are all essential. If you answer 'no' or 'incorrect' to any question, you will have the opportunity, at the end of the application form, to tell us why and what you are doing to work towards this criteria.

We will consider your response but it may be that you need some extra time to put the required practice in place and should re-submit once you have done so. We will support you to achieve this.

We aim to advise you, via email, of the outcome of your application within 3 weeks of submitting. The outcome will either be 'Pass' or 'Further work and/or clarification needed'. If the latter, we will provide you with feedback and guidance about what you need to do to pass.

If you do not pass the first time, you can re-submit your application as many times as you need, although we hope that the guidance is clear enough that this won't be necessary.

**Good luck!**

## Establishing a Healthy Schools Infrastructure

The Healthy Schools team encourage all schools to sign up to the [Essential Award](#) before completing Specialist Awards. The Essential Award covers key health and wellbeing topics and sets the foundations for creating a healthy and happy school. You can sign up on the Healthy Schools website by filling out the first page of the [Essential Award application](#). By completing the Mental Health and Wellbeing Specialist Award, you will have already made some progress towards the Essential Award.

1. Have you achieved or are you “working towards” the Bristol Healthy Schools Essential Award?

('Working towards' the Essential Award means that you have started the online application and you are implementing the criteria.)

Yes

No

## Establishing a Healthy Schools foundation

These initial steps involve completing a brief self-assessment and making sure that you have established a foundation for your healthy school's work. This foundation will provide you with a support network, leadership, and strategic focus, all of which will strengthen your successes.

Before proceeding with the application, it's important to complete this initial self-assessment. This short survey is designed to:

- act as a benchmarking tool to determine your current status.
- provide a quick overview of where you might focus your efforts.
- identify areas where the healthy schools team can provide extra support.

[Please click here to fill in the short Food Environment Specialist Award, Initial Self-Assessment.](#)

The answers to this survey will not be used in your final assessment. The information will only be used at the start of your process to highlight where we can be of support. Your honest responses are greatly appreciated as they will help us better understand your starting point.

2. Whilst establishing your Healthy Schools foundation or working on the Essential Award, have you completed the following?

	YES	NO
Our School Improvement Plan has a section on improving health and wellbeing.		
We have a Healthy Schools Coordinator.		
We have established a Healthy Schools Steering Group. The Groups meets at least 3 times a year and has a wide representation.		
We have a pupil Healthy Schools Team with representation from across the year groups OR We have included Healthy Schools as a standing item for every School Council meeting.		
Our school has taken part in the Bristol Pupil Voice Survey or/and we commit to taking part in the next round (2024).*		

**[\\*Find out more about the Pupil Voice Survey 2024 and register here!](#)**

### Leadership and Development

3. We support our teaching and non-teaching staff to develop their knowledge and skills on healthy lifestyles, food and nutrition, cooking and growing:

Yes

No

a) please provide a brief overview of how you have supported teaching and non-teaching staff to develop their knowledge and skills on healthy lifestyles, food and nutrition, cooking and growing

Our training [pages](#) will signpost you to relevant training.

4. We have adopted a whole school food policy, as per Healthy Schools guidance:

Yes

No

We have pre-written a [food policy](#) for schools to adopt that covers both the criteria in this award and the food elements of our Essential award. We suggest that you celebrate this with your whole school community to get everyone on board and use every opportunity to promote it.

We have provided you with a short statement that you might like to use or adapt for guidance for parents, depending on phases and ages of your setting. This could be for your website/ newsletter/ new parent – reception letters and guidance:

*Suggested statement:*

*We are proud to be a Healthy School.*

*We're working with the Healthy Schools Programme to increase healthy eating, teach children about healthy choices and give them the skills to be able to cook from scratch.*

*As part of this work we have a food and drinks policy that outlines our work, what you can expect from us, and what we'd like your support on. It also outlines rules around what children can and can't bring in.*

*[then you can always give a brief overview of the headlines such as 'please only provide water and fruit and veg as snacks']*

*In addition to this we teach children about making healthier choices through our PSHE and DT curriculum. We have a pupil's Healthy School team and they help develop new and fun ideas to keep us healthy and well.*

### **Teaching cooking skills**

5. Every child, in every year group, cooks each year, with a focus on savoury food and cooking meals from scratch:

- Yes
- No

Aside from cooking within the DT curriculum, consider cross-curricular opportunities and also setting up cooking clubs (for children and families) and making links with your catering team.

As per National Curriculum guidance, schools should focus on giving children key cooking skills, with a focus on savoury foods and cooking from scratch. The curriculum guidance states that "learning how to cook is a crucial life skill that enables pupils to feed themselves and others affordably and well, now and in later life." A link to the national curriculum for DT is [here](#).

The Healthy Schools [website](#) provides links to recipes, Change4Life lessons plans and more.

To overcome the barrier of lack of cooking facilities, no-cook dishes could be considered (e.g making fruit salads, pesto, healthy wraps etc) and the Healthy Schools team can help. Recipes ideas are available [here](#).

6. Our pupils have access to growing and gardening opportunities:

Yes

No

The school could consider using produce grown for school lunches or fundraising by running farmers' markets for parents. Including growing in the curriculum, setting up lunchtime or after school gardening or cooking clubs, consider family opportunities. This can be on site (cooking clubs, cooking with school caterers, visits to local food producers or farms, visits from local chefs, a school gardening club, an on-site allotment, forest school, visits to wholesale fruit market, linking with related orgs such as Travelling Kitchen, Square Food Foundation or Woodland Trust)

### Food Provision

7a. Our school has completed a review of all food provided by the school and on site services (breakfast clubs/ school lunch and after schools club) to ensure that any provider of meals (i.e breakfast, lunch, tea) will have achieved Bristol Eating Better School's Award (Gold) OR the Soil Association Food for Life School's Award (Gold)

Yes

No

7b. Please list all of your providers of meals (ie. breakfast clubs, school lunch and after schools clubs, as appropriate) and confirm whether they have achieved Bristol Eating Better Schools Award (Gold) OR the Soil Association Food for Life Schools Award (Gold)

The [Bristol Eating Better Award](#) is a scheme developed and operated by Bristol City Council to reward and promote food businesses that are committed to providing healthier menus and supporting the environment. It has recently been adapted for schools and incorporates the School Food Standards. We are keen that all Bristol school caterers or meal providers achieve the [Bristol Eating Better School's Award \(Gold\)](#) to ensure best practice and consistency across schools.

However, if your school caterer already have the Soil Association's Food for Life Schools Award (Gold), this is sufficient for meeting this criterion, but they should be encouraged to also achieve the Bristol School's Eating Better Gold Award.

8. We have worked to increase school meal uptake:

- Yes
- No

We are looking for schools to have worked to increase school meal uptake towards the ideal of 65%, identifying barriers and solutions to encourage pupils entitled to FSM to take up their entitlement, avoiding stigmatisation, with the aim of a 90% minimum uptake.

a) Please report your whole school meal uptake:

b) Please report your FSM uptake:

c) Please provide a brief overview of barriers you have found to uptake both school meals generally and particularly FSM entitlement:

Typical barriers schools find include, but are not limited to: incomplete FSM entitlement forms, misunderstanding about entitlement, fussy eaters, division of



packed lunch and school lunch eaters in hall meaning children can't sit with their friends, long queues, chaotic/ noisy lunch room, school food presentation and lack of choice.

d) Please provide a brief overview of actions taken to address the above barriers:

Consider how you can address any barriers you have identified to your FSM uptake. Actions might include: targeted work with parents to complete FSM entitlement forms and promote entitlement uptake. An offer to schools struggling with fussy eating is that school nurses will run a parents workshop. Allowing pupils to sit with peers (we recommend not separating packed lunch eaters and school meal eaters). Improving or implementing queueing systems, staggering lunch breaks, staffing the setting to better manage queuing and behaviour, giving adequate time for pupils to eat, relax and socialise, work to reduce noise levels. Making school food presentation more fun and providing more choice to pupils.

9. We have worked to ensure that pupils have a positive lunchtime experience:

- Yes
- No

This links with the above work to increase school meal uptake.

Consider how you create an enjoyable, relaxed and sociable lunchtime experience as this is important to young people. Are there changes you could make and how might you capture student feedback to ensure you're making positive change? Work might include improving the atmosphere and design of the setting, improving or implementing queueing systems, staggering lunch breaks, staffing the setting to better manage queuing and behaviour, giving adequate time for pupils to eat, relax and socialise, work to reduce noise levels, allowing pupils to sit with peers (we recommend not separating packed lunch eaters and school meal eaters).

10. We protect our children from inappropriate marketing by the food and drink industry such as 'giveaways' and promotions within schools:

- Yes
- No

The school should ensure that they don't support or allow companies manufacturing food or drink high in salt, sugar or fat to promote marketing campaigns within schools.

11. We only use healthier food options for events, fundraising, meetings and celebrations in school:

Yes

No

*The Essential Award challenged schools to 'work towards' healthier fundraising, celebrations and events. At this level, schools are challenged to ensure that ONLY healthy options are used in fundraising, celebrations and events.*

*The Healthy Schools team have produced a [Healthy Fundraising Ideas Pack](#) to help you achieve this. You will need to work with your PTA to get them on board. Ideas include swapping your cake bake for a sale of plants and veg from your school veg patch or homemade gifts from pupils, or having a family fun run or teachers vs. parents football match.*

12. We are a breastfeeding friendly school, ensuring that anyone who needs to feels comfortable to breastfeed in our school, including parents/carers, staff and pupils where relevant. To demonstrate this, we confirm that we will comply with the following criteria\*: ensure that all our staff know about the Bristol Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme (see below) display a Bristol Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme window sticker and poster in an obvious place in our school uphold a woman's right to breastfeed by ensuring that if someone complains, the complainant is moved, not the mother \*This means you will automatically become part of the Bristol Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme and we will send you window stickers and posters to display.

Yes

No

**What you are most proud of?**

11. Please tell us about something that you are particularly proud of in relation to your school's approach to the food environment:

**Your feedback**

12. If you answered 'no' or 'incorrect' to any of the questions, please tell us why you are not able to comply with this criteria at present, what the barriers are, what steps you are taking to work towards being able to comply and when you expect this to be possible (if at all). We will consider your response when we review your application. Please state clearly which criteria/ question(s) your answer refers to, including the section heading and question number.

13. To help us improve, please give us some feedback on this award, e.g. What was your experience of completing it? Was it clear what was required? What did you think of the criteria? Does anything need to change?

Well done!