

**How to set up a School Nutrition Action Group (SNAG)**

A best practice guidance note

**Introduction**

There is an increasing amount of evidence about the importance of healthy eating and the impact a healthy diet and lifestyle can have. In addition, people need to value, enjoy and learn about food, including cooking, growing, food sources and sustainability.

Many schools are undertaking food projects and it is important to ensure clear, consistent, coherent messages are given out not only to pupils but to the whole school and wider community to help guide long term changes and wide reaching benefits.

One of the most effective ways this can be done is by having a School Nutrition Action Group (SNAG) - a working party put in place to help review your school food culture and develop and implement an action plan to improve it.

Taking a whole school approach, SNAGs ensure a coordinated and effective working partnership on all aspects of school food and nutrition across the whole school community.

**What is a SNAG?**

SNAG stands for **S**chool **N**utrition **A**ction **G**roup.

Essentially it a group of people who meet regularly to discuss all aspects of school food and nutrition in order to improve the school food culture with the aim of promoting and encouraging healthier food choices and lifestyles.

**Who should be members of a SNAG?**

A SNAG should represent the whole school community. Typical membership could include:

* The Head Teacher or a member of the Senior Management Team (SMT)
* Parents / Carers
* Governor(s)
* School Catering Manager and/or Area Supervisor
* Midday Supervisor (or equivalent)
* Teaching Staff
* Health Specialist (eg. School Nurse)
* Pupils

**How many people should be in a SNAG?**

It is recommended that between 10 – 15 people be involved; if this number is exceeded, the meetings can be more difficult to manage and it reduces the opportunities for everyone to have their say.

**How often should we hold SNAG meetings?**

It is recommended that SNAG meetings are held six times per year – one per each half term.

**How long should a SNAG meeting be?**

Given that it can be hard to assemble such a wide ranging group of people, once you have pinned them down you will probably want to make the most of them! Typically a 90 minute meeting with a short refreshment break can be most productive, though 45 – 60 minutes may be more realistic.

**When is the best time of day to hold a SNAG?**

You will have to decide when the best time to hold the meetings would be. Could it be done as part of the school day or would before or after school be more appropriate? Mornings are generally better for pupils but a cook in a primary school would probably prefer an afternoon once service has finished… Some parents / carers may not be able to attend during normal working hours, plus it may be tricky releasing staff… In short, there is no ‘best time’ and you will need decide what will work for your school.

**What are the key roles within a SNAG meeting?**

For each meeting you will need someone to set and distribute the agenda in advance, someone to take then share the minutes, and someone to be the chair. Rotating these roles can give people a sense of belonging and a greater ownership of the work, and it may also provide a good learning opportunity for the pupils involved.

**What do we discuss in SNAG meetings?**

Anything related to school food and nutrition!

This could include:

* School Meals
* Packed Lunches
* Breakfast Clubs
* After School Clubs
* Cooking / Growing Clubs
* Food within the National Curriculum
* Lessons / Assemblies
* Tuck Shops / Vending Machines / Snacks
* Wider Community Events

**Where do we start?**

The best place to start is by looking at where you currently are in terms of embedding a healthy school food culture – what healthy eating initiatives are already in place, what work has previously been done, what could be improved…

Ideas can then be turned into a School Nutrition Action Plan (SNAP) which can then be used as the basis of future meetings to update on progress and work out what is working well and what further changes need to be made.

**What is a SNAP?**

SNAP stands for **S**chool **N**utrition **A**ction **P**lan.

It is a document which sets out the actions your school is (or will be) taking in order to improve your school food culture.

Each action has an agreed start and end date, a named person who will take responsibility for that action, an outline of the expected outcome, a RAG status, and a comments section.

A SNAP example template can be found [**here**](#SNAP)

**What type of actions could we include in our SNAP?**

Anything you like – as long as it is linked to school food and nutrition and works towards promoting and encouraging healthier eating behaviours and lifestyles!

There are a vast array of things you could do. Some examples which other schools have successfully completed include:

* Packed Lunch Audit
* Lunchtime ‘Rules’
* Taking Part in Food for Life ‘Get Togethers’ *(eg. Grandparent Gardening Week)*
* ‘5 a Day’ Poster Competition
* Parent Lunch
* Focus on Increasing Free School Meal Uptake
* Audit on School Meal Waste
* Parent Taster Evening
* ‘Eat a Rainbow’ Challenge
* Healthy Eating Assembly
* Cooking Club

I’m sure you have some amazing ideas of your own too!

**Why can’t I just use the School Council (or equivalent) instead of setting up a SNAG?**

There are a number of reasons why a separate SNAG is hugely beneficial. Firstly, the School Council rarely includes all the adult members you need to make a SNAG successful. Secondly, by recruiting a new set of pupils, you are increasing the opportunities they have to have a say on important issues within their school. Thirdly, the School Council is likely to have a full agenda with the many other tasks that come their way – a SNAG will ensure the focus in this specific forum remains on school food and nutrition.

**How can we inform the whole school and community about the SNAG?**

What channels do you usually use? Assemblies, displays, notice boards, newsletters, e-mails, social media platforms, web pages, articles in the local newspaper… All of these will help to convey what you are doing and spread the news about the good work your school is doing!

Try to get pupils involved in the communication side of things too – they may particularly relish an opportunity to produce a SNAG blog or put something on Facebook or Twitter, and it is likely to have a much greater impact this way.

**Further Information**

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**SCHOOL NUTRITION ACTION PLAN *(SNAP)***

**EXAMPLE TEMPLATE**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **ACTION** | **START**  **DATE** | **END**  **DATE** | **RESPONSIBILITY** | **EXPECTED OUTCOME** | **STATUS**  **(RAG)** | **COMMENTS** |
| 1. | Set out some lunch time ‘rules’ | Oct 19 | Dec 19 | Joe Bloggs | A calmer dining hall environment  A nicer lunchtime experience  Clear behavioural expectations |  | We have been working with the children to get suggestions for what to include in our new ‘rules’.  Once agreed, a poster will be designed and displayed in the dining hall. |
| 2. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**STATUS (RAG)**

**R**ed **Not Yet Started**

**A**mber **Work in Progress**

**G**reen **Complete**