



Food for Life Schools Silver & Gold Award Criteria and Guidance



Applying for your award through your School Portal.

www.foodforlife.org.uk/signin

Your School Portal is your personalised information hub and the place where you provide us with your award submissions. You'll be able to see what schools in your area are up to, search our wide range of resources, blog about your FFL activities, and most importantly, update your award progress.

You may wish to keep a note of your username and password here:

My username:

My password:

A quick guide to what you'll find in the 'Update Award Progress' area

In this area, you're able to select a criteria category and see all criteria in that section for the Bronze, Silver and Gold awards. We ask you to provide information on how you're meeting each criteria and we'll give lots of useful examples and guidance to help you along the way. Here's what you'll find as you click through the tabs:

Overview:

A full description of each criteria, including why it's been included.

Getting Started:

Handy hints and tips for putting each criteria into action.

Resources:

Quick links to a host of FFL and external resources which support that criteria.

B 1.0

Our menus demonstrate their compliance with national standards or guidelines on food and nutrition.

Overview

Food and nutrition standards help to ensure that pupils have the best chance of getting all of the goodness they need from the food they eat.

You will need to show that your school lunch menu complies with the new School Food Standards. You can do this through a self-evaluation checklist available from the School Food Plan website, see the 'Getting Started' tab for more information.

Getting Started

Resources

Submission

Submission:

This is where you log your activities and evidence for submission to the FFL team. You can either save and/or submit for feedback on an ongoing basis depending on your package subscription*.

If you are an Awards Package subscriber, we'll either approve or provide feedback and you'll be able to see both your submission and our comments every time you log in. You'll also be able to see which criteria have information saved, submitted or approved at a glance.

* You can only submit criteria for approval if you have an Awards Package subscription. Member Package subscribers can log and save information but it will not be submitted for assessment.

Summary of the Bronze Award Criteria

The Food for Life Schools Awards are cumulative – so to achieve Silver and Gold you must still be implementing all the Bronze criteria. Here's a useful reminder:

Food Quality

- ☐ **B1.0** Our menus demonstrate their compliance with national standards or guidelines on food and nutrition.
- ☐ **B1.1** At least 75% of dishes on the menu are freshly prepared (on site or at a local hub kitchen) from unprocessed ingredients.
- ☐ **B1.2** All meat is from farms which satisfy UK animal welfare standards.
- ☐ **B1.3** No fish are served from the Marine Conservation Society 'fish to avoid' list.
- ☐ **B1.4** Eggs are from free range hens.
- ☐ **B1.5** No undesirable additives or artificial trans fats are used.
- ☐ **B1.6** No genetically modified ingredients are used.
- ☐ **B1.7** Free drinking water is prominently available.
- ☐ **B1.8** Menus are seasonal and in-season produce is highlighted for pupils.
- ☐ **B1.9** Information is on display about food provenance.
- ☐ **B1.10** Menus provide for all dietary and cultural needs.
- ☐ **B1.11** All suppliers have been verified to ensure they apply appropriate food safety standards.
- ☐ **B1.12** Catering staff are supported with skills training and are engaged in food education.

Food Leadership and Food Culture

- ☐ **B2.0** Our School Nutrition Action Group has led a review of food culture in our school, and actions have been agreed.
- ☐ **B2.1** We monitor school meal take up and we are taking action to maximise the take up of free school meals.
- ☐ **B2.2** We consult with our pupils and parents on school meal improvements.
- ☐ **B2.3** We keep parents informed of lunch menus and Food for Life activity and invite them to attend our school lunches.
- ☐ **B2.4** We encourage our pupils to suggest improvements to the dining experience and we implement the best ideas.
- ☐ **B2.5** Our lunchtime supervisors promote a calm and positive dining experience and help our pupils with food choices.
- ☐ **B2.6** We have made a commitment to phase out flight trays.



Food Education

- ☐ **B3.0** We use the topic of healthy and sustainable food as a theme for assemblies.
- ☐ **B3.1** Our pupils take part in regular curriculum cooking activities and this is linked to our whole school approach to food.
- ☐ **B3.2** Our pupils have the opportunity to grow and harvest food and make compost and this is linked to wider learning.
- ☐ **B3.3** We organise an annual farm visit, and this is linked to wider learning.

Community and Partnerships

- ☐ **B4.0** We hold an annual event on a food theme for our pupils, parents and the wider community.
- ☐ **B4.1** We make efforts to actively engage parents and/or the wider community in our growing and cooking activities.
- ☐ **B4.2** We share Food for Life learning with local schools, the wider community and other partners.

Silver Checklist

1. Food Quality

- ☐ **S1.0** Our school food meets the Silver standards of the Food for Life Catering Mark, which means we take care that our food is healthy, ethical, and uses local ingredients. We use a minimum of 5% organic ingredients in our menus.

Using the Food for Life Catering Mark Points Calculator, our menus achieve at least

150 points:

40 points

for sourcing ethical and environmentally friendly food

20 points

for championing local food producers

20 points

for making healthy eating easier

70 points

from any of these categories.

2. Food Leadership and Food Culture

- ☐ **S2.0** Our governors have signed off a school food policy with a timetable for action.
- ☐ **S2.1** We give lunchtime a clear priority in our school day, and timetabling clashes are avoided.
- ☐ **S2.2** We ensure take up of school meals by pupils registered for free school meals is 90% or higher, and we are taking action to raise general school meal take up.
- ☐ **S2.3** We have made sure that key teachers or others have skills needed to lead gardening and cooking activities and ensure basic food hygiene.
- ☐ **S2.4** We work with parents to discourage unhealthy snacks or lunch box contents.
- ☐ **S2.5** We invite parents and/or community groups into our school to eat with our pupils.
- ☐ **S2.6** We don't use flight trays.

3. Food Education

- ☐ **S3.0** We have established a cooking club and our pupils are cooking with seasonal, local and organic ingredients.
- ☐ **S3.1** We ensure pupils in our garden group and/or a class are growing fruit, vegetables and herbs organically.
- ☐ **S3.2** We have produce from our school garden available at least once a term for pupils to eat or cook with.
- ☐ **S3.3** Our pupils explore the ethical and environmental issues around food choices and this is linked to changes in our school meals.
- ☐ **S3.4** One or more of our year groups keep in touch with a local farm throughout the year.
- ☐ **S3.5** We organise at least one annual visit to or from small local food businesses.

4. Community and Partnerships

- ☐ **S4.0** We hold events to involve parents and/or the wider community in growing and cooking activities.
- ☐ **S4.1** We actively encourage our pupils and their parents to grow and cook their own produce at home.
- ☐ **S4.2** Our pupils share Food for Life learning with local schools, the wider community and other partners.



For handy hints,
resources and to submit
your application, go to your
school portal

www.foodforlife.org.uk/signin

Gold Checklist

1. Food Quality

- ☐ **G1.0** Our school food meets the Gold standards of the Food for Life Catering Mark, which means we take great care that our food is healthy, ethical, uses lots of local ingredients and is animal and climate friendly. We use a minimum of 15% organic and 5% free range ingredients in our menus.

Using the Food for Life Catering Mark Points Calculator our menus achieve at least

300 points:

100 points for sourcing ethical and environmentally friendly food

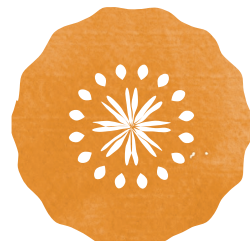
50 points for championing local food producers

50 points for making healthy eating easier

100 points from any of these categories.

2. Food Leadership and Food Culture

- ☐ **G2.0** Our pupils all have the opportunity to sit down to lunch every day.
- ☐ **G2.1** School meals are the norm in our school.
- ☐ **G2.2** We are working with our caterer to reduce and manage food waste.



3. Food Education

- ☐ **G3.0** We are committed to providing a minimum of 12 hours cooking lessons a year for all our pupils up to the age of 14.
- ☐ **G3.1** All our pupils have the opportunity to participate in organic food growing during their time at our school.
- ☐ **G3.2** We actively involve our pupils in planning the food growing calendar and maintaining the growing area using organic practices.
- ☐ **G3.3** Our pupils have the opportunity to take part in a programme of farm-based activities throughout the farming year.

4. Community and Partnerships

- ☐ **G4.0** Our parents and/or the wider community are actively involved in growing and cooking activities in our school.
- ☐ **G4.1** Our parents can buy or collect organic and/or local produce at our school, or we direct them to alternative local outlets.
- ☐ **G4.2** Food and cooking education is available in our school to parents and community members out of school hours.
- ☐ **G4.3** We host regular visits about Food for Life from other schools and stakeholders.



Got a question? Give us a call on 0117 314 5180, email fpl@foodforlife.org.uk or contact your local programme manager*

(you'll find their details in your school portal).

* Local programme managers are in areas where FFL is commissioned only.

Food Quality: Silver & Gold



In order to achieve the FFL Silver and Gold Award, food served throughout the school day is assessed using a points based system.

Points are achieved at Silver and Gold for sourcing environmentally friendly and ethical food, steps taken towards making healthy eating easy and championing local food producers.

We calculate your points based on your ingredients' spend over a defined period of time. This period is set by you, but should cover at least a 3 week menu cycle. You must be able to provide evidence of your ingredient spend over this period via invoices, along with evidence of welfare certification.

You will find more detailed guidance in your FFL School Portal or in the Soil Association's Food for Life Catering Mark Handbook for Schools.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

If your school uses an external (Private or Local Authority) caterer:

In order to achieve the FFL Schools Award your caterer will need to hold the FFL Catering Mark (CM) at the equivalent level. The CM is assurance that your schools' meals are already meeting the standards so all you need to do is confirm with the FFL Awards Team who your caterer is and you will have achieved that section of the award.

If your school's caterer does not currently hold a Catering Mark we can help you approach your caterer about going for the CM or help find a caterer who is already a holder.

If your caterer holds a CM at a level lower than the award you are aiming for, they may be able to upgrade for your school without having to apply for a new licence. Please get in touch with us to find out more.

If your school caters for itself 'in-house' (i.e. does not use a private or local authority caterer):

You need to complete the Food Quality section by submitting evidence through your online school portal. We provide further support, advice and guidance for our in-house schools, please contact us or visit your school portal for further details.

Food Quality: Silver & Gold

S1.0

Our school food meets the Silver standards of the Food for Life Catering Mark, which means we take care that our food is healthy, ethical, and uses local ingredients. We use a minimum of 5% organic ingredients in our menus.

Using the Food for Life Catering Mark Points Calculator, our menus achieve at least 150 points, including:

- i. 40 points for sourcing ethical and environmentally friendly food
- ii. 20 points for championing local food producers
- iii. 20 points for making healthy eating easier
- iv. 70 points from any of these categories.

Been a while since your Bronze award?

We may ask to see your menus again and check a few of the Bronze Food Quality criteria too as part of your Silver assessment.

G1.0

Our school food meets the Gold standards of the Food for Life Catering Mark, which means we take great care that our food is healthy, ethical, uses lots of local ingredients and is animal and climate friendly. We use a minimum of 15% organic and 5% free range ingredients in our menus.

Using the Food for Life Catering Mark Points Calculator our menus achieve at least 300 points, including:

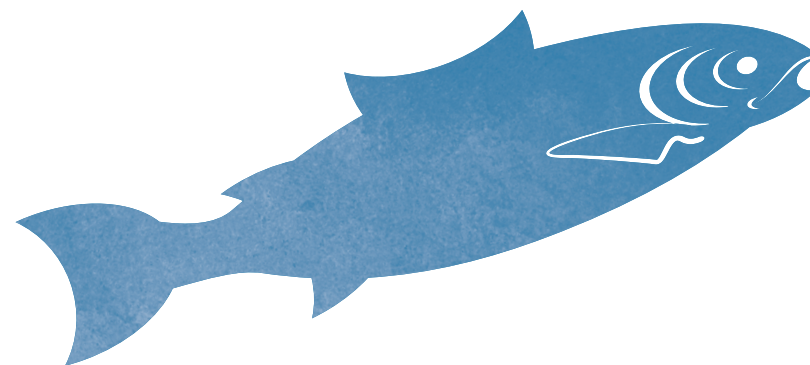
- i. 100 points for sourcing ethical and environmentally friendly food
- ii. 50 points for championing local food producers
- iii. 50 points for making healthy eating easier
- iv. 100 points from any of these categories

Got a question?

Give us a call on 0117 314 5180, email ffl@foodforlife.org.uk or contact your local programme manager*

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Food Quality: Silver & Gold

What is ethical and environmentally friendly food?

Ethical and environmentally friendly food is food that has been independently verified as meeting higher level of welfare standards. You can identify the welfare standards of the produce you buy using symbols displayed on the packaging, or from the product descriptions given on your invoices (e.g. 'Organic Yogurt', 'Free Range Pork Chops').

The list below gives details of how many points you will receive per % used on the following certified items.



Organic: You'll receive 5 points for every % spent on organic produce.



Organic food is produced using environmentally and animal friendly farming methods on organic farms. Organic produce and ingredients must be certified organic to gain points in this section. Many organic products carry the Soil Association logo and those from the EU must display the EU organic logo.

Free Range: You'll receive 4 points for every % spent on free range produce.

Animals reared in free range systems have opportunities to enjoy fresh air, exercise and express their natural behaviours.

You can collect points by using free range poultry and free range, outdoor-reared and outdoor-bred pig meat. These systems must also be farm assured, which is a Bronze requirement (B1.2) If using organic poultry or pig meat you will collect double points (for organic and for free range meat).

Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) or Marine Conservation Society (MCS) certified 'fish to eat':

You'll receive 4 points for every % spent on 'fish to eat' certified by MSC or MCS.



Marine Stewardship Council - you can buy MSC certified sustainable seafood from most UK suppliers. It has the added benefit

of being fully traceable.

Marine Conservation Society - the MCS 'fish to eat' list can be accessed online. This list is regularly updated according to the latest research on the sustainability of fish stocks. You will need to demonstrate how much 'fish to eat' you purchase.



Fairtrade: You'll receive 3 points for every % spent on Fairtrade.

Fairtrade standards, as guaranteed by the FAIRTRADE Mark, ensure that producers in the developing world are getting a fair deal.



RSPCA Assured: You'll receive 3 points for every % spent on RSPCA Assured pig meat, fish and poultry.

Points are awarded for RSPCA Assured (formerly Freedom Food) fish, pigs and poultry. Improving welfare for chickens and pigs is a priority because of the prevalence of more intensive systems in those two sectors.



LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming): You'll receive 2 points for every % spent on LEAF certified food.

LEAF is an assurance system recognising sustainably farmed products. It is based on LEAF's Integrated Farm Management principles.

Food Quality: Silver & Gold

How to champion local food producers?

Sourcing food locally is not just important for tackling global emissions; it also enables people to build relationships with their local food system and supports the local economy.

As local food champions you'll receive:

- 3 points for every % spent on raw ingredients sourced from your region, or adjacent county. Raw ingredients means food produced (grown) in that region, which includes meat, fish, dairy products, eggs, fruit and vegetables, sugar, flour and cereals.
- 2 points for every % spent over 59% on raw ingredients from the UK (59% is the UK national average).

You can also achieve points in this section for using produce grown on your school grounds or allotments!

Work this into your total spend using the market value price for each product, or ask your supplier how much they charge for each item.

You'll receive 3 points for every % that would have been spent on raw ingredients, when using your school grown produce.

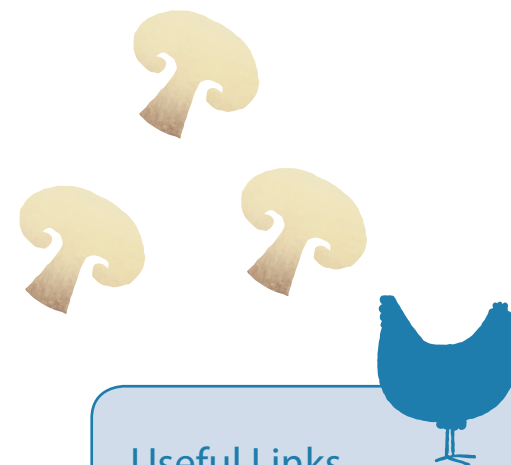


How to make healthy eating easier?

Points are awarded for taking active steps to making healthy eating an easy choice at school.

- 20 points per meat-free day or equivalent (maximum of 60 points)*
- 20 points for other steps to serve meat in moderation
- 20 points for taking steps to minimise salt intake
- 20 points for taking actions to cut plate waste
- 20 points for taking actions to support eating well
- 20 points for taking actions to promote meal uptake
- 10 points if more than 50% of bread on offer is wholemeal
- 10 points for serving 'Real Bread'
- 10 points if fruit is cheaper than desserts.

*Points are gained for having one or more meat-free days each week where meat is replaced with eggs, pulses, nuts, quorn, tofu or other meat alternatives (not fish or cheese). Or, alternatively, have a non-meat dish as the main option for 20% or more of the menu, excluding desserts.



Useful Links

Soil Association Certification:
www.sacert.org

EU Organic:
www.organic-farming.europa.eu

Marine Conservation Society:
www.mcsuk.org

Marine Stewardship Council:
www.msc.org

RSPA Assured:
www.rspcaassured.org.uk

Fairtrade:
www.fairtrade.org.uk

LEAF:
www.leafuk.org

Meat Free Monday:
www.meatfreemondays.co.uk

Food Leadership and Food Culture: Silver



Progressing from Bronze to Silver

Progressing from Bronze to Silver is all about building on the groundwork you developed as part of your Bronze award. Topics discussed by your School Nutrition Action Group will now form a whole school food policy and should include more time dedicated to cooking, growing, farm visits and sharing learning and celebrations with parents and the community.

Completing this section also shows your commitment to improving your school's lunchtime offer; through ensuring maximum take up of free school meals, healthy lunch boxes and completely removing flight trays.

Silver Criteria

S2.0

Our governors have signed off a school food policy with a timetable for action.

A whole school food policy is a shared, evolving document that ensures healthy and sustainable eating messages are consistently championed through the example set by your school and the wider community.

In developing a food policy that engages the whole school community; pupils, parents, carers and catering staff, you are more likely to embed a long-lasting approach to improving school food culture.

S2.1

We give lunchtime a clear priority in our school day, and timetabling clashes are avoided.

In order to make healthy eating a priority you make sure that lunch timetabling encourages pupils to sit down for long enough to enjoy social interaction and facilitate good digestion. Pupils involved in extra-curricular activities should have an alternative eating time.

S2.2

We consult with our pupils and parents on school meal improvements. We ensure take up of school meals by pupils eligible for free school meals is 90% or higher, and we are taking action to raise general school meal take up.

It is important for all your pupils to have a fresh, healthy meal at lunchtime to enable them to concentrate on learning in afternoon lessons. You should raise awareness of entitlement to free school meals among parents and make sure it is easy to apply. Addressing under-registration for free school meals should be a priority for the school's leadership and governing body.

TOP TIP

For schools with infant pupils:

Following the introduction of Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) in September 2014, we would expect your school to be doing what it can throughout the year to increase take up of UIFSM and your free school meals, to get up to and beyond 90% take up. You will need to combine your UIFSM and FSM figures to get an overall figure to meet this criteria.

Food Leadership and Food Culture: Silver

S2.3

We have made sure that key teachers or others have skills needed to lead gardening and cooking activities and ensure basic food hygiene.

Training and resources will give your teaching staff and others confidence in their roles when engaging in food education with young people. With cooking in particular, it is important to consider whether teachers or other volunteers possess the skills and knowledge to teach skills safely.

Careful precautions and simple techniques can ensure that all cooking activities, including knife skills, can be conducted safely.

S2.4

We work with parents to discourage unhealthy snacks or lunch box contents.

A study by Leeds University (2010), commissioned by the Food Standards Agency, revealed that if the nutritional standards for school meals were applied to packed lunches, only 1% would meet the requirements. Only one in five packed lunches contained any vegetables or salad and about half included an item of fruit.

Actively seek the support of parents for a healthy snack or lunch box campaign in your school. Unhealthy lunch boxes or brought-in snacks undermine what you are trying to achieve in transforming your school food culture.

S2.5

We invite parents and/or community groups into our school to eat with our pupils.

As part of your work in championing good food culture within your community, you should aim to invite parents or community groups in to have lunch at least once a term. This promotes social interaction at mealtimes, allows them to be inspired by the great food you serve, as well as find out about any food related events or activities you are planning.

TOP TIP

Breakfast Clubs

If it's a struggle to invite parents in to have lunch on a regular basis, why not start up a Breakfast Club which provides free or subsidised breakfasts for pupils. Providing children with a breakfast is a useful way of lending support to less advantaged families and can help to bridge the health and attainment gap. See the resources section on your online school portal for advice on how to set up a Breakfast Club.

S2.6

We don't use flight trays.

Although plastic flight trays may be practical and efficient for caterers, they do not encourage children and young people to develop social skills or good eating habits.

Use melamine, plastic or china plates and bowls instead of flight trays. The use of disposable plates does not meet our criteria.

Note: Exemptions to this rule may apply in the case of pupils with special needs or very young pupils (i.e. aged four and under).

Got a question?

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(you'll find their details in your school portal).

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Food Leadership and Food Culture: Gold



GOLD SCHOOL

Your Gold award builds on the work that you are already doing to meet Bronze and Silver criteria. Children should still be empowered to make decisions over the lunch service and lunchtime staff should continue to help with healthy choices and creating a calm atmosphere. Packed lunches should be minimal and you will still be actively working to promote the delicious healthy school meals that are being served.

Progressing from Silver to Gold

At Gold we want to see that food is truly embedded into everyday life at the school. Across the whole school community, healthy eating is the norm and is given the time it deserves. All children can sit down in a relaxed atmosphere with enough time to eat and digest their food, and most of the pupils regularly eat a hot school meal.

As a school you are also working with your caterer to keep your food waste to a minimum and recycling everything you can.

G2.0

Our pupils all have the opportunity to sit down to lunch every day.

Lunchtimes should be treated as an important part of the school day, acting as an opportunity for pupils to learn social skills, and develop good eating habits that will last a lifetime.

Schools should be aiming to provide pupils with at least 30 minutes where they can sit down and eat their lunch together.

G2.1

School meals are the norm in our school.

At Gold we are looking for a school meal take up figure significantly higher than average. For most schools this would be around 60%, but you can use the school census and national survey data to determine national averages for varying school demographics. Significantly higher take up would be 15% points or more above the average.

We would also want schools to show that their FSM take up figure is still over the 90% stipulated in Silver, and that paid for take up is over 50%.

G2.2

We are working with our caterer to reduce and manage food waste.

Approximately one-third of food grown for human consumption in the UK ends up in the rubbish bin. At least half of this is edible, and much of the other half could be more usefully composted.

By limiting food waste, you also have the potential to save money that could instead be invested in better quality ingredients or enhancing the lunchtime experience.

Food for Life Gold schools can demonstrate that they have measures in place to actively limit food waste.

For handy hints, resources and to submit your application, go to your school portal www.foodforlife.org.uk/sign



Food Education: Silver



Progressing from Bronze to Silver

This section of the Silver award is all about developing the skills and knowledge that have been gained through your Bronze award.

Cooking and growing activities should be structured through lunchtime and/or after-school clubs and knowledge of the importance of local, organic and seasonal food is embedded both practically and through assemblies; highlighting the links between the garden, kitchen and dining room.

Children also have the opportunity to experience the different stages of farm life, the ins and outs of a small local food business as well as ethical and environmental concerns.

Silver Criteria

S3.0

We have established a cooking club and our pupils are cooking with seasonal, local and organic ingredients.

All of your pupils should have the chance to participate in a cooking club that meets regularly and use recipes that highlight seasonal produce, as well as using local and organic ingredients at least once a term.

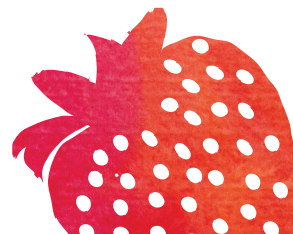
S3.1

We ensure pupils in our garden group and/or a class are growing fruit, vegetables and herbs organically.

Having one or more areas of space dedicated to food growing, on your schools grounds or nearby, is a fantastic interactive classroom that can support all curriculum areas.

Outdoor activities such as food growing not only serve to develop social skills and facilitate different learning styles, but also provides pupils with a sense of accomplishment and an appreciation of how to undertake practical work with delicate care.

The wider the range of produce grown by your pupils, the more likely it is that they will find a range of fruit and vegetables that they feel motivated to prepare, cook and eat.



Food Education: Silver

S3.2

We have produce from our school garden available at least once a term for pupils to eat or cook with.

Eating fruit and vegetables that pupils have grown themselves is a wholly different experience to eating those served up by others.

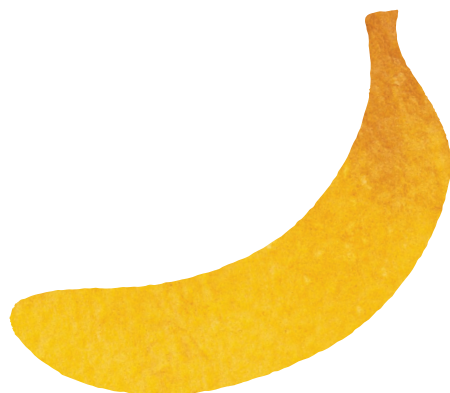
Through your regular garden group make school garden produce available for your pupils to taste and cook with at least once a term. This is a great way to give them more of an appetite for healthy fresh produce.

By using school grown produce to create dishes at cooking club you will be meeting the local, seasonal, and organic criteria in S3.0! Use the Term Time Planner you received in your Awards Package resources for guidance on what to grow and when to sow!

S3.3

Our pupils explore the ethical and environmental issues around food choices and this is linked to changes in our school meals.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation, agriculture alone is responsible for around 30% of our man-made greenhouse gasses. As consumers we can aim to lessen this impact by choosing foods that are local, ethically sourced and unprocessed.



S3.4

One or more of our year groups keep in touch with a local farm throughout the year.

Forming a year round link with a local farm (or farms) allows pupils to understand the different stages involved in farm life and provides an invaluable connection to your local community that can be developed in many ways, e.g. through a School Farmers' Market or links to your school meals.

Farm visits should form part of this link, along with regular updates and/or visits from the farmer.

S3.5

We organise at least one annual visit to or from a small local food business.

Many children and young people feel little connection with the food they eat, or with the people who work to produce, process and cook it.

Giving them the opportunity to experience the creation of everyday foods such as flour, pasta, bread, cheese or pressed fruit juice will be a memorable experience that will enable them to appreciate the hard work involved in everyday food production.

Got a question?

Give us a call on 0117 314 5180 or email ffl@foodforlife.org.uk



Food Education: Gold



Progressing from Silver to Gold

To meet our Gold criteria, cooking, growing and farming-linked education should be widely available across the school year and should support the development of a variety of skills. Pupils will be involved in planning what food is grown and the progression of cookery skills should be clearly mapped out in a set timetable of practical cooking lessons, which include making savoury dishes.

All pupils will have either the opportunity to visit a farm themselves, or learn directly from others who have done so throughout the year.

Gold Criteria

G3.0

We are committed to providing a minimum of 12 hours cooking lessons a year for all our pupils up to the age of 14.

According to the Royal Society for Public Health young people have a strong desire to learn cookery skills. However, they often lack the knowledge and experience to prepare the nutritious meals from fresh, unprocessed ingredients.

Consider introducing a range of familiar and less familiar ingredients and teach your pupils to make simple nutritious dishes that can form part of healthy meals. Best practice is to teach your pupils basic cooking skills, including safe techniques for the use of sharp knives.

Top tip:

Using the school garden as a basis for Science, Maths or English classes, or enlisting year groups to help prepare garden produce for a soup sale or cooking class are just a few ways in which you can involve larger numbers.

G3.1

All our pupils have the opportunity to participate in organic food growing during their time at our school.

While it may not be feasible for all your pupils to be actively involved in organic food growing activity at any one time, all pupils should be given the opportunity to participate at some point during their school lives.

G3.2

We actively involve our pupils in planning the food growing calendar and maintaining the growing area using organic practices.

Putting new skills into practice is empowering and rewarding. Utilising pupils' knowledge of food growing and organic principles in planning the food growing calendar will create a strong sense of pride and ownership.

G3.3

Our pupils have the opportunity to take part in a programme of farm-based activities throughout the farming year.

Pupils often benefit from doing physical work and learning new practical skills. If this work is linked to the farming calendar, getting involved will enable your pupils to become more connected with the farm and its annual cycle.

Ensure that pupils involved in your farm links programme are actively carrying out a range of tasks around the farm. Hands-on participation is not only rewarding but maximises learning, and in secondary schools this provides an amazing opportunity to introduce students to farming as a career option.

Top tip:

Have you thought about organising a residential farm stay? Residential trips are an amazing tool for really immersing children in farm life and understanding whole food processes.

Community and Partnerships: Silver



Progressing from Bronze to Silver

Progressing from Bronze to Silver takes the step from inviting parents and the community to help out in the classroom to actively holding events which involve them in growing and cooking activities, and encouraging learning at home.

School Farmers' Markets, 'Grandparent Gardening' events and celebratory theme days are just some of the ways that FFL schools successfully engage with the wider community.

At Silver, pupils should be involved in the sharing of FFL knowledge, through giving school tours, presentations, writing blogs, or even visiting community groups.

Silver Criteria

S4.0

We hold events to involve parents and/or the wider community in growing and cooking activities.

In addition to holding an annual food themed event, create at least two occasions where parents and/or your wider community can get involved with cooking and growing activities at your school.

This will give your pupils the opportunity to celebrate what they have learnt, along with developing your schools' status as a transformer of food culture beyond the school gates.

S4.1

We actively encourage our pupils and their parents to grow and cook their own produce at home.

Encouraging your pupils to get their families cooking and growing at home is rewarding for all involved and is a great way to ensure that FFL learning about fresh and sustainable food procurement is shared even wider.

It is also an affordable way for families to have a variety of fresh fruit and vegetables available to them to count towards their five-a-day.

S4.2

Our pupils share Food for Life learning with local schools, the wider community and other partners.

Support and encourage your pupils to share their learning around cooking, growing, farming and food choices. It is a very powerful experience and helps develop important leadership skills.

Work achieved in S4.0 and S4.1 may be relevant for this criterion if pupils have been involved in demonstrating their FFL knowledge of cooking and growing to others.



Community and Partnerships: Gold



Progressing from Silver to Gold

As a Gold school you are pioneers of best practice around good food, both in your local area and nationally. You set the standard for serving fresh, healthy meals, with high quality and local ingredients, and you provide cooking, growing, and food education to all pupils as well as others in your school community. Parents are able to source organic produce through your school and you regularly host visits about your fantastic Food for Life work.

Gold Criteria

G4.0

Our parents and/or the wider community are actively involved in growing and cooking activities in our school.

Your Food for Life work is a great way to support strong school-home and school-community links which can enrich and enhance the curriculum. Pupils' achievements have been shown to be greater where parents and the wider community are actively involved in school life.

At Gold, you should encourage good levels of involvement from parents and/or community members to help organise, contribute to and attend growing and cooking activities.

G4.1

Our parents can buy or collect organic and/or local produce at our school, or we direct them to alternative local outlets.

Gold schools are food hubs for their local community, and can play an important role in making it as easy as possible for parents to buy local, seasonal and organic food.

Box schemes are a great way to learn about what's in season and are often more affordable than buying organic – or even non-organic produce – at the supermarket.

Selling produce from your organic school garden is a useful way of reinforcing messages about seasonal food, as well as making a little extra money which can be reinvested into growing equipment and seeds.

Getting local food businesses to sell their produce in school supports the local economy and strengthens community links.

For handy hints, resources and to submit your application, go to your school portal www.foodforlife.org.uk/signin

Community and Partnerships

G4.2

Food and cooking education is available in our school to parents and community members out of school hours.

Offer classes in practical food education, including cooking, for parents and the wider community at least once a term.

You can have a positive influence on your pupils' diets outside school, and influence the health of the wider community, by offering opportunities for parents and community groups to develop cooking or growing skills using your school facilities out of school hours.

G4.3

We host regular visits about Food for Life from other schools and stakeholders.

These fact-finding visits should involve your pupils, teaching and catering staff and enable local schools and other stakeholders to understand how you have transformed your school food culture using the Food for Life approach and what the benefits have been.

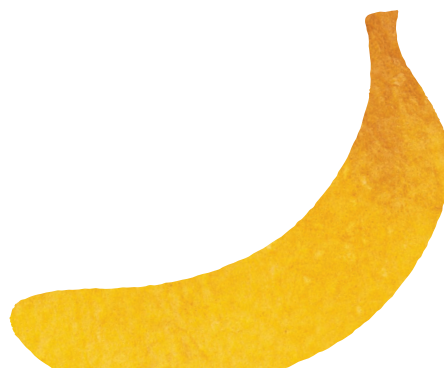
Sharing your learning with our schools and stakeholders helps other schools learn the best way to do things from people they trust, it also really empowers and establishes your school as a pioneer of addressing school food culture.

Got a question?

**Give us a call on
0117 314 5180, email
ffl@foodforlife.org.uk
or contact your local
programme manager***

(you'll find their details
in your school portal).

* Local programme managers
are in areas where FFL is
commissioned only.



Some useful websites

Catering Mark Handbook for Schools:
www.sacert.org/catering/standards

For resources and information on
the School Food Standards:
www.schoolfoodplan.com/standards

Growing information and resources:
www.gardenorganic.org.uk/schools

Cooking information and resources:
www.focusonfood.org

Information on how to develop a whole
school approach and school food policies:
www.healtheducationtrust.org.uk

Best practice case studies and real
life school food solutions:
<http://whatworkswell.schoolfoodplan.com>



About Food for Life

Food for Life is a Soil Association initiative, which began life in 2003 and developed into an award-winning national programme to transform school food culture thanks to funding from the Big Lottery Fund.

Building on its success in both primary and secondary schools, Food for Life now includes tried and tested approaches to transforming food culture in a wide range of environments including nurseries, hospitals and supported living.

We are working in partnership with the Royal Society for Public Health, Focus on Food, Garden Organic and the Health Education Trust, all nationally recognised experts in their fields.

The Soil Association was formed in 1946 to pioneer a better world – one where we can all eat, farm and live healthily, and with the environment in balance. Today we're still dedicated to making positive change happen. We're farming and growing, buying, cooking and eating. We're campaigning and researching. We're running innovative programmes that prove the case for change. And we're inspiring millions of people to take their own step towards a better world.



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 [@SAfoodforlife](https://twitter.com/SAfoodforlife)

“If we truly want the next generation to understand how food is grown and produced then we have to put food education within the curriculum for their health and the health of the nation.”

Jeanette Orrey MBE,
Co-founder, Food for Life