



Complying with Appetite for Life recommendations

Appetite for Life sets out the actions required to improve the standards of food and drink provided in schools in Wales. Appetite for Life recommendations are split into nutrient based standards, food based standards and drinks standards, as follows

- There are 14 nutrient based standards including energy.
- There are 11 food based standards.
- Separate drinks standards.

In monitoring compliance with these standards the following key points need to be borne in mind:

- The nutrient based standards and the food based standards apply to an average school lunch over 5 consecutive days. Food based standards also apply across the whole school day.
- There are also separate drinks standards.
- All standards apply to primary, secondary and special schools.
- To be fully “compliant” with all the Appetite for Life recommendations you must be able to evidence that you meet all 14 nutrient based standards, all 11 food based standards and the drinks standards.
- The standards apply to all outlets within the school premises that serve food and drinks to pupils whether serviced by the school, contract caterer, or local authority catering service and includes vending machines, tuck shops and pupil run cafes that serve food to pupils.

Nutrient based standards

The 14 nutrient based standards apply to all of the food on offer at lunch times not just “meal deals” or “main meals” and therefore all of the food on offer must be included in the nutritional analysis calculations. If you serve some of your lunch time provision at break times e.g. baguettes, cakes/biscuits etc these too must be included in your nutritional analysis calculations. The nutritional analysis guide gives clear instructions for carrying out nutritional analysis.

Your lunch time provision cannot be compliant if you have not included all the food and drinks on offer and analysed it as one menu using the methods set out in the nutritional analysis guide.

Using specific foods/products e.g. low fat mayonnaise and redeveloping existing recipes will help your overall analysis to meet the nutrient based standards but foods on their own cannot be compliant to the nutrient based standards, they need to be considered as part of the overall menu.

Food based standards

The 11 food based standards should be applied across the whole school day including lunch time provision.

Some nutritional analysis software programmes can include the food based standards which means your results from nutritional analysis will show whether you are meeting the food based standards.

If your nutritional analysis software doesn't show results for food based standards, you will need to manually work out whether you are meeting these.

You need to be able demonstrate that you are meeting all 11 food based standards across the whole school day before you can claim you are compliant.

Using specific foods/products and redeveloping existing recipes e.g. including a portion of fruit within a dessert, will help your food provision to meet the food based standards.

The secondary school assessment tool can be used to help you assess your provision against the food based standards.

Drinks standards

You need to be able demonstrate that you are meeting all of the drinks standards across the whole school day before you can claim you are compliant.

Frequently asked questions about compliance

How do I work towards meeting the nutrient based standards?

1. Get a base line of information

Start by inputting your recipes into a nutritional analysis software programme to build the current menu cycle and enter the provision mix. This will provide baseline information of where the current menu cycle stands against the nutrient standards.

The next step is to check the accuracy of the information inputted. This will pinpoint possible inputting errors that may affect the accuracy of the overall menu analysis.

Checking the accuracy of menus will give a better picture of how your provision meets the recommended nutrient based standards.

When the analysis accurately reflects the food offered you can then begin any menu and recipe development to work towards meeting the nutrient standards.

2. Adapt the menu and redevelop recipes to work towards the nutrient standards

Most recipes will contain a good source of nutrients; but remember nutritional analysis is also based on the sales mix – number of items served. In addition to recipes being redeveloped, the menu may need to be redeveloped to encourage and support pupils in choosing a balanced mix of foods which provide a variety of nutrients.

Items such as sandwiches require creative recipe development in order to increase or decrease their nutrient values.

Snack items could incorporate main meal items to ensure a range of food items provide good sources of nutrients. For example; chilli con carne served as a main meal with rice could be served as a snack item in the form of a “grab and go” burrito.

Making homemade recipes from scratch can enable you to control the type and amount of ingredients used. This can make it easier to control the nutrients provided by the recipe. However, it may not always be possible to make recipes from scratch due to time constraints and financial implications. Nevertheless, recipes using manufactured products can be modified to improve their nutritional content. For example; you can add pureed vegetables to a jar of tomato sauce for pasta to help the overall dish contain a portion of vegetables.

Food manufacturers are continually developing foods and recipes and these tend to be lower in fat, salt and sugar. Try to source these products. Be aware of products that are flash fried during manufacturing as these are restricted products.

When buying manufactured products request the full nutrient profile including the 14 nutrients required for school lunch to ensure that the nutrient analysis replicates the nutrient content of the food served.

Adding extra ingredients to recipes can help increase the nutrient content of the recipe and in turn the nutrient content of the menu.

Remember: Any modifications made to recipes should be taste tested to ensure palatability. Financial implications and cooking processes of the modifications should also be considered when undertaking recipe and menu development.

How do I know whether my lunchtime provision complies with Appetite for Life recommendations?

You will need to use a nutritional analysis software program to demonstrate that your provision meets the 14 nutrient based standards, following the methods for analysis set out in the nutritional analysis guide. Separately you will need to ensure your provision meets the 11 food based standards and the drinks standard.

I know the menu we serve is compliant because we use all lower fat products and we serve at least three varieties of vegetables every day so why would I need to use nutritional analysis software?

Using lower fat products to make recipes will help your provision to meet recommendations but you will still need to use nutritional analysis software to ensure your lunchtime provision meets the nutrient standards recommended in Appetite for Life.

Vegetables contain a number of nutrients required by Appetite for Life recommendations, serving at least three varieties of vegetables everyday will help your provision to meet these requirements but unless you analyse your provision using nutritional analysis software you won't know exactly whether your provision is complying with the nutrient standards.

Regardless of what you serve on your menu, you will need to carry out nutritional analysis to assess your provision against the nutrient standards for lunch time provision.

The tuck shop is run by the school and sells a number of products including savoury snacks and confectionery. The school thinks that they don't have to comply with Appetite for Life as they think the recommendations apply only to the food served at lunchtime.

Appetite for Life recommendations apply to all food served across the whole school day. Nutrient standards apply to lunch time provision, while food and drinks standards apply across the whole school day regardless of who serves the food and where it is served from. The school will be required to look at their provision in the tuck shop and ensure it complies with Appetite for Life recommendations.

The pupils in our school run a cafe as part of their enterprise work; does food and drink served here have to comply with Appetite for Life recommendations?

All food and drinks served to pupils on school premises needs to comply with Appetite for Life recommendations regardless of who is responsible for serving it. If the food and drinks are being served as part of lunch time provision they also need to be included within the nutritional analysis calculations.

Does food and drink provided in vending machines need to comply with Appetite for Life recommendations?

Yes, all outlets including vending machines that provide food and drinks to pupils on the school premises need to ensure that the food and drinks served meet Appetite for Life recommendations. If the food provided in vending machines is eaten as part of the lunch time provision e.g. baguettes, sandwiches, these need to be included in the nutritional analysis of the lunch time provision. All food and drinks provided through vending need to meet the food and drinks based standards.