



Food strategy conversation starters

Food sustains us, gives us pleasure and creates social bonds. It also costs, both financially and environmentally. Do you have a vision for food in your setting? What does a sustainable food strategy mean for you? Use these questions with staff, leaders, governors and pupils to start conversations and develop your food strategy.

Context: challenges to quality food provision

Issues such as funding for free school meals, rising catering costs, food waste and sustainability can cause challenges for catering teams. Check out or share [What's happening with food in schools](#) (three-minute read) to understand more.

13 questions

1. What's our vision for food provision in our setting? What's the purpose of food for us? What or who do we want to nourish?
2. What do we like about our current food provision? What don't we like? What's the impact? If we could make changes, what difference would that make?
3. What do our pupils think about our food offer? Is our food offer informed by pupil voice?
4. Where does our food come from? What do we know about our supply chain? What's our food mileage? How much of our food is grown or raised in the UK?
5. How much of our food gets wasted? How much of that is plate waste (the child didn't eat it), counter waste (we didn't sell it) or production waste (e.g. we had something in the fridge that didn't get used and went off)?
6. What happens to our food waste? And what does that cost us?
7. What's our cost per school meal? What's the gap between this and what we receive in free school meal funding?
8. What do we do to incentivise or encourage take-up of free school meals?
9. Do we offer, or want to offer, breakfast provision in our setting? What barriers have we encountered in making breakfast work? How could we improve our breakfast provision?
10. Is our dining hall a pleasant place to eat? Is it a comfortable, inclusive place to be?



11. Do pupils have enough time to eat? Do we have a [grab and go culture](#) in our setting, and what impact does that have on pupil health and wellbeing?
12. How or where does food feature in our curriculum?
13. What do we think about the [proposed changes to School Food Standards](#)? What would need to change to implement them in our setting?

Further reading

Use these resources to deepen your understanding and create change in your setting.

- [Why do breakfast clubs matter?](#)
- [How much does a school meal cost?](#)
- [The case for auto-enrolment](#)
- [What's happening with food in schools?](#)
- [Making breakfast work](#)

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