

# Children's Nutrition & School Food in North Yorkshire – a Public Health Approach



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## Overview

- Child obesity data
- Healthy Schools & Early Years Award Programme
- Free School Meals auto-enrolment
- Focused work with schools – case study
- School food resources
- How you can help

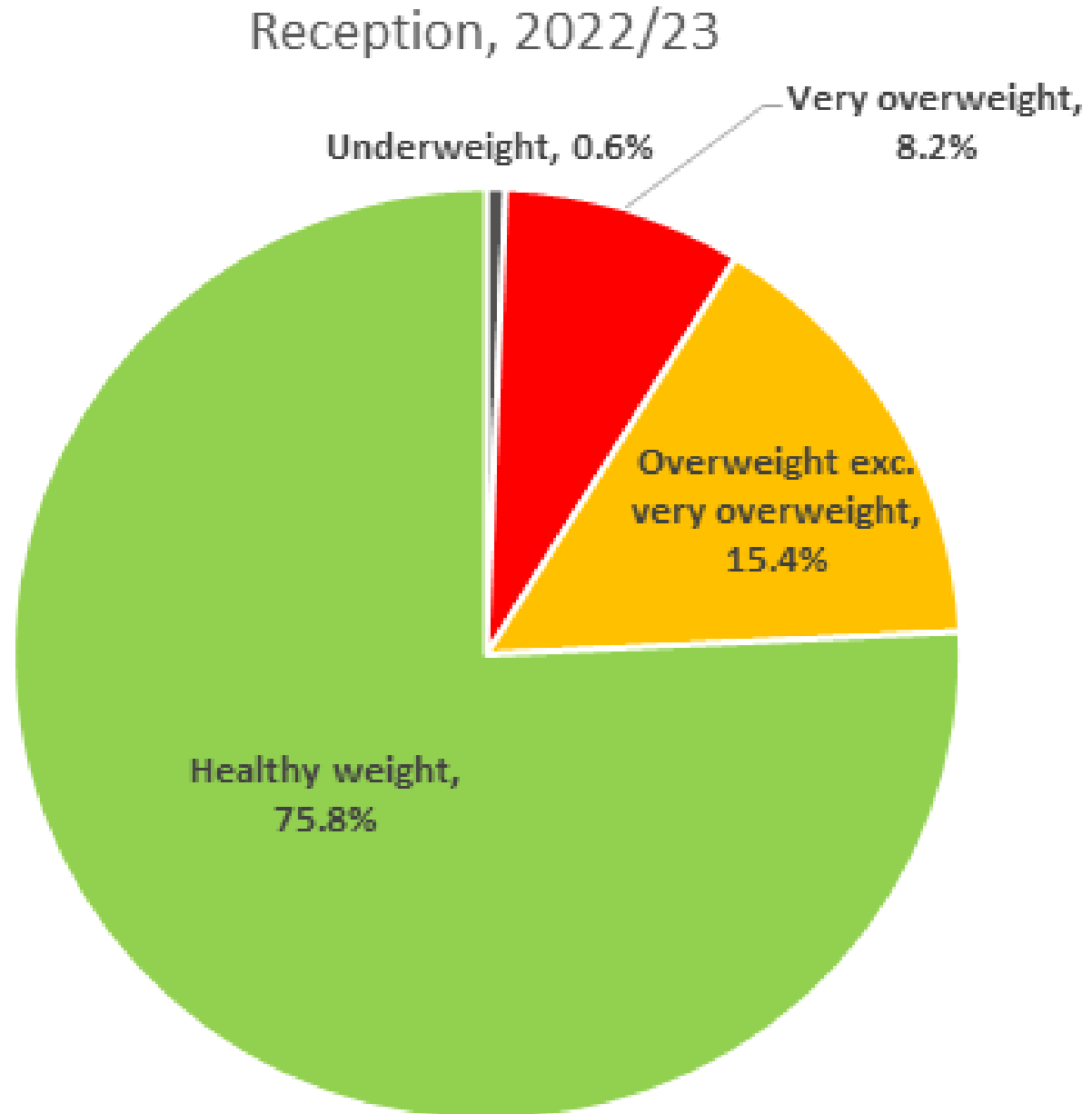
## 4-5 year-olds

23.6% excess weight

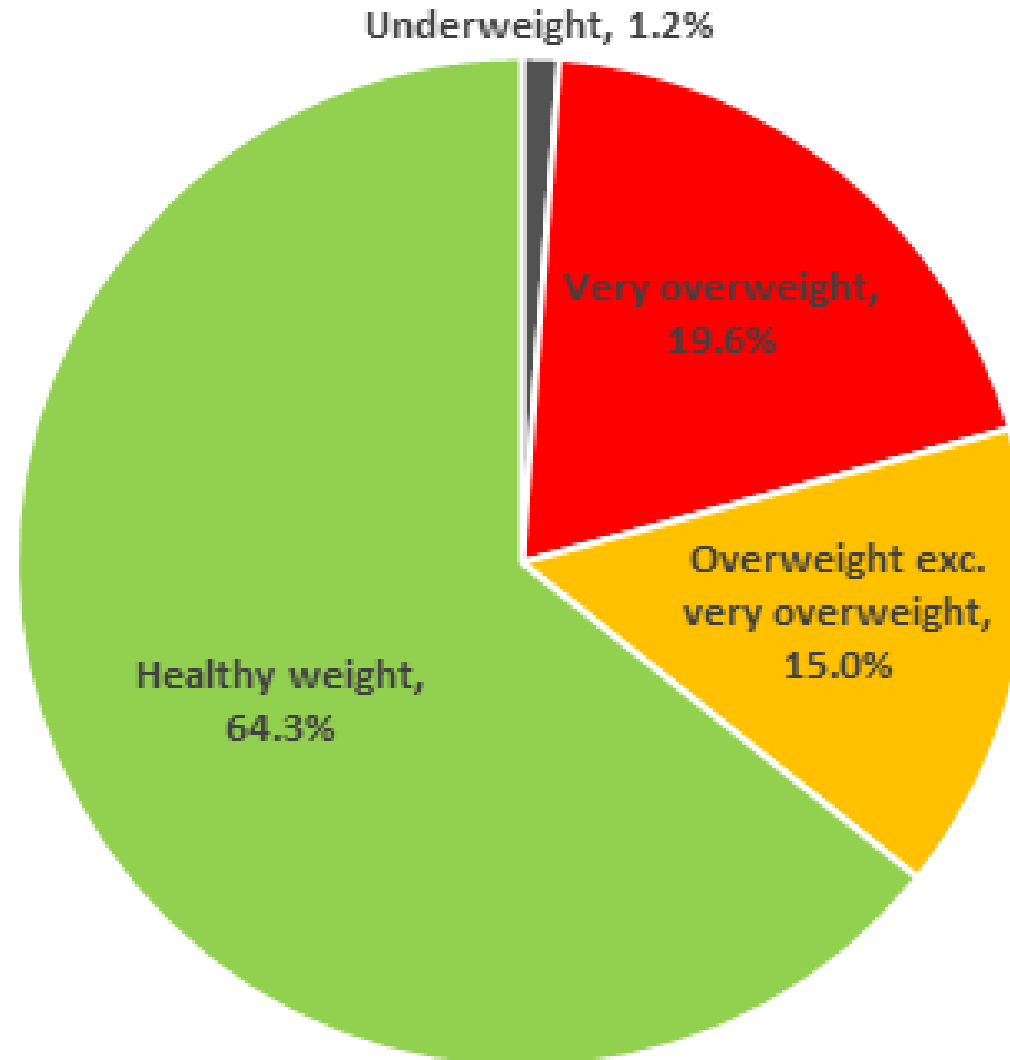
(was 23.3% the previous year)

8.2% Very overweight (Obese)

(was 9.6% the previous year)



Year 6, 2022/23



10-11 year-olds

34.6% excess weight

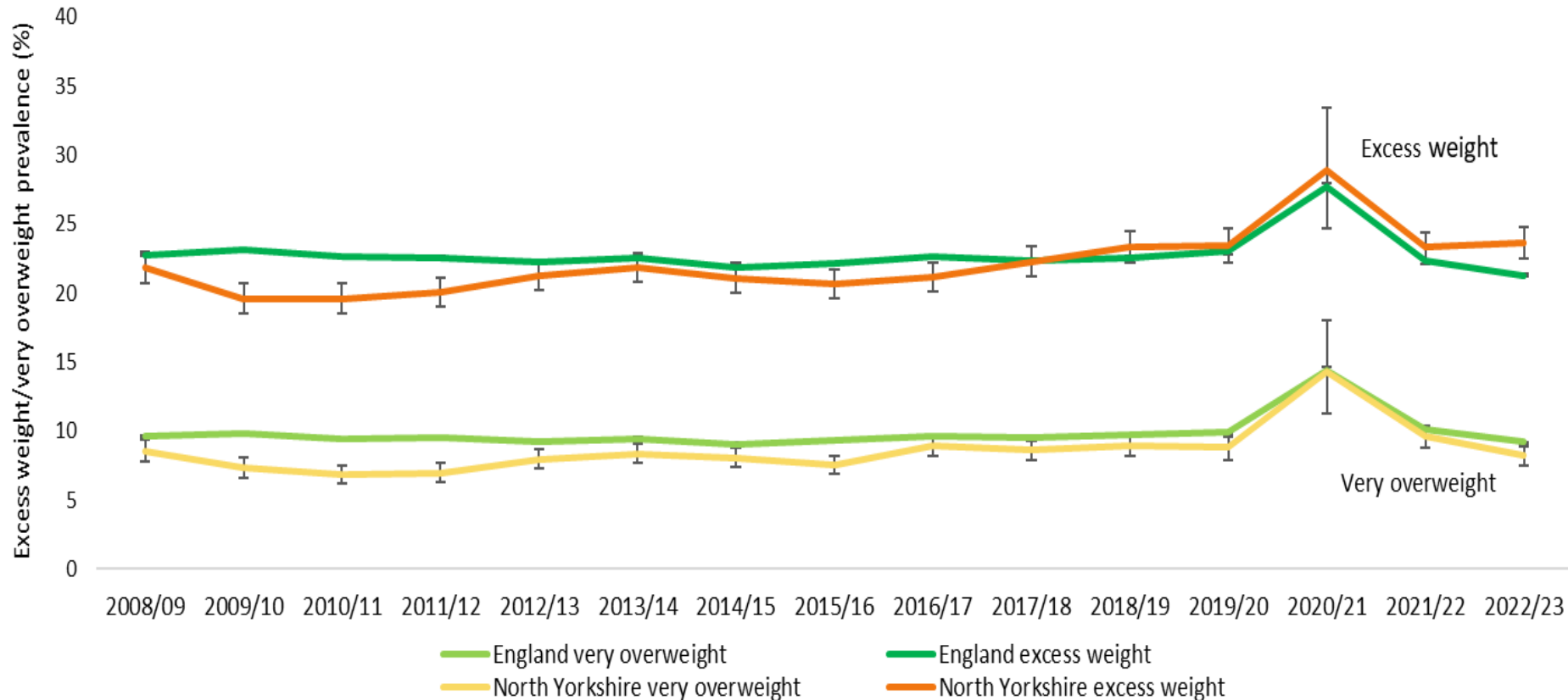
(was 34.4% the previous year)

19.6% Very overweight (obese)

(was 20.1% the previous year)

# Excess Weight & Very Overweight Trends (4-5 yrs) NY and England comparisons

Prevalence of excess weight and very overweight 2008/09 - 2022/23  
Children in Reception (aged 4-5 yrs.)

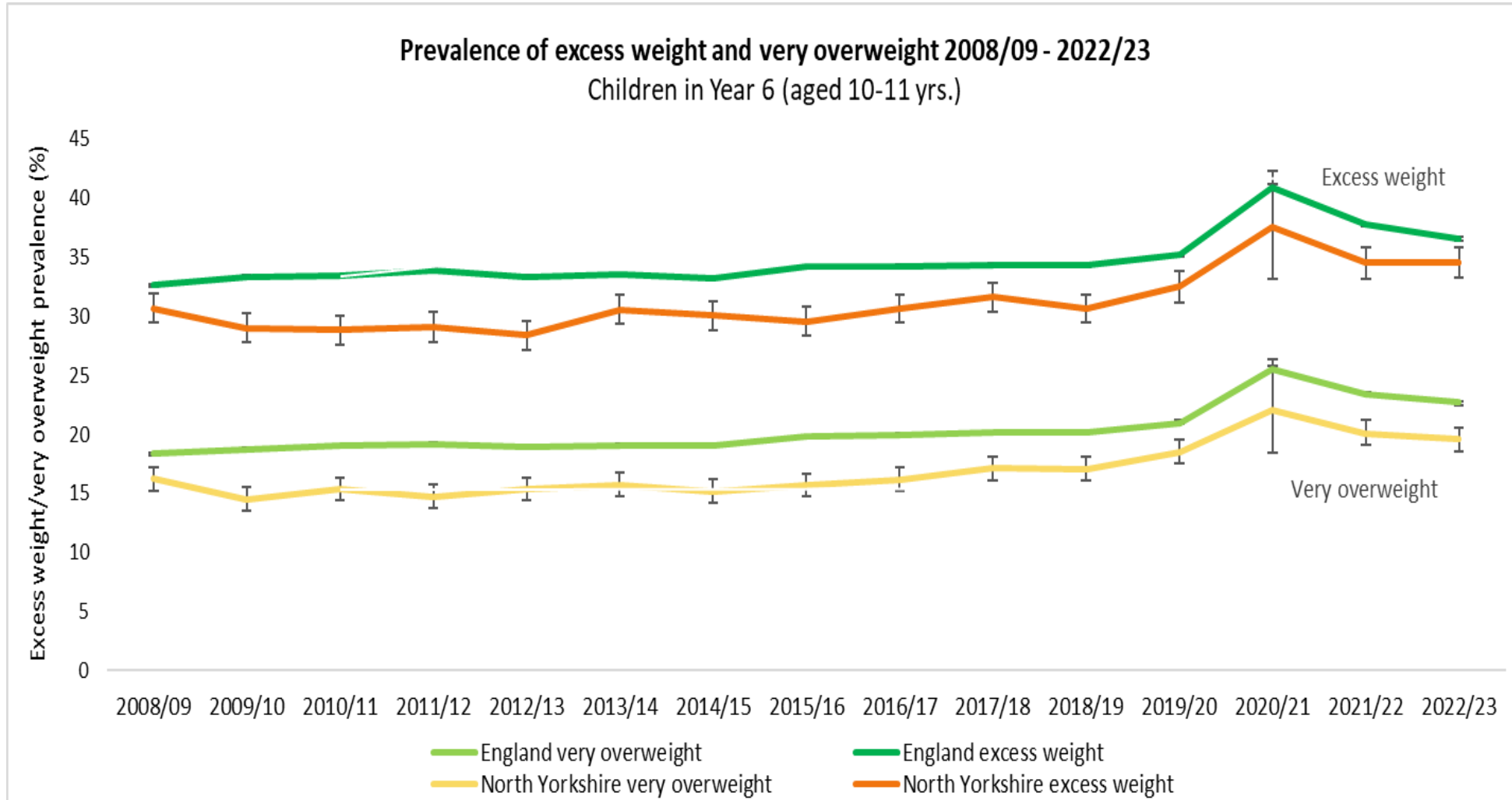


## Key points:

- Levels of excess weight and very overweight in 4-5 year-olds have largely returned to pre-pandemic levels in NY and England.
- NY rates of excess weight have not reduced as much as England and are above national average (orange line).
- NY rates of very overweight (obesity) have reduced since the previous year and are below national average.

# Excess weight & Very overweight Trends (10-11 yrs)

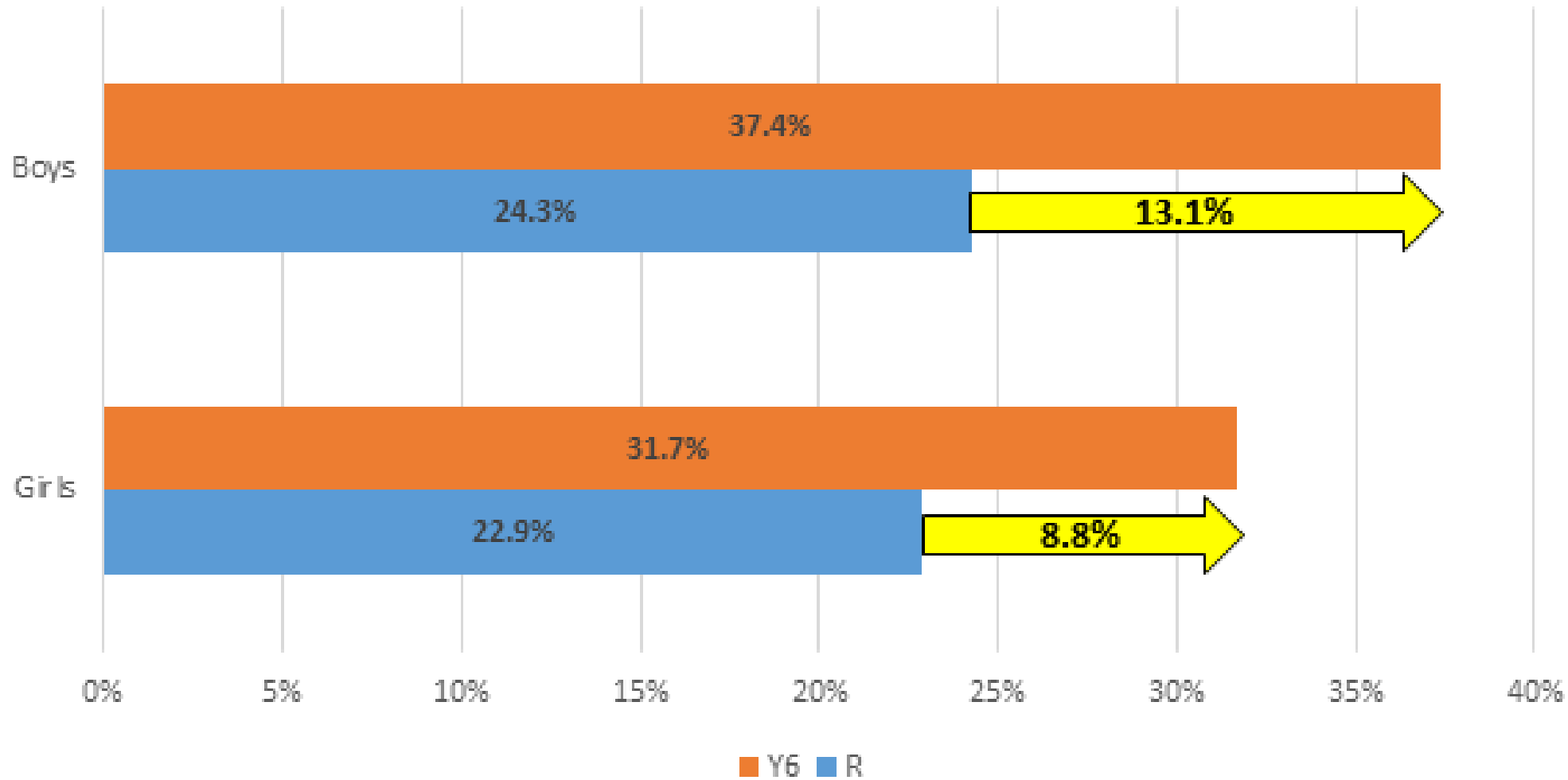
## NY and England comparisons



### Key points:

- Levels of excess weight and very overweight in 10-11 year-olds have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels in NY and England.
- NY rates of excess weight and very overweight (obesity) are below national averages.
- NY rates of very overweight (obesity) have reduced since the previous year.

# The percentage differences between Year 6 and Reception excess weight boys and girls, 2022/23



## Common areas of obesity activity identified as part of a whole systems approach to obesity







# Healthy Catering in Schools & Early Years Partnership Group

Partnership group (NYC) formed 2018

Membership: Public Health, Healthy Schools team, NYC Catering, Trading Standards, Early Years

- ▶ Improving the school food offer e.g. puddings, menus
- ▶ School food survey 2021
- ▶ School & Early Years staff presentations
- ▶ Webinars, resources, school letters etc.





**Healthy Schools**  
North Yorkshire



**Healthy Early Years**  
North Yorkshire

# Healthy Schools & Early Years Award Programme

- The free scheme supports schools & early years settings to create a healthier environment, including a focus on healthy food.
- Around 80% of North Yorkshire schools are now registered with the Healthy Schools Award Programme and many have already achieved an award.



# Free School Meals Opt-out Scheme

Around 11% of eligible pupils nationally do not claim free school meals.

Families miss out on savings of around £450 annually, and schools miss out on the pupil premium funding.

FSM auto-enrolment involves identifying children who are eligible but not claiming, and enrolling them (unless they opt out).

The process removes the barriers that families often face when applying (e.g. around language, literacy, cultural or technical issues).

NYC has implemented FSM auto-enrolment during 2024 – so far we have identified around 800 children who are eligible but not currently claiming.

# School Zone Project - Selby High School - (Trading Standards)

- ▶ Increased salad and vegetables in wraps, sandwiches, sauces etc.
- ▶ All bread is now either 50/50 or wholemeal bread.
- ▶ Baked goods such as traybakes, cookies - reduced sizes, taken off menu.
- ▶ Installed 3 outdoor canopies and an outdoor pod servery to improve the dining period & experience.
- ▶ Reduced the use of single use plastic (plates, cutlery) in canteen, more use of biodegradable packaging for sandwiches.
- ▶ Eliminated single use plastic bottles within the school, installed several water bottle filling stations, pupils encouraged to bring reusable containers - **this eliminated approx. 114,000 bottles going to landfill each year from the school.**





## Secondary Schools' Guide For Providing Healthy Food Choices

Children's health and development are affected by the foods they eat. Schools play an important role in helping children access healthy foods across the school day. Provision of healthier foods in schools can improve attendance, behaviour, concentration, academic performance and wellbeing.

The Growing Up In North Yorkshire (GUNY) 2022 Survey found secondary-aged pupils reported that:

**20%** had nothing to eat or drink before lessons



**33%** had at least 2 sugary drinks the day before



Only **19%** had at least 5 portions of fruit and veg the day before



The school food standards (School food standards: resources for schools - [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)) are designed to help children develop healthy eating habits and ensure that they have the energy and nutrition needed to get the most from their school day. This guide is to support schools to make changes that will help children to make healthier food choices and enjoy mealtimes.

### Top Tips

Consult the **school council** for ideas or on forthcoming changes - what would the students like to see on the menu? Do a walk through of the **dining environment** to identify what the experience is like and potential changes that can be made (think about flow and seating arrangements)

Look at the **presentation of food** - we eat with our eyes. Is it attractively presented? Does it look appetising? What and how is food presented on the plate? (Can you hold taster sessions for students to try out new food?)



Look at the quantity of **single use plastic** being used in the dining area - can this be reduced, replaced?



In line with the school food standards, look at **portion sizes** being served - are these within the parameters set? (Are sweet treats like cakes the right size and weight?)



Revisit the **school food standards** - is the menu compliant over the whole school day not just lunchtimes? e.g. how often are processed/red meats served? what is served at break times?

Explore offering **wholemeal/wholegrain** or **50/50 versions** of bread/rice/pasta.

Look at ways to increase **fruit** and **vegetables** in foods eg in sandwiches, sauces, puddings. Introduce changes gradually and allow time for this.

Is **drinking water** freely available to students around the school building? Are students encouraged to bring in a clean reusable water bottle each day? Can extra water coolers be provided around school?



# Infographic resource - top tips for secondary schools & case study

# Healthy Packed Lunch Guidance



## Why?

- National school food standards focus mainly on school dinners
- Lack of county-wide guidance for schools / families
- Schools requested NYC guidance they could share with parents.

## How?

- Discussions with partners (catering, Public Health, Healthy Schools etc)
- Consulted schools.
- Reviewed national school food standards & examples from other regions.
- Developed and designed draft leaflet.
- Piloted it with parents, carers, school staff, colleagues etc.

A healthy packed lunch will give children the energy and nutrition they need to get the most from their school day - helping them to stay healthy, feel good and be ready and able to learn. Just like school meals, packed lunches should be made up of foods from the main food groups in the Eatwell Guide [www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/the-eatwell-guide](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/the-eatwell-guide) and portions should be appropriate for a child's age and size. This will ensure every child has a healthy and nutritionally-balanced lunch.

## What should I include in my healthy packed lunch?

Please try to include **ONE** of each of the following in your lunch each day:



### STARCHY CARBOHYDRATE

- ✓ bread, wrap, pitta, bagel, rolls, baguette
- ✓ rice or couscous
- ✓ noodles or plain pasta - avoid flavoured instant packet products and limit canned pasta
- ✓ potatoes
- ✓ oatcakes, rice cakes or crackers

Wholemeal/wholegrain options contain more fibre and keep you fuller for longer

**Gives you energy for the day ahead!**



### DAIRY FOOD (or non-dairy alternative)

- ✓ cheese - hard, soft, spread
- ✓ yoghurt or fromage frais
- ✓ milk
- ✓ custard

Choose low fat, low sugar options where possible

**Good for healthy bones and teeth!**



### FRUIT (fresh, frozen, tinned or dried)

- ✓ apple
  - ✓ banana
  - ✓ satsuma
  - ✓ pear
  - ✓ plum
  - ✓ mango
  - ✓ melon
  - ✓ dried fruit e.g. raisins, apricots, dates. Add to meals and not as a snack
  - ✓ cherry tomatoes (chopped)
  - ✓ handful of grapes (halved)
  - ✓ fruit salad or kebab
- Wash fruit and vegetables prior to preparing.  
Ensure canned fruit is in juice not syrup.
- 

Fruit and vegetables give you vitamins, minerals and fibre to stay healthy. Part of your '5 a day'

**How much?** A portion is one child-sized handful.

### VEGETABLES OR SALAD

- ✓ chopped vegetable sticks (e.g. carrot, cucumber, pepper)
  - ✓ salad in sandwiches
  - ✓ vegetable soup
  - ✓ Baked beans count as a vegetable but only once during a week. Ensure beans are reduced in salt and sugar
- If you are using canned products, choose those without added sugar and salt.
- 



### PROTEIN

- ✓ meat e.g. sliced lean ham, chicken or beef in a sandwich
- ✓ fish - preferably try to include oily fish such as salmon, tinned mackerel, sardines and pilchards. Aim to have one portion a week
- ✓ eggs
- ✓ lentils, beans, chickpeas
- ✓ alternative meat free option

Try to limit processed foods e.g. sausages, meatballs, fishfingers, fishcakes, sausage rolls

**Helps your body to grow and develop**

**DRINKS** - plain tap water is the best option, especially for teeth. Please send your child to school with their own named, clean water bottle each day.

Drinking enough each day helps keep your body working well and your skin looking healthy!



### Me-sized meals

Young children don't need as much food as teenagers and adults. When they eat more than they need, the excess energy is stored as fat in their bodies.





### What about snacks for break time?

#### The best options for breaktime snacks are:

- Portion of fresh fruit (no dried fruit as snacks please as the sugar can stick in teeth).
- Vegetable sticks.
- Other ideas for healthy snacks could be rice cakes, bread sticks, bag of plain popcorn.

#### Please check your school's policy on snacks

### What should I NOT bring to school?

Please do **NOT** include the following items:

- ✗ Sweets and chocolate bars – these foods are high in sugar and calories, low in goodness, and are harmful for teeth.
- ✗ Squash or fizzy drinks – water is best for teeth.
- ✗ Other items e.g. nuts, sesame, fish – please check your school's allergy policy.

Thank you!



### 5 top tips for your packed lunch

- Freezer packs can keep food cool. Freeze a (reusable) bottle of water which will be ready to drink by lunchtime.
- Get your child to help pack their lunch box – they are more likely to enjoy it.
- Love to dip? – cut up pitta bread or veg sticks to have with a dip.
- Use pastry cutters to cut funny-shaped sandwiches.
- Protect your fruit by putting it in a small plastic container e.g. apple/banana guard.



### Get more vegetables in your lunches!

Here are some GREAT ideas for upping the veg content in your lunchboxes <https://simplyveg.org.uk/lunchboxes>

### Be safe!

- Please cut up food into small sizes for young children. Cut grapes and cherry tomatoes in half (lengthways if oblong).
- Be aware of allergies – please check your school's allergies guidance.

## School dinners are best!

### Making packed lunches can be time consuming and expensive – why not try school dinners?

School meals provide your child with a nutritionally-balanced variety of foods. Every infant child (aged 5-7) is entitled to a **FREE** school lunch.



Also, **FREE school meals** for all age groups are provided to families who receive qualifying incomes such as income support and universal credit. Ask your school office how to order yours. More information is available from your school's website or the **North Yorkshire Council website**

[www.northyorks.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-meals](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-meals)

[www.northyorks.gov.uk/free-school-meals](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/free-school-meals)

Here are some websites with more information to help your family to stay healthy, happy and well:

[healthyschoolsnorthyorks.org/healthy-food](http://healthyschoolsnorthyorks.org/healthy-food)

[www.nhs.uk/healthier-families](http://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families)

[www.nhs.uk/start4life](http://www.nhs.uk/start4life)

And some information on saving money, local food banks, financial support and eating well on a budget:

[healthyschoolsnorthyorks.org/costsaving](http://healthyschoolsnorthyorks.org/costsaving)



Leaflet developed by Public Health, North Yorkshire Council and the North Yorkshire Healthy Schools Programme.

# Early Years Version completed 2024



## Healthy packed lunch guidance for parents/ carers with young children (2-5 years old)



A healthy packed lunch will give young children the energy and nutrition they need to get the most from their day - helping them to grow and develop, learn and play, be healthy and happy.

Packed lunches for children aged 2-5 years old should be made up of foods from the main food groups in the Eatwell Guide [www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/the-eatwell-guide](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/the-eatwell-guide) and portions should be appropriate for a child's age and size. This will ensure every young child has a healthy and

nutritionally-balanced lunch. NB. The Eatwell Guide does not apply to children under the age of 2 because they have different nutritional needs. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby-weaning-and-feeding/babys-first-solid-foods/>

### What should I include in my child's healthy packed lunch?

Try to include a variety of different foods across the week to provide all the vitamins and minerals required and make sure content varies from day to day.



#### STARCHY CARBOHYDRATE

1 or 2 portions per meal

- ✓ bread, wrap, pitta, bagel, rolls, baguette
- ✓ rice or cous cous, noodles, plain pasta - avoid flavoured instant packet products and limit canned pasta
- ✓ potatoes
- ✓ oatcakes, rice cakes or crackers

**Avoid very high fibre foods**

**Gives you energy for the day ahead!**



#### DAIRY FOOD (or non-dairy alternative)

At least 1 portion of milk or dairy foods, or alternatives per meal

- ✓ cheese - hard, soft, spread (avoid blue cheese and mould-ripened cheese and cut cheese into strips not chunks)
- ✓ yoghurt or fromage frais
- ✓ milk (avoid unpasteurised). Whole milk is recommended
- ✓ custard
- ✓ non-dairy alternatives (use unsweetened options). **Children under the age of 5 should not be given rice drinks.**

**Avoid foods which are low fat, sweetened with artificial sweeteners (often labelled 'low sugar')**

**Good for healthy bones and teeth!**



#### FRUIT (fresh, frozen or tinned)

- ✓ apple
- ✓ banana
- ✓ satsuma
- ✓ pear
- ✓ plum
- ✓ cherry tomatoes (cut into quarters)
- ✓ handful of grapes (cut into quarters)
- ✓ dried fruit e.g. raisins, apricots, dates. Add to meals and not as a snack.
- ✓ melon (cut into slices not chunks)
- ✓ mango (cut into slices not chunks)

Remove any pips/stones before serving fruit.  
Wash fruit and vegetables prior to preparing.  
Ensure canned fruit is in juice not syrup.

**Fruit and vegetables give you vitamins, minerals and fibre to stay healthy. Part of your '5 a day'**

**How much?** A portion is one child-sized handful.



#### VEGETABLES OR SALAD

- ✓ vegetable sticks (e.g. carrot, cucumber, pepper)
- ✓ salad in sandwiches
- ✓ vegetable soup
- ✓ Baked beans count as a vegetable but only once during a week. Ensure beans are reduced in salt and sugar

**If you are using canned products, choose those without added sugar and salt.**



#### PROTEIN

- ✓ meat e.g. sliced lean ham, chicken, or beef in a sandwich (cut sausages into strips and remove skins)
  - ✓ fish - preferably try to include oily fish e.g. tinned mackerel, sardines, pilchards, and salmon
  - ✓ eggs (ensure eggs are fully cooked)
  - ✓ lentils, beans, chickpeas
  - ✓ alternative meat free option
- Try to limit processed foods e.g. sausages, meatballs, fishfingers, fish cakes, sausage rolls

**Helps your body to grow and develop**

**DRINKS** - tap water is the best, especially for teeth. Fresh drinking water must be available and accessible to children at all times when attending an early years setting.



#### Me-sized meals

Young children don't need as much food as teenagers and adults. When they eat more than they need, the excess energy is stored as fat in their bodies.

# Resources for Schools

## NEW School Food Resource Bank

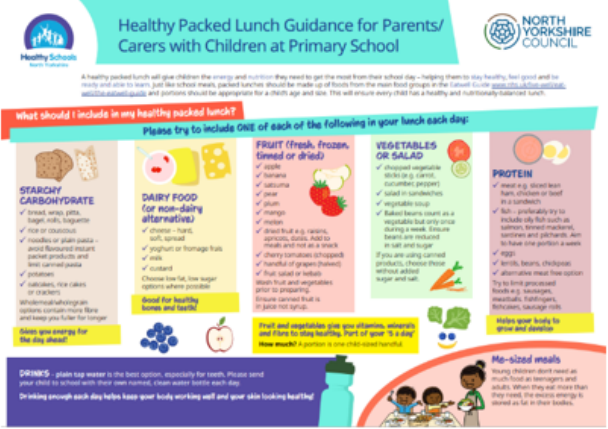
- Resources and information for schools to help with promoting healthy eating and accessing food.
- Please share any resources with your families e.g. via email, text, your school website or newsletter. [School-food-resource-bank.pdf](https://healthyschoolsnorthyorks.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Healthy-Lunchboxes-leaflet-primary-2024.pdf) ([healthyschoolsnorthyorks.org](https://healthyschoolsnorthyorks.org))



North Yorkshire & York Healthy Schools  
North Yorkshire Healthy Early Years

### School Food Resource Bank

This document contains web links to a number of resources and information for schools about healthy eating and food provision. The middle column shows an image of the website or resource, the links to these resources are on the left, and a brief description of the item is on the right. If you have any comments, suggestions or questions please contact North Yorkshire Healthy Schools [;healthyschools@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:healthyschools@northyorks.gov.uk)

Name of the Resource	Image of the resource/document/website	What is this resource/information
<p>Healthy packed lunch leaflets for primary school and early years.</p> <p>Primary school version:</p> <p><a href="https://healthyschoolsnorthyorks.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Healthy-Lunchboxes-leaflet-primary-2024.pdf">https://healthyschoolsnorthyorks.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Healthy-Lunchboxes-leaflet-primary-2024.pdf</a></p>	 <p>The image shows a colorful leaflet titled 'Healthy Packed Lunch Guidance for Parents/Carers with Children at Primary School'. It features sections for 'Starchy Carbohydrate', 'Dairy Food', 'Fruit', 'Vegetables or Salad', and 'Protein', each with a list of examples and tips. There are also sections for 'Drinks' and 'Me-sized meals'.</p>	<p>A digital leaflet with suggestions for families about what to include in a healthy packed lunch.</p>

# Resources for Schools

## NEW Complex Eating Behaviour in Children – A Resource Bank for Families & Professionals

[Complex-eating-behaviour-in-Children-Resource-Bank.pdf](https://www.healthyschoolsnorthyorks.org)  
[\(healthyschoolsnorthyorks.org\)](https://www.healthyschoolsnorthyorks.org)



### Complex Eating Behaviour in Children – A Resource Bank for Families and Professionals

Providing healthy meals for your family can seem like an impossible task at times. There are several challenges that a family may face daily; cost of food, finding time to eat together, meeting the needs/requirements of different members of the household, as well as trying to ensure a healthy diet for all members of your family.

In addition to the ongoing challenges faced by families on a regular basis to provide healthy, affordable meals, if there is a child/young person with a complex eating behaviour in a family this can add additional requirements that need to be considered. Eating behaviours in children can be complex and there can be several reasons for the behaviour.

The following resources/links have been put into one document to provide support and information to professionals and families around helping children and young people with complex eating behaviours. **If you are concerned about a child's weight or any medical condition effecting their eating, please contact your GP.**

Title/overview	Image of the resource/document/website	What is this resource/information
<p>Harrogate and district NHS Foundation Trust</p> <p>Advice for Anxious and Hesitant Eaters and Children with Limited Diets leaflet</p> <p><a href="https://www.hdfnhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Advice-for-hesitant-anxious-and-limited-eaters.pdf">https://www.hdfnhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Advice-for-hesitant-anxious-and-limited-eaters.pdf</a></p>		<p>Printable resource for professionals and families with children who may be anxious, hesitant eaters or have a limited diet.</p>

# Resources for Schools

## NEW Breakfast Clubs Guidance for Schools

[Breakfast-Clubs-Advice.pdf](#)  
([healthyschoolsnorthyorks.org](http://healthyschoolsnorthyorks.org))



### Guide to Providing Breakfast Clubs

Information for North Yorkshire Schools

- **Why is Breakfast Important for Children?** A healthy breakfast helps provide children with the energy and nutrients they need to thrive, improving concentration, behaviour, attendance, punctuality, wellbeing and educational attainment (*National Breakfast Report 2021*).
- In England 2.7 million disadvantaged children and young people could be missing out on breakfast (*Hidden Hunger report by Magic Breakfast Club 2022*).
- 20% of North Yorkshire secondary school pupils said they have nothing to eat or drink before school (this was 8% in primary school pupils) (*Growing Up in North Yorkshire Survey 2022*).



Top Tips



**Funding** a breakfast club can involve a range of costs: equipment, staffing and food. Can you apply for support through additional funding schemes available? Main funding schemes' details are below. Are there alternative funding options local to your school that could support?

Models of **provision** vary with the needs of the school community. Some are free, use donations or are at a cost to parents.



If you are unable to provide a full breakfast facility, consider **grab and go options** like bagels/fruit & yoghurts.



Consider carrying out a **survey** with parents and pupils to identify what is needed.



Think about the **timings** of when the provision will be available to pupils. It is important to build in time for staff to prepare prior to the session and clearing up.



Check the **School Food Standards** are being met in the section "other food provided at school other than lunch." [Checklist for school food other than lunch](#) ([publishing.service.gov.uk](http://publishing.service.gov.uk))



### National Breakfast Club Schemes That Can Provide Support for Schools



**Scheme:** Participating schools receive 75% subsidy for food costs and delivery. Schools will need to contribute 25% to the remaining costs.

**Eligibility:** Schools in disadvantaged areas with 40% or more pupils in bands A-F of the income deprivation index. If a school is receiving provision from magic breakfast or Greggs, they will not qualify.

**Applications:** On a first come first served basis. Funding available up until July 2025. Complete an expression of interest: [National School Breakfast Programme - Family Action](#) ([family-action.org.uk](http://family-action.org.uk))



**Scheme:** Provides schools with food directly. Food and delivery costs are funded.

**Eligibility:** A minimum of 35% of pupils should be recorded as eligible for pupil premium.

**Applications:** Upon receipt of an expression of interest form from a school, this is then checked and, if accepted, held until funding is confirmed. Expression of interest form: [Apply for Magic Breakfast](#)



**Scheme:** Provided with food and grant for set up costs.

**Eligibility:** A minimum of 40% of pupils at the school should be eligible to claim free school meals.

**Applications:** A waiting list operates for new clubs. Online applications: [Breakfast Clubs](#) ([greggsfoundation.org.uk](http://greggsfoundation.org.uk))



**Scheme:** Offer grants, free bowls and food.

**Eligibility:** Priority given to schools who have 35% or more with children in receipt of pupil premium funding.

**Applications:** Applications usually open in September. Schools are encouraged to sign up for the network for news and offers: [Support for school Breakfast Clubs | Kellogg's](#) ([kelloggs.co.uk](http://kelloggs.co.uk))

### Additional Support / Links

Visit [Home - Healthy Schools North Yorkshire](#) to sign up for the Healthy Schools Award and to access useful links/resources.



North Yorkshire Healthier Choices. Contact Healthier choices for advice and support on introducing food / catering changes to your school at

[ts.healthierchoices@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:ts.healthierchoices@northyorks.gov.uk)





## How you can help

- Raise awareness of the issues.
- Share the resources.
- Encourage schools and early years settings to join the award scheme.
- Signpost families to our free Healthy Lifestyles service [Healthy Families](https://www.brimhamsactive.co.uk/families)  
<https://www.brimhamsactive.co.uk/families>
- **Families** can self-refer or **professionals** can refer by:
  - ✓ emailing [active.health@brimhamsactive.co.uk](mailto:active.health@brimhamsactive.co.uk)
  - or
  - ✓ calling the Healthy Families team on 01423 556106

**Thank You!**

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Please contact me  
with any questions,  
comments or  
suggestions

