



Leeds Case Study:

In 2008, Leeds City Council led a city-wide packed lunch policy consultation engaging children, young people their families, headteachers, health professionals & councillors to investigate the needs for a city-wide packed lunch policy. The following summarise key stakeholder opinions.

Headteacher opinion

Of the 109 Head teachers that responded 92 (84%), said they agreed and would welcome the policy to support their health ethos. Concerns related to parent reaction and requested tailored support for families on what constitutes a healthy school meal. They agreed the policy should not be mandatory, and requested high-level publicity to inform and prepare pupils and parents for change.

"We anticipate a few issues to start with, but eventually pupils and parents will conform, same as the School Uniform policy."

Headteacher

Pupil opinion

Pupils agreed it was only fair that packed lunch pupils should eat healthily - the same as those having school meals. They said if done inappropriately it could cause bullying and discrimination of pupils and expressed the need for support for children from low-income families who are not entitled to free school meals; recognising that there would be some resistance at first from pupils and parents, but felt after time that they would get used to it.

"Its unfair students can eat chocolate in their packed lunch but we can't buy from the school." **Secondary school pupil**

Parent opinion

Parents agreed saying the standards for school food were necessary, and that it was unfair that packed lunch eaters were not restricted to the same standards. Their concerns tended to focus on monitoring and affordability and would welcome advice.

"It's one less argument" **Parent**

Catering opinion

All 9 catering providers to the 260 schools in Leeds welcomed the policy. Collective concerns focused on monitoring and importance of promoting a hot school meal and monitoring.

"Must not discourage uptake of school meals."
Catering Manager

Policy outcome

These findings informed the Leeds Packed Lunch policy toolkit and guide setting out 6 key steps for implementation in consultation with pupils and families. A free copy of the original Packed Lunch Policy Guidance Frameworks and a toolkit on 'how to' create a policy are available here:

<http://www.cornwallhealthyschools.org/documents/packed%20lunch%20policy%20guidance%20EL.pdf>

<http://www.cornwallhealthyschools.org/documents/packed%20lunch%20toolkit.pdf>

Sample comments by Head teachers in response to the policy facilitated by a Clinical Programme Manager for Paediatric Dietitian (Childhood Obesity) in Manchester:

"These families often struggle to provide three meals a day, especially in the school holidays and are frequent recipients of our food bank vouchers. The packed lunches are low on a nutritional and calorific level just due to affordability."

"There would need to be an investment in skilling parents up to meet a set of guidelines rather than just setting rules."