

HEALTHY



Community

Good Morning



NEEDS ?



BREAKFAST CLUB

funding

A GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE FOR BREAKFAST CLUBS



FUN

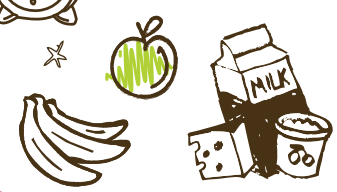
Good start to the day

Nutrition IDEAS

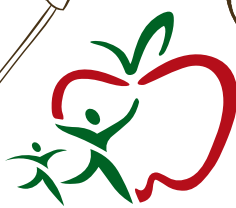


Aims

EVERYONE



Healthy Food for All access | availability | affordability



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Sources: The material in this document is based on a wide variety of published and unpublished sources, which are acknowledged in the text where possible. A list of references is in Section J.

# A GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE FOR BREAKFAST CLUBS



**Healthy Food for All**  
access | availability | affordability

## Funding

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- St Mary's National School, Rowlagh, Clondalkin, Dublin 22
- St. Mary's on the Hill National School, Knocknaheeny, Cork
- St Oliver Plunkett National School, Finglas, Dublin 11
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- The Get Ahead Club, Clondalkin, Dublin 22

THANK  
YOU

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- Department of Children and Youth Affairs
- Department of Education and Skills
- Department of Health
- Department of Social Protection
- Health Service Executive (HSE)
- Irish Primary Principals’ Network
- Kellogg Company of Ireland
- Limerick Food Partnership
- National Dairy Council
- National Education Welfare Board
- National Parents Council
- **safefood**
- Society of St. Vincent de Paul
- Youthreach
- The Board of Management and staff of Healthy Food for All

THANK  
YOU

# Foreword

“When you wake up in the morning Pooh,” said Piglet at last,  
“What’s the first thing you say to yourself?”

“What’s for breakfast?” said Pooh. “What do you say, Piglet?”

“I say, I wonder what’s going to happen exciting today?” said Piglet.

Pooh nodded thoughtfully. “It’s the same thing,” he said.”

*Winnie the Pooh, A.A. Milne*

A Good Practice Guide for Breakfast Clubs is an acknowledgement of the excellent work being carried out in breakfast clubs in many communities around the country. The Guide builds on this work and seeks to encourage and spur on other schools and community groups to establish and develop more such breakfast clubs.

Breakfast clubs were first set up to combat poverty and malnourishment in disadvantaged communities. Since their development, research indicates that breakfast clubs are more than a means of providing food. The benefits of breakfast clubs to the social and personal development of children and their families are numerous.

Breakfast clubs provide a fun and safe place for children to meet their friends before school, which is especially important for children who find school challenging and have difficulty socialising. They can also be a wonderful opportunity to welcome families within the school setting, and can help relieve family pressures and stress through the provision of an alternative approach to breakfast. Breakfast clubs can be a real support to families and help build positive relationships between the school and the local community.

The Irish Primary Principals’ Network, together with other education partners, has been involved in supporting Healthy Food for All develop A Good Practice Guide for Breakfast Clubs. We recommend its use in schools and communities where any or many of the needs outlined exist for children in today’s modern and complex society.

## **Gerry Murphy**

President

Irish Primary Principals’ Network

## Abbreviations used in the text

CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
EHO	Environmental Health Officer
FETAC	Further Education and Training Awards Council
HFfA	Healthy Food for All
HSE	Health Service Executive
NHP	National Hygiene Partnership
NS	National School
SPHE	Social, Personal and Health Education
SVP	Society of St Vincent de Paul

# Introduction

**Healthy Food for All** (HFfA) is an all-island initiative seeking to combat food poverty by promoting access, availability and affordability of healthy food for low-income groups.

Food and nutrition are key determinants of health. What people eat, and how much they eat, influences how healthy they are, and even how long they live. Food poverty arises when people lack the money or other resources needed to eat a healthy diet.

Healthy Food for All has three main objectives:

- To support community and sectoral initiatives which promote availability of and access to healthy and affordable food for low-income groups, with a focus on direct food provision, including school meals
- To develop an all-island learning network to identify best practice on promoting healthy food for low-income groups and to develop links with similar organisations in the UK and Europe
- To promote awareness of food poverty across all aspects of public policy, with a focus on availability, access and affordability of food.

## Why Breakfast Clubs?

Breakfast has long been considered the ‘most important meal of the day’. Research has shown that eating a nutritious breakfast has a positive impact on the nutritional intake of children<sup>1</sup> and mediates against obesity<sup>2</sup>. The Growing Up in Ireland Study<sup>3</sup> reported that 19% of nine-year-olds in Ireland were overweight, and 7% were obese. Girls and children in lower social classes were more likely to be overweight or obese.

In the Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children Report, 13% of Irish schoolchildren report that they never eat breakfast on a weekday with a marked increase seen in those from lower social classes, girls and older children<sup>4</sup>. This same study also found that 21% of schoolchildren report ever going to bed or school hungry as there is not enough food at home. Breakfast skipping is reported to affect cognition, memory, concentration and behaviour in school<sup>5</sup>. Children going to school hungry cannot fully participate in class which will have a detrimental impact on their personal, cognitive, social and educational development.

There are a number of reasons why children do not eat breakfast<sup>6</sup>:

- **Poor appetite in early morning:** Some children have little appetite first thing in the morning and will not eat at home. Others have to rise early and undergo a long journey to school.
- **Family tension and stress at breakfast time:** Most families try to ensure their children eat breakfast, but many parents report extreme frustration and family friction caused by ‘picky’ children or children who simply will not eat at breakfast time.
- **Working parents who need to drop children:** Many working families need to leave home early and drop children to childcare and there is an increasing need for breakfast to be provided within the before-school setting.
- **Lack of food:** No consistent provision of food in the home setting, with children arriving to school hungry. Children are often not confident there will be a regular supply of breakfast food at home.
- **Lack of routine:** Poor routines at home mean that children are rising too late to eat breakfast and get to school on time. For many children, poor bedtime routines at home contribute to poor routines in the morning.

Children should be encouraged to eat breakfast from an early age to give them the best start to the day. Breakfast clubs in schools or community settings can provide additional support to families. They are a great opportunity to ensure that children who may not have breakfast before attending school do so.

**Good  
Morning**





Breakfast clubs have been linked to a range of benefits. They are shown to have a positive impact on school attendance and punctuality<sup>7 8</sup>. Breakfast clubs have been cited as the fourth most effective intervention of the School Completion Programme<sup>9</sup> which aims to support young people at risk of early school leaving. Evaluation of a breakfast club scheme in Drogheda, Co. Louth reported improved relationships between staff and pupils and a noticeable improvement in pupil behaviour in class<sup>10</sup>. An evaluation of breakfast club schemes in the UK reported similar improvements in relationships between staff and pupils and across age groups<sup>11</sup>.

Breakfast clubs can play an important role in the social and personal development of the child. Increased self-esteem and sense of independence are widely reported for children attending breakfast clubs<sup>12</sup>. Breakfast clubs are more than just a means of providing food to children. They are an opportunity to engage with children and parents on an informal basis and can be an important support service for many families.

In 2009, Healthy Food for All published A Good Practice Guide for School Food Initiatives. This Guide provides practical advice on the provision of food in schools, including breakfast clubs. A Good Practice Guide for Breakfast Clubs complements this information.

The purpose of A Good Practice Guide for Breakfast Clubs is to provide practical advice on the setting up and running of breakfast clubs in school and community settings. This Guide has been developed primarily for use within primary schools and community or youth groups working with children of this age in the Republic of Ireland.

Healthy Food for All hopes that this guide is informative and practical and will help schools and community groups to set up and run breakfast clubs in their local area and provide a positive support to many families in their community.

**HEALTHY**  
**Nutrition**

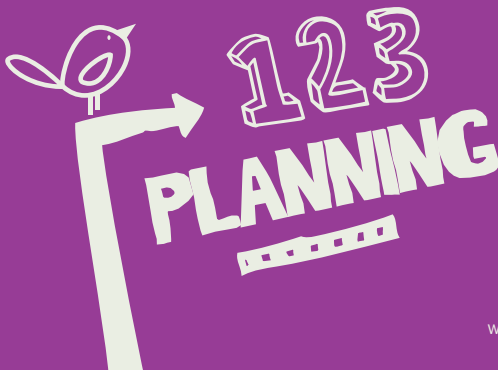


# Planning Your Breakfast Clubs

## Initial stages

The initial stages of planning your breakfast club are crucial and it is important to assess what is the need for a breakfast club in your school or community. You need to know if the club will be used and which type of club would best meet the needs within the school or local community.

Do not neglect this step. You might find that there is little demand for what you are considering, or that people want something quite different from what you had in mind. You may save yourself a lot of time and effort.



## First Steps and Assessing Need

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### What should I do first?

There are a number of questions you need to consider first before you start consultation:

- What exactly do you want to find out? The information that you collect should inform the planning process of the breakfast club.
- Who and what is the information for? Is it for your own planning? Will it be used in a funding application? If the latter, will it answer the types of questions funders may ask?
- What questions will you ask? Will the answers really tell you what you want to know?
- How can you put your questions in plain language that children will understand and respond to?
- How and where will you gather the information? Who will be responsible? Will you be able to do it yourselves or do you need help?
- How much is it all going to cost and how much time will it take? Draft a budget and a timetable.
- What is likely to happen as a result of your consultation? Be realistic about what you can offer. You do not want to raise expectations that you cannot fulfil.

### Who should I involve in the planning?

It is essential to involve the relevant people in the decision-making process, from children and parents and the staff body. The club is more likely to be a success if you understand their needs and have them involved right from the beginning. These include:

- Children
- Parents/carers/families
- Teachers/principal/teaching assistants
- Board of Management
- Community Services



## How do I collect this information?

There are various ways of getting the information you need. Examples include informal conversations, questionnaires, focus groups or participatory appraisal. (Participatory appraisal is explained in the section below). Where possible, use templates and methods that are already available rather than devising your own. A sample questionnaire is provided in the next section. Remember to adapt them to suit your own school or community if necessary.

The method you choose will depend on many things, such as how much time you have, what funding you have, and how many people you wish to speak to. If you want to consult a large number of people, then a questionnaire is likely to be the best option. If you only want to talk to a small group of parents or children, then informal conversations or a focus group may be a better choice. It is also important to consider the skills and resources of those you are consulting. For example, if literacy levels are likely to be low a focus group may be more appropriate than a detailed questionnaire.

## Questionnaires

Written questionnaires can be used to consult a large group of people. They can be paper-based or online. Be careful when you are analysing the results. In any survey, there is likely to be a bias in the responses – respondents are more likely to be well disposed towards your proposal; those who are not interested are less likely to respond at all – either positively or negatively. It is usually best practice to test out your questionnaire on colleagues or a small group of people to see if any changes are needed.

Key things to think about:

- Make it easy for the respondent. Make sure that the format, length and language of the questionnaire are suitable for the respondents.
- Ask closed questions where possible. These are questions with a list of options for answers or tick boxes. Closed questions are easier and quicker to answer, and the answers are much easier to count and compare. Open questions ask the respondent to describe or give opinions. This can be useful when you want to give people the option to share their thoughts and ideas.
- Take into account any literacy or language issues that your respondents may have. You may need to have your questionnaire translated into different languages based on the background of your pupils.

# Sample Questionnaire for Parents



Dear Parent,

We are trying to find out if parents are interested in their children coming to an Early Bird Club at school before class begins. We will provide breakfast at this club for all children and activities may also be run. An Early Bird Club is an excellent way for your child to start the school day. It is a great opportunity for your child to join a social club.

1. Are you interested in your child coming to a club before school?

Yes  No

2. Would you like your child to eat breakfast at this club?

Yes  No

3. At what time do you think a club should open in the morning?

8:00am  8:15am  8:30am

4. What is the maximum that you would pay each day for this club, if breakfast was provided?

60c  €1  €1.50

5. If you are not interested in your child coming to the club, what are your reasons?

---

---

6. Would you be interested in volunteering at this club?

Yes  No

No experience is needed and training would be provided to all parent volunteers. Volunteering would be an excellent way to start the day with your child and a great way to interact with other parents from the local area.

7. Any other comments?

---

**Thank you.**

If you have any questions or want further information please contact:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## Participatory appraisal

Participatory appraisal uses pictures and plain language to communicate ideas and get responses from people. It is a particularly useful way to help you gather information, especially from children. It also works well with people who do not like or cannot fill in forms. It can help you reach people who might not otherwise take part in a consultation process. It can be a useful method to use with groups who have low literacy levels or language barriers.

The methods used are more visual and active than traditional methods. They provide a more immediate way of literally 'seeing' a problem and its solution. They enable people to think creatively about their situation. Participants generally enjoy the process and report having great fun.

Before starting this type of consultation, consider the following:

- What will it cost to organise and bring people together?  
What resources will you need?
- What skills and knowledge are needed?  
Do you have these skills or will you need help from a trained facilitator?

## ? More Information

Check out Fruitful Participation: Involving People in Food and Health Work. This can be downloaded from the Community Food and Health website, [www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk](http://www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk)

training



## Key Partners

For a club to be successful, it will be essential to involve other individuals and organisations from the local community. A breakfast club is about more than providing food. Working in partnership will likely achieve more than working in isolation. You need to think of the key partners in your local area – who needs to be involved to make the breakfast club work? Who can provide you with advice and support to make the club a success?

You might consider involving some of the following:

- Community Dietitian/Health Promoting Schools Officer
- Parents/carers/families
- Children
- Teachers/principal/teaching assistants
- School Completion Programme Officers
- Home School Community Liaison Officer
- Local Youth groups
- Local businesses
- Charities
- Local training schemes
- Local Community Food Initiatives
- Local volunteer centres
- Local Authority representative



The partners that you need to involve will depend on the type of club that you are running, and the resources and skills required.

## Management Committee

It can be useful to set up a committee to drive and manage the establishment of the club and to involve the key partners. The committee should be established from the outset to fully utilise all the skills and resources of the key partners. Establishing and organising a management committee can seem daunting and time-consuming, but it will help run the club more effectively and ensure the club is achieving its aims and objectives.

## What is the role of a management committee?

- Devise the aims and objectives of the club and communicate these to the whole school and/or community.
- Meet regularly to ensure problems are discussed and addressed appropriately and with the involvement of all members.
- Maintain links with key individuals, groups and agencies.
- Review the club regularly and monitor its progress, including spending.
- Identify and apply for upcoming funding opportunities.
- Identify essential roles and responsibilities for the breakfast club and be involved in recruitment of these staff or volunteers.
- Keep notes of its meetings and decisions.

## Aims and Objectives

Why are you setting up a breakfast club? Are you running a club to increase attendance rates at school or to improve the nutritional intake of your pupils? Is the main purpose of the club to provide a positive support service for families in the local community?

It is important to understand why you are setting up a club. This ensures that it is run appropriately and progress can be monitored towards specific aims. In a school or a community centre, it is likely that there will be a number of initiatives in place to address different issues. For example, a school may develop a Healthy School Food Policy to improve eating habits of children. This might also be a specific aim of the breakfast club. It is important to make links between any existing initiatives to ensure messages are consistent and initiatives are supportive of each other.

The aims are broad aspirational goals and the objectives are how you are going to achieve these goals. They should be SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound. Evaluation of your project will measure your achievements against your stated objectives.



AIMS



## Sample Aims and Objectives for a BREAKFAST CLUB



**Aim:** To increase the attendance rates of pupils in school/class

**Objectives:**

- To target those children who do not regularly attend school.
- To involve children in the running of the club to increase their participation.
- To develop an award scheme for participation in breakfast club.
- To provide support for pupils to complete their homework before class.

## Managing Finances

### Determining your Budget Needs<sup>13</sup>

Before you plan your club in specific detail, you need to ensure that your budget and resources match what you hope to deliver. You need to consider the following questions:

- What is your budget?
- What funding are you able to access? Name each source and their funding amount.
- Are you going to charge for the club? Provide details of specific charges. Are you going to waive this fee if a child cannot pay? How will this be managed?
- Will the club receive any donations?
- Who is going to run the club? What is the budget needed to cover wages and expenses?
- Will your staff/volunteers need training? How much will this cost?
- Do you need support from external services i.e. accountant? What will this cost?
- What equipment do you need to buy, such as tables, chairs, toaster?
- What are the administration and banking costs?
- Do you have to pay overheads i.e. heating, lighting etc.? Can you estimate the average cost of this?

## Monitoring Finances<sup>14</sup>

All breakfast clubs will need to keep good records of income and expenditure. If you are in receipt of funding through the School Meals Programme, you will be required to show income and expenditure records annually. If you are thinking of applying for additional funding it is also essential that you have good financial records, as potential funders will ask to see your most recent accounts.

As a minimum, a breakfast club will need to keep a cash book, a petty cash book and a purchases record.

**Cash book:** All money received, by cash or cheque, and all payments by cash or cheque should be entered in the cash book. This is the central record of income and expenditure. For every item of expenditure there should be a voucher – a receipt, or account or other form of explanation.

**Petty cash book:** You may need some cash in hand for small purchases that require cash rather than cheque payment. Usually it is simply cash in a box. All cash payments are recorded in the petty cash book and for each payment there should be a voucher with a receipt attached. It is usual for the petty cash to have an agreed amount of money, which is then topped up each week or month by the amount that has been spent.

**Purchases Record:** When your breakfast club is buying on credit, it is important to keep a record of what you have ordered and bought, but not yet paid for. It is only when you actually pay that you make the entry into your cash book.

It is vital that you keep everything that might be useful: all receipts, invoices, bank statements, old cheque books with stubs filled in and bank lodgement books. Keep a copy of all invoices and receipts you send out and file them. If filing is not your strong point, at least have an emergency box file where you put everything so you can track it down when you have to.

## Bank accounts

It is recommended that you have a separate bank account for your breakfast club, even if it is being run as part of another school programme. Always have at least two signatures for the cheques (three people from the management/steering committee should be selected and given authorisation to sign cheques).

## Cash handling procedures

There are a number of elements to consider if you are going to be charging for your breakfast club:

- Ensure that you have a float each day for the same amount. It should be checked by two people and needs to be accurate both at the start and at the end of each day.
- Any food used throughout the day for taster sessions should also be recorded, as well as any wastage or items that could not be sold.
- When counting cash, you need a secure space with a table on which to count and bag the money.
- If you need to keep any cash from one day to the next, make sure you have somewhere secure to store it, such as a lockable cash box or safe.
- Never make payments directly from cash received; ideally no cash payments should ever be made other than through petty cash.



# B

## Funding Your Breakfast Clubs

This section examines the different ways in which a breakfast club can be funded, including government funded programmes. Most breakfast clubs draw from a variety of different sources for funding based on their particular needs and the resources available to them.



## The School Meals Programme

The School Meals Programme<sup>15</sup>, operated by the Department of Social Protection, provides funding towards the provision of food for disadvantaged school children. The Programme aims to provide regular, nutritious food to children who are unable, by reason of lack of good quality food, to take full advantage of the education provided for them. The School Meals Programme has an important role in encouraging school attendance and educational achievement by children, particularly those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds.

Two types of schemes are available under the School Meals Programme.

### Urban School Meals Scheme

The Urban School Meals Scheme for primary schools is operated and administered by Local Authorities and part-financed by the Department of Social Protection. The Department of Social Protection has no function in initiating school meals programmes in local schools. The role of the Department is to reimburse Local Authorities and to approve participation in the scheme.

The Local Authority administers the scheme on a day-to-day basis and is responsible for deciding on the eligibility of individuals and schools. It is also responsible for tendering for the supply of the food item. Administration costs are covered in full by the Local Authority. Schools can contact their Local Authority to find out if they are eligible for the scheme. Participating schools are required to provide details of average attendance to the Local Authority.

### School Meals Local Projects Scheme

The School Meals Local Projects Scheme provides funding directly from the Department of Social Protection to primary schools, secondary schools, local groups and voluntary organisations which operate their own school meals project. The Scheme was established to assist school meals projects operating outside the statutory Urban School Meals Scheme, but in some cases schools may operate both schemes.

Projects must be targeted at areas of disadvantage or at children with special needs. Priority for funding is currently given to schools which are part of the Department of Education & Skills' initiative for disadvantaged schools, 'Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools' (DEIS).

Funding under this scheme is for the food item only. It cannot be used to fund administration, equipment, salaries, bank charges, or any non-food purchases. The individual school or community group can decide the type of food that is provided. Food must be of suitable quality and nutritional value and prepared and consumed in an appropriate environment.

Funding is based on a rate of payment per meal, per child, per day. The current rate for breakfast is 60c per child per day. Breakfast is considered as food provided to children before the start of the school day. Food provided at mid-morning break is considered snack time, and applications for snack funding are necessary. The current rate for snack funding is also 60c per child per day.

Funding is allocated on a school year basis. An application for funding must be made each year and should be submitted to the Department before the start of the school year. The School Meals Local Projects Scheme form can be downloaded at: [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie)

Funding is issued in two installments - at the beginning of the school year and at the start of the following calendar year. Funding is paid by Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) directly to a nominated bank account. It is recommended that a separate bank account is used for funding from the School Meals Scheme.

An Income and Expenditure Report (SMLPS 2) must be submitted to the Department of Social Protection at the end of every school year. Accounts must show all expenditure of the project and all sources of funding – statutory and voluntary.

## ? More Information

School Meals  
SWA Section  
Department of Social Protection  
College Road  
Sligo  
Tel: 071 9138625 or 071 9138626  
Website: [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie)

## EU School Milk Scheme

The EU School Milk Scheme<sup>16</sup>, operated by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, provides milk and dairy products at subsidised rates to schools. Children are eligible if they are in regular attendance at a pre-school, nursery, primary or secondary school. Crèches and child-minding services which are run for financial gain are not eligible for this scheme.

Schools that are interested in accessing the EU School Milk Scheme should contact the National Dairy Council<sup>17</sup> who can provide information on suitable local dairies and pricing information. The dairy will then contact the school with an application form. The school must provide information on the products required i.e. milk, cheese; the total number of pupils in the school and the number of pupils participating in the scheme.

The current allowance for aid is 250ml of milk per pupil per school day. Whole milk, low fat milk, cheese, and natural yoghurts are all eligible under the scheme. Milk should be refrigerated to ensure that it is safe for consumption and acceptable to children to encourage consumption. The National Dairy Council provides fridges to schools free of charge upon registration for the EU School Milk Scheme.



### Remember

- The Department of Health's Food Pyramid recommends that children consume three servings from the 'milk, cheese and yogurt' food group per day as part of a balanced diet
- One standard serving is a large glass of milk (200ml), small pot of yoghurt or matchbox size of cheese
- Milk should be kept refrigerated at 5°C or below

Schools can use this scheme to purchase milk for breakfast clubs but it cannot be used in the preparation of meals, for example in preparing porridge or scrambled eggs. It can only be added directly to breakfast cereals. The 250ml allowance applies to the whole school day. For example, if milk is supplied at the breakfast club and cheese is also used in the preparation of sandwiches for lunch, the school must make sure that the total per child per day equals 250ml.

## ? More Information

Milk Subsidies Section,  
On-Farm Investments, Subsidies and Storage Division  
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine  
Johnstown Castle Estate  
Wexford  
Tel: (053) 9160284  
Fax: (053) 9143852  
Website: [www.agriculture.gov.ie](http://www.agriculture.gov.ie)

The National Dairy Council  
Innovation House  
3 Arkle Road  
Sandyford Industrial Estate  
Dublin 18  
Email: [freshmilkclub@ndc.ie](mailto:freshmilkclub@ndc.ie)  
Fresh Milk Club Hotline: 01 2902451  
Website: [www.thefreshmilkclub.ie](http://www.thefreshmilkclub.ie)

## Funding Options to Supplement Government Programmes

As statutory funding is only available for the food item, there is a need to consider additional sources of funding. Many breakfast clubs use a range of funding sources depending on the needs of their pupils and the resources available to them.

Examples include:

- Using the core school budget.
- Using the School Completion Programme or Home School Community Liaison budget (where applicable).
- Charging pupils.
- Fundraising at school.
- Accepting donated resources.

? ?  
Funding



- Applying for corporate sponsorship or other in-kind support from local businesses.
- Talking to local businesses through local business networks such as Business in the Community or Women in Business.
- Contacting local charitable organisations.
- Applying for local funding streams such as Health Action Zone, Local Drugs Taskforce.

## Corporate Sponsorship

Increasingly, businesses are donating to schools and community projects. Some of the larger businesses will have formal policies in place (usually called Corporate Social Responsibility – CSR), which may show the types of projects that they will sponsor and the support which they can offer. Other businesses do not have formal policies in place but may provide sponsorship on an ad-hoc basis.

Businesses can provide sponsorship in different ways, and this is likely to depend on the company's size, location and business type. Larger multinational organisations may offer monetary funding or may sponsor purchasing of larger pieces of equipment, such as an oven, tables & chairs. Smaller businesses in the local area may offer donations of products or equipment. For example, a local supermarket may donate a certain quantity of bread or cereal each month. Try to keep your requests appropriate to the size of the organisation, and make sure you can show the benefits to the breakfast club.

For many businesses, location is important. It is important to focus on businesses in your area as they are more likely to sponsor a club locally. Identify if any of these businesses have CSR policies or sponsor other projects or charities. Decide which businesses are the best 'fit' for your club and approach these first. Follow the steps below on applying for funding to ensure your proposal is appropriate. All businesses like good media. They want sponsorship to be a positive focus on their company. Make sure you show businesses how their sponsorship will help the breakfast club, and how you will highlight their contribution.

## ? More Information

Check out 'Getting Corporate Sponsorship' on The Wheel website  
Telephone: 01 4548727  
Website: [www.thewheel.ie](http://www.thewheel.ie)

Check out 'Business in the Community' for information on partnering schools with businesses  
Telephone: 01 8747232  
Website: [www.bitc.ie](http://www.bitc.ie)

## Applying for Funding

There are a number of key elements to consider when applying for funding.

**Do your research** – Find out what funding is available and whether your proposal fits the criteria for funding. If the funder issues a Call for Proposals, read carefully any information that accompanies it, as it will generally offer guidance on eligibility and on the application process. Some organisations have specific funding criteria – for example, they may fund a maximum of 50% of your requirement, with the balance ('match funding') to come from your own resources or other sources. Read these criteria carefully and make sure that your application meets them.

**Work with key stakeholders** – Key stakeholders include parents, teaching and support staff, community services, and other local schools. Some of your stakeholders may have prior experience of applying for funding, and you can learn from their experience and build on it to develop your application. Having strong relationships with other organisations, groups and individuals can strengthen both your application and your project.

**Develop a solid proposal** – There is considerable competition for any available funds. The funding organisations will need to be convinced that their money will be better spent with your initiative than with the other applications. Your application must demonstrate that you have done your

research, that your proposal is realistic, that the funding you are applying for is adequate but not excessive, and that you have the resources to manage and deliver the project.



## Checklist for your proposal

- Who is the breakfast club for? (Is there a specific target group? Can families attend?)
- Who will be responsible for the planning, staffing, and running of the club?
- Why are you doing it? (To increase concentration? To improve attendance and punctuality? To improve nutrition?)
- Where will it take place? (In more than one room? On the school site or off-site?)
- Where will you recruit staff and volunteers from?
- Where will you get your resources, such as equipment, food?
- When will you start and end the club?
- What activities are you going to run, and why?
- What are you going to do if too many or too few children want to attend?
- What is your club going to be called?
- How will you know if the club has been a success?
- How will you report your progress to funders?
- How much is it going to cost?

Remember to look at the funding criteria to make sure your application fits!



## Charging for Your Breakfast Club

It may be necessary to charge for your breakfast club, either to fully fund your breakfast club or to supplement funding from elsewhere. There are some positives to charging. Research suggests that charging helps to mainstream the service, contributes to its continuation and reduces the stigma and impression that the clubs are only for the disadvantaged<sup>18</sup>.

There are a number of ways in which you can charge for your breakfast club, and you just need to find the right option for your club. Here are some examples<sup>19</sup>:

- **Charge per item** – Each item has a fixed price and children or families are charged according to what they eat. Healthier options can be priced at a cheaper rate to encourage healthy eating.
- **Charge per day/week/term** – Charging per week or per term is likely to encourage regular attendance and will allow you to plan your budgets better. Charging on the day is likely to have the opposite effect!
- **Sliding scales of payment** – For example, if a child attends Monday to Thursday, their breakfast is free on Friday or rates are cheaper if more than one child from a family attends.
- **Token schemes** – Tokens could be used instead of cash which avoids daily handling of cash at the club. It also ensures that those who are unable to pay are not identified.

It is vital to consider the charge that you will set to ensure that you are not excluding those families who are unable to pay. Costs should be kept to a minimum where possible. Even if you are charging for breakfast, it is still possible to provide free places to those families most in need. It will be important to avoid stigmatisation of these families to encourage attendance. You will need to work closely with your parents and support staff to achieve this. If you operate a token system or if you charge weekly or termly, the charges for these families could be waived without identifying these families to others.



# Case Study

## **Killorglin Family Resource Centre, Co. Kerry**

A breakfast club was started in Killorglin Family Resource Centre in 2008. A needs analysis by the Family Resource Centre and a member of St. Finian's Diocesan Trust identified a need for a breakfast club in the community. The main aims of the club are to create a safe and stimulating environment to give children a good start to the day, provide support to local families in the mornings and encourage healthy eating. An average of 25 children come to the breakfast club each morning.

### **How does it run?**

The club runs from 7:30am to 8:45am each morning during school term. As the resource centre is not within walking distance of the local school, the centre has hired a private bus to take the children from the club to school.

Staff members try to get the children involved at all times. For example, they ask children for their suggestions on new foods and games to try in the club. This has proved positive with children as they like to have the opportunity to make suggestions and feel more involved in the running of the club.

### **What foods are available?**

Breakfast cereals, toast, juice, hot/cold milk and water are available every morning. There is also one hot food option available each day, including waffles, eggs and bacon. The hot food options are changed regularly to provide variety to the menu. There is a healthy eating policy in place for the breakfast club, and staff members are mindful of this policy when planning the menu.



### **How is the club funded?**

Food items are funded through the School Meals Programme. The remainder of the funding is through Pobal, St. Finian's Diocesan Trust and fundraising. This covers payment for overheads including insurance, and staff salaries.

There is a weekly charge for the breakfast club. There is no fixed charge but prices are based on the specific circumstances of the family. Weekly prices range from €5 to €38 per family depending on the number of siblings that attend. The Resource Centre works closely with local schools, health nurse and families to ensure that those of most need are accessing the club. No family is turned away based on an inability to pay.

### **Who works in the club?**

All the staff members that are working at the club are employed as childcare staff at the Family Resource Centre. They are also involved in other initiatives run in the centre for local children, such as after-school clubs. This allows children to build up a relationship with staff members and creates a more positive environment within the breakfast club.

Once the hot food has been cleared away, a staff member will set up games and activities on one of the tables. They put out board games and paper for drawing. There is an outdoor play area too, where a staff member will supervise children once they have finished their breakfast. These activities work perfectly and are seen as an essential part of the breakfast club by staff members. Time and support is also given for children to finish any outstanding homework.

### **What are the benefits?**

The Family Resource Centre is continually evaluating the club. The local primary school is very supportive of the club. They have noticed significant changes in attendance rates and punctuality at the school. There have been positive changes in the behaviour and concentration levels of pupils in class, and a reduction in bullying has also been reported. Children who attend the breakfast club

have improved social and communication skills and increased confidence. There has also been positive feedback from local parents who see it as a real benefit to their children and a great support for families in the morning. The breakfast club has helped enhance relationships with family members, schools and the wider community

### Summary Box

How many children attend the club each morning?	25
How many staff members are needed each morning?	3
Funding Source – Food	School Meals Programme
Funding Source – Venue	Pobal, St. Finian’s Diocesan Trust & Fundraising
Funding Source – Equipment	Pobal, St. Finian’s Diocesan Trust & Fundraising
Funding Source – Staff	Pobal, St. Finian’s Diocesan Trust & Fundraising
Is there a charge?	Yes – depending on family circumstances

### Contact Details:

Killorglin Family Resource Centre  
39 Iveragh Park  
Killorglin  
Co Kerry  
Email: [killorglinfamilycentre@gmail.com](mailto:killorglinfamilycentre@gmail.com)  
Telephone: 066 9762933



## Getting Started

This section outlines some of the key steps to consider in the early stages of setting up your breakfast club, including choosing a suitable venue and who will manage and run the club.





## Choosing a Venue

Breakfast clubs can be held in a variety of different settings and it is important to ensure that the club setting is appropriate for the children attending. It should be easily accessible for children and provide an attractive environment. The availability of kitchen or dining facilities in a school is a great advantage but a section of the assembly hall or a large classroom is a good alternative. It may be possible to make links with a local community centre where more appropriate facilities are available for hosting the Breakfast Club.

The basic requirements of a breakfast club are:

- A fridge
- A toaster
- Cutlery and crockery (age-appropriate)
- Tables and chairs (age-appropriate)
- Storage space (for equipment and dry foods)
- Running water



There also needs to be adequate access to toilets, hand-washing facilities and waste disposal facilities. You may also want to consider storage for school bags, especially if the room is small so that children do not trip over other bags.

The space required depends on the number of children that will be served each day. If you carried out a needs assessment, you should have an indication of the numbers that will attend on a regular basis. In some schools, each class is given a specific time slot to reduce over-crowding.

The space needs to be attractive to encourage children to come to the breakfast club. Ask children to make suggestions about the layout and design of the club, and what foods they would like to see on the menu. It is important to know what will encourage children to attend the breakfast club. Ask pupils to decorate the room with their work. This gives a greater sense of ownership to the space and is a good way of getting children involved in the club. The social aspect of the breakfast club is important as it helps to create a positive start to the school day.

Use ‘fun’ tablecloths. Make sure the cutlery and crockery used is of good quality. It can be beneficial to have an area with additional chairs or sofas where pupils can relax and socialise once they have eaten. This is an excellent way to encourage older children to the club.

You might want to have parents or siblings accompany children to the breakfast club. This can create a sociable atmosphere with other parents and promote positive interaction throughout the community. This will influence the space and facilities needed.

These are the basic requirements for a breakfast club. More resources may be required for different types of clubs. Please see Section F for information on specific breakfast club models and their requirements.

### **What are you going to call your breakfast club?**

It can be a good idea to give your breakfast club a name. In some cases, there is stigma attached to attending a breakfast club and a positive name can help reduce stigmatisation. Names should be fun and positively promote the breakfast club to children and their families. Examples of club names include: ‘Rise & Shine’ club, ‘Early Bird’ club, or ‘Sunshine’ club. Try to highlight the social aspect of the club and how it can give children a good start to the day. Get children involved in suggesting names, and ask them to vote on which name to adopt.

## **Staffing**

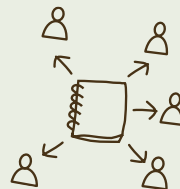
It is important to identify who is going to run and manage the breakfast club. The type of club you are going to run and the resources available in your local community will determine your staffing requirements. Breakfast clubs can use different combinations of staff, both paid and voluntary. Make links with the local School Completion Programme, where relevant, and community services to identify what support could be provided. In some clubs, all the staff members are paid. In others, there is a mixture of paid staff members and pupil or parent volunteers.

### **Club Coordinator**

The breakfast club coordinator has a key role to play. This person must be fully aware of the key objectives of the breakfast club and its role as an important school initiative. Good liaison with all of the school partners is crucial.

A typical coordinator might be responsible for:

- Liaising with Principal, teachers and parents
- Planning activities
- Identifying the target group of pupils, where relevant
- Staffing
- Looking after premises
- Marketing and promotion
- Reporting to funders
- Liaising with the steering committee and senior management team
- Health and safety
- Child protection issues
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Making appropriate links with the local community



Where breakfast clubs are overseen by a steering committee, the committee's remit may cover some of the areas set out for the coordinator above. Having a range of members on your steering committee will give you access to a broader base of information and expertise. It also means that the key players are involved in decision making and that work can be shared between members.

### **Paid Staff Members**

In many breakfast clubs, there are a number of paid staff members. In a school setting, these are usually school staff members, including teaching assistants or secretary; who are paid for additional hours working at the breakfast club. This approach is beneficial as they are already working with pupils. In some places, links have been made with local community services and a project worker may be involved in running the breakfast club. It is important to make links with external organisations to utilise the skills of their staff and the resources available. This will also promote a greater community approach to school initiatives.

If taking on employees, it will be important to consider contractual arrangements, the payment costs and where this funding will come from. It will be necessary to have correct recruitment and management structures in place for employees. Draw on the expertise from your management committee for this process.

## Volunteers

Some workers may be involved in a voluntary capacity. In a breakfast club, volunteers may come from the teaching staff, parents, pupils or other community members.

Involving parents in the breakfast club fosters a positive relationship between the school and the local community. It is important to promote parental involvement as an opportunity of engaging with their children and also with other parents from the local community. Providing training and development programmes may also act as an incentive for parental involvement.

Many breakfast clubs get the older pupils involved in helping out with some of the lower risk jobs at the breakfast club such as serving foods and cleaning tables. The older children act as good mentors for the younger children. Their involvement in the club is seen as an important part of their personal development.

In some schools, a rota system is in place. Pupils apply to volunteer for a one or two week period. At the end of their volunteering, each pupil is awarded with a certificate of participation. This gives pupils a sense of achievement and shows that their involvement is appreciated.

It is important to remember that the role of volunteers is to complement, not replace, the role of paid staff and those who provide key services within the club. Guidelines for recruiting volunteers should be followed. The volunteers should be provided with a clear and appropriate work contract stating their area of responsibility and the limits of their authority. This will help prevent difficult situations arising regarding roles and responsibilities.

Even when the organisation's work is carried out entirely by volunteers, the management committee still has a legal responsibility for them and their work. It is up to the management to ensure that there are adequate procedures to train and support their volunteers as well as appropriate disciplinary and grievance procedures.

### ? More Information

Check out the Volunteer Ireland website for further information on volunteer management, [www.volunteer.ie](http://www.volunteer.ie)

## National Employment Schemes

There are a number of national employment schemes which community groups can access. Eligibility criteria for each scheme differ. Remember to check the criteria to ensure you are eligible to recruit staff using these schemes. A minimum number of hours worked is required for these programmes so be sure to check if these can be met in the breakfast club alone. They are more suitable for those schools or community groups that run additional services, such as lunch provision or after school clubs.

## Community Employment Programme

The Community Employment Programme<sup>20</sup> helps long-term unemployed people to re-enter the workforce. As of 2001, school-based positions are no longer eligible for Community Employment. Voluntary organisations and public bodies may sponsor projects which are for community and public benefit. Employment through this programme is only suitable for those breakfast clubs being run by a community organisation.

The sponsor organisation is provided with resources to employ those on the programme. The Department of Social Protection pays a wages grant to participants for the full period of employment. A contribution towards full-time supervision and materials costs will be made to the sponsor organisation. A specific skills training grant is also provided for participant development.

### ? More Information

Contact your local Employment Services Office to check your eligibility and for information on how to apply.

FÁS: **[www.fas.ie](http://www.fas.ie)**

Department of Social Protection: **[www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie)**

## Tús – Community Work Placement Initiative

The Tús Initiative<sup>15</sup> provides short-term work opportunities within the community and voluntary sector for those who are unemployed. Community and voluntary organisations with a work placement opportunity should register this with the Local Development Company/Údarás na Gaeltachta operating in their immediate area. They will then be required to submit a detailed work proposal which will be assessed by the Local Development Company/Údarás na Gaeltachta.

Participants must work 19½ hours per week and specific work hours will be subject to the needs of the organisation hosting the work placement. All community and voluntary organisations will be required to make a contribution towards the cost of the placement, which will be assessed on a case by case basis. Organisations will be responsible for the costs that Tús is unable to cover.

## Community

### ? More Information

Check out the following websites for further information and contact details:

Department of Social Protection: [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie)

Irish Local Development Network: [www.ildn.ie](http://www.ildn.ie)

### JobBridge

JobBridge<sup>21</sup> is a National Internship Scheme that will provide work experience placements for interns for a six or nine month period. JobBridge is open to host organisations in the private, public (including commercial semi-state) or community and voluntary sectors. An organisation must have a minimum of one full time employee who is employed for 30 hours or more per week and an intern may not take the place of a paid member of staff.

Organisations must be registered with JobBridge before they can advertise internships. All internships are advertised on the JobBridge website and applications will be sent directly to the host organisation.

During the placement, interns will be paid an internship allowance by the Department of Social Protection. Interns can participate in training provided by the host organisation or part-time courses paid for by the State.

### ? More Information

Check out the JobBridge website for requirements on becoming a host organisation and employing internships, [www.jobbridge.ie](http://www.jobbridge.ie)

# Case Study

## **Parents Training Together, Our Lady Immaculate School, Darndale, Dublin 17**

The Parents Training Together Initiative serves over 1500 breakfasts every day to pupils in nine different schools in Dublin 5 and Dublin 17 areas. Parents Training Together is a Local Training Initiative for early school leavers. This case study refers specifically to their breakfast club at Our Lady Immaculate Schools, Darndale, where breakfast is provided for 486 pupils each morning.

### **How does it work?**

The breakfast club is open at 8:40am. Each class has a specific time slot to come to the breakfast club. This means that the space is not overcrowded at any one time. If a child is late and has not had breakfast, they can attend the club at a later time if needed. Breakfast is delivered to the classroom of the junior classes as they require extra supervision from their teachers.

### **What foods are available?**

Breakfast cereal and fruit juice are available every morning. Taster sessions with new foods are also carried out on a regular basis to encourage children to try new foods.

Where possible, links are made with the curriculum. For example, a class will learn about the importance of eating fruit and how to make fruit smoothies, which will then be served at the breakfast club. The coordinator knows that it is important to be aware of popular foods for children and provide healthy options of these foods. This will encourage children to come to the breakfast club and eat healthier options.



### How is it funded?

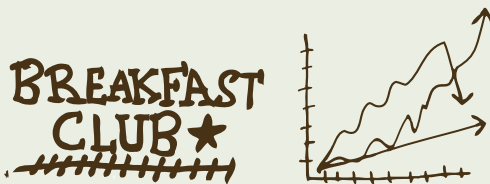
Funding from the School Meals Programme is used to fund food items. Funds from the Dormant Accounts Fund were used to build the canteen and dining area and provide equipment to the appropriate standard. New equipment is funded through the School Completion Programme or core school funds

### Who works in the club?

All staff members are trainees of the Parents Training Together, a Local Training Initiative. Funding has been attained from FÁS to run this initiative. Trainees attain a FETAC Level 3 qualification at the end of their 48 week placement. This approach has been beneficial in creating a more positive relationship between the school and parents, and improving the skills of the local community. The co-ordinator of the initiative is also paid through FÁS and has overall responsibility for all clubs. In each school a designated supervisor oversees the running of the club.

### Tips for success

Listen to your pupils! The breakfast club is constantly evolving based on feedback from the children and teachers. There was a drop-off in attendance at the breakfast club for older children. The club co-ordinator received feedback that this age group did not want to be mixing with the younger classes. One of the cookery rooms was opened in the morning and promoted as a space for the older children to come and socialise before class. Numbers have increased since this change was made. It is important to emphasise the social aspect for this age group.





## Summary Box

How many children attend the club each morning?	486
How many staff members are needed each morning?	5
Funding Source – Food	School Meals Programme
Funding Source – Venue	Dormant Accounts Fund
Funding Source – Equipment	School/School Completion Programme
Funding Source – Staff	FÁS
Is there a charge?	No

### Contact Details:

Parents Training Together  
Our Lady Immaculate School  
Darndale  
Dublin 17  
Email: omeacatherine@yahoo.co.uk  
Telephone: 01 8482262

*a Good  
start to  
the day*

## Staff Training

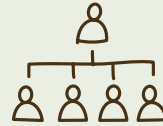
Training may be necessary for some staff members depending on their experience and skills, and the requirements of the club. Staff training can also be a positive experience for many individuals as it can boost their confidence and promote better team interaction.

Each breakfast club must assess their specific training needs and staff should complete training as necessary. For some topics, such as child protection it may only be relevant for the co-ordinator or designated staff member to complete the course. This information can then be fed back to other staff members. For other topics, it may be beneficial or necessary for all staff members to undertake training, such as food safety.

Training for staff members could include:

- Food Safety and Hygiene
- Working with Children
- Child Protection
- First Aid
- Manual Handling
- Healthy Eating and Cooking for Young People
- Fire Safety
- Positive Communication
- Food Allergies

training



## Food Safety and Hygiene

All staff members involved in the preparation and serving of food are required by law to be supervised, instructed and or trained in food hygiene appropriate to their level of responsibility.

There are no specific guidelines for staff in schools, but they must adhere to general rules/guidelines of food safety. 'Safe Food to Go', published by the Food Safety Authority of Ireland, outlines the key elements of food safety to which food workers must adhere. The coordinator of the breakfast club should contact their local Environmental Health Officer (EHO) as soon as possible in the planning stages. The EHO will be able to provide advice on the layout of the facilities available to minimise food safety risks. The food safety requirements may also differ depending on

the foods that you are serving, i.e. cooked foods carry a higher risk than providing toast and juice. The EHO will be able to offer advice specific to your own club and the standards that need to be met.

## ? More Information

Find your Local Environmental Health Officer on the Environmental Health Section of the HSE website, [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)

Safe Food to Go is available on the Resources and Publications Section of the FSAI website, [www.fsai.ie](http://www.fsai.ie)

## Training in Food Safety and Hygiene

It may be useful, or necessary, for staff members to complete training in food safety and hygiene. There are various courses available. The most appropriate course will depend on the specific skill requirements of your staff members and the type of club you are running.

‘Food Safety and You’, run by the Food Safety Authority of Ireland, is an induction training programme designed for delivery by managers/coordinators to staff members. Managers can attend a two-day workshop outlining the knowledge and skills necessary to train others in food safety. The Food Safety Training Skills Workshop is certified to FETAC Level 5. This will allow a single trainer in an organisation to deliver induction training to all staff members. This option may be useful where there is a large number of staff and volunteers, and funding for training for all staff members may not be available.

## ? More Information

Food Safety Training Skills Workshops  
Food Safety Authority of Ireland  
Telephone: 01 8171348  
Email: [training@fsai.ie](mailto:training@fsai.ie)  
Website: [www.fsai.ie](http://www.fsai.ie)

FOOD  
SAFETY

Online courses may be a more appropriate approach for some clubs. These courses can be completed at a time suitable to the staff member and avoids having to release staff for whole days to attend training. Travel costs to attend training are also avoided. It is necessary to provide online facilities for staff members to access this training, and to allow sufficient time for courses to be completed with other work commitments.

The National Hygiene Partnership (NHP) run e-learning courses on food safety and hygiene, which cover the essential skills required when handling food.

## ? More Information

The National Hygiene Partnership  
Abbey Court, Block B,  
Lower Abbey Street,  
Dublin 1.  
Telephone: 01-448 0614  
Email: [info@nhp.ie](mailto:info@nhp.ie)  
Website: [www.nhp.ie](http://www.nhp.ie)

Training on healthy eating and cooking for young people may be run by your local Community Nutrition and Dietetic Service or Health Promotion Department at the HSE. Contact details can be found on their website, [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)

## Working with Children

It may be necessary for staff members to undergo training on working with children if they have little or no prior experience in this area, especially if they will be working with vulnerable children. You will need to consider the skills requirements of your staff members before choosing the appropriate course.

Check the FETAC website for the range of courses available. The After-School Support Skills module (FETAC Level 5), equips participants with the key skills and knowledge needed to work effectively with children. If your staff members will also be involved in other clubs in the school, such as homework club, this may be a very useful course.

## ? More Information

Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC)

Telephone: 01 865 9500

Website: [www.fetac.ie](http://www.fetac.ie)

This website provides specific details on FETAC courses at all levels. You can also search for approved providers of courses in your local area.

### Child Protection

Every organisation that provides services for children should have adequate child protection procedures in place to promote the welfare and safety of children. All schools are required to have a Child Protection Policy in place.

*Children First: National Guidance*<sup>22</sup> provides guidance on developing child protection procedures locally. This guidance states that organisations should:

- Ensure best practice in the recruitment of staff or volunteers, which includes Garda vetting, taking up of references, good Human Relation (HR) practices in interviewing, induction training, probation and on-going supervision and management.
- Ensure that staff members or volunteers are aware of how to recognise signs of child abuse or neglect.
- Develop guidance and procedures for staff and/or volunteers who may have reasonable grounds for concern about the safety and welfare of children involved with the organisation.
- Identify a designated person to act as a liaison with outside agencies and a resource person to any staff member or volunteer who has child protection concerns. The designated person is responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to the HSE Children and Family Services or to An Garda Síochána.

The ‘Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools’<sup>23</sup>, based on the *Children First: National Guidance*, are the key guidelines for primary and post-primary schools.

Each staff member should be trained in the school or organisation’s procedures for child protection. Each staff member should understand the signs and symptoms of child abuse and know the appropriate means of reporting suspected cases of abuse.

## ? More Information

The ‘Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children’ resource is available on the Department of Children and Youth Affairs website, [www.dcyia.gov.ie](http://www.dcyia.gov.ie)

The ‘Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools’ resource is available on the Department of Education and Skills website, [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)

## Garda Vetting

Any individual working in a full-time, part-time, voluntary or student placement role where they have unsupervised access to children is required to complete Garda vetting. Garda Vetting is conducted only on behalf of registered organisations and is not conducted for individuals on a personal basis. There is no fee for Garda Vetting.

The Board of Management of the school or the Managing Director of the community organisation should write to the Garda Central Vetting Unit providing the following details:

- A description of the service that will be provided.
- The approximate number of staff requiring vetting each year.
- The level of unsupervised access that staff will have to children.
- Any additional relevant information, including organisational literature or certificates of registration in respect of charitable status.

On receipt of this information, the Garda Central Vetting Unit will respond directly to the school or community organisation.

Garda Vetting Application Forms are available from the Garda Central Vetting Unit. The school or organisation is responsible for supplying these forms to staff members and sending them back to the Central Vetting Unit. The outcome of the check is provided directly to the school or organisation, and not the individual person.

## ? More Information

Garda Central Vetting Unit/Garda Criminal Records Office  
Racecourse Road  
Thurles  
Co. Tipperary  
Telephone: Lo-Call 1890 488 488  
Website: [www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie)



# D

## Running your Breakfast Club

This section provides information on the foods that should be served at a breakfast club and ways in which you can encourage healthy eating in children. It also provides practical advice on shopping and storing of food items, which are also important to consider.

### **Nutritional Guidelines**

Healthy Eating Guidelines for Children and Young Teens (5-13 year olds) are available which outline appropriate portion sizes and daily servings of different food groups. It is recommended that you contact your local Community Nutrition and Dietetic Service and Health Promotion Department within the HSE for further advice on healthy eating for children and young people.





## How many servings do 5-13 year olds need each day<sup>24</sup>?

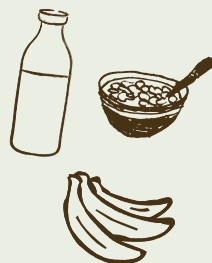
Food Group	Daily Servings Needed	What breakfast foods are in this group?	What is one serving?
<b>Cereals &amp; Breads</b>	6 servings	Breakfast cereals, porridge, muesli, breads, bagels, soda bread, crackers, rolls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 slice regular pan bread</li> <li>• 2 whole-wheat cereal biscuits</li> <li>• 4 dessertspoons flake type breakfast cereal</li> </ul>
<b>Fruit &amp; Vegetables</b>	4+ servings	Fruit juice (unsweetened), raw fruit, tinned fruit (in fruit juice, not in syrup)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 apple</li> <li>• 2 small satsumas</li> <li>• 1 large slice of pineapple</li> <li>• 1 small glass unsweetened fruit juice</li> </ul>
<b>Milk &amp; Dairy</b>	3 servings	Fresh milk, yoghurt, cheese, yoghurt drinks, soya milk,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 large glass of milk (any variety)</li> <li>• 1 small carton of yoghurt</li> <li>• 1 matchbox size piece of cheese</li> </ul>
<b>Meat &amp; Fish</b>	2 servings	Baked beans, eggs, lean meats Oily fish (salmon, sardines)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 egg</li> <li>• 6 dessertspoons of baked beans</li> <li>• 100g tinned salmon</li> </ul>
<b>Fats &amp; Oils</b>	2 servings	Reduced fat spreads and oils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 heaped teaspoon</li> </ul>
<b>Other Foods and drinks high in fat, sugar and salt</b>	NOT too MUCH and NOT too OFTEN	Sweets, chocolate, crisps, cakes, jam	

This table outlines the recommended servings a child should consume over the course of the day. Consider what other food is being provided to children throughout the school day when planning menus for breakfast. If eggs are going to be served at lunchtime, it may be a good idea not to serve them at breakfast time also.

## Tips

### A balanced breakfast should always include:

- A serving of fruit or fruit juice
- A serving of breakfast cereals or breads
- A serving of milk and dairy food.



## Not all servings are the same!

The calorie content of different foods should also be considered when planning breakfast menus. Two foods may both be considered as one serving for that food group, but can have very different calorie contents. For example, 2 regular slices of pan bread will have approximately 135-160 calories. 1½ cups of a breakfast cereal will have approximately 190-220 calories. More information on appropriate serving sizes and calorie intakes can be found in the following documents.

## ? More Information

Your Guide to Healthy Eating – Using the Food Pyramid

This resource can be downloaded in the Publications section of the HSE's Health Promotion website. Additional copies can also be ordered through [www.healthpromotion.ie](http://www.healthpromotion.ie)

Food & Nutrition Guidelines for Primary Schools

This resource can be downloaded from the Department of Health's website, [www.dohc.ie](http://www.dohc.ie)

## ? More Information

Healthy Eating and Active Living for Adults, Teenagers and Children over 5 years – A Food Guide for Health Professionals and Catering Services.

This resource can be found in the Resources and Publications section of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland's website.

Telephone: 01 8171300

Email: [info@fsai.ie](mailto:info@fsai.ie)

Website: [www.fsai.ie](http://www.fsai.ie)

## Understanding Food Labels

Food labels can be confusing. It is important to know how to read food labels properly so you can be confident that you are giving your pupils the best options you can. Most foods will have nutritional information listed on their pack. Use the table below to learn how to interpret this information.

### What is considered a lot or a little? (Look at the 'per 100g' column)<sup>25</sup>

This amount is A LOT	This amount is A LITTLE
10g of sugar	2g of sugar
20g of fat	3g of fat
5g of saturated fat	1g of saturated fat
6g of fibre*	
0.5g of sodium	0.1g of sodium

\* Any food which contains at least 3g of fibre is considered a source of fibre.

This reference guide can be used to help you choose healthier options for your breakfast club. For sugar, fats and salt you should be choosing foods that are closer to the amount in the 'A LITTLE' column. For fibre, you want to choose foods that are closer to the amount in the 'A LOT' column.

## ? More Information

Check out the **safefood** website for more information on food labels, [www.safefood.eu](http://www.safefood.eu)

## Sample Menus for a Breakfast Club

Here is a sample weekly menu plan for a breakfast club. This menu plan might not be suitable for all breakfast clubs based on the facilities and resources available but could be used as a guide when planning menus.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast Cereal	Breakfast Cereal	Breakfast Cereal	Breakfast Cereal	Breakfast Cereal
Low-fat Milk	Low-fat Milk	Low-fat Milk	Low-fat Milk	Low-fat Milk
Toast	Toast	Toast	Toast	Toast
Fruit Juice	Fruit Juice	Fruit Juice	Fruit Juice	Fruit Juice
Fresh Fruit	Fresh Fruit	Fresh Fruit Platter/ Fruit and yoghurt smoothies	Fresh Fruit	Fresh Fruit
Hot food e.g. Scrambled Eggs	Yoghurt	Yoghurt	Yoghurt	Hot food e.g. Baked Beans
Drinking Water	Drinking Water	Drinking Water	Drinking Water	Drinking Water

## Tips for a balanced breakfast

- **Breakfast cereals** – Choose porridge or breakfast cereals that are low in salt and sugar and that have no added honey or chocolate coating. Choose cereals that are fortified with iron and Vitamin D. At least one of the cereal options should be high in fibre or wholegrain. Allow children to mix higher fibre cereals with others to encourage intake. Try having different cereals on different days to encourage variety of choice.
- **Low-fat Milk** - Children between the ages of 2 – 5 can have low fat milk as long as they are eating a balanced and varied diet. Low-fat milk has a fat content of 1.8% or less. Milk fortified with vitamin D will also help children to reach their vitamin D requirement.



- **Toast** – Choose wholemeal or granary breads or breads which are a 50:50 mix of wholemeal and white. Try toasted bagels, scones or soda bread to add variety.
- **Fruit Juice** - Make sure that your fruit juice contains 100% unsweetened pure fruit juice. Limit to 1 glass or 150ml. Check the carton label - if a product is labelled as 'fruit drink', 'juice drink' or 'fruit juice drink' this means that sugar and water have been added.
- **Fresh Fruit** – If possible, offer fresh fruit every day. Have fruits that are easy for children to eat and in appropriate portion sizes. Chop up fruit into bite-size portions where possible.
- **Fruit Platters & Smoothies** – Think of different ways to serve fruit. Once a week you could have a fresh fruit platter of exotic fruits to encourage children to try new fruits. Make it a fun and sociable experience. Smoothies made from fresh fruit and low-fat yoghurts are an excellent way of getting children to have fruit.
- **Yoghurt** – Choose plain or fruit options.
- **Hot Food** – Hot foods should only be served occasionally. Hot food can add variety to a menu and act as an incentive for children to attend a breakfast club. If attendance is low on certain days, serving hot foods may encourage more children to come on these days. It is recommended that meat products, such as sausages, are only served once every two weeks. This includes food being provided at all times in school, so speak with those involved in serving food at lunch time or after-school.
- **Drinking Water** – Drinking water should be freely available at all times. Provide tap water in jugs and allow children to serve themselves. *water*
- **Spreads & toppings** – Read the food labels and avoid any that contain hydrogenated fats. Butter, margarine and spreads may be offered, but encourage children to spread these thinly. Offer reduced sugar jam or marmalade or low fat soft cheese as alternatives.
- **Adding Sugar** – Avoid adding sugar to cereals and porridge. This includes honey and brown sugar which are all additional sugar.
- **Salt** – Salt should not be added to food during cooking and should not be made available at the table for children to add to food.



## Breakfast Cereal Bars

Breakfast cereal bars should not be used as a substitute for a bowl of cereal. Children will miss out on the vitamins and minerals found in breakfast cereals and the milk added to the cereal.

## Fruit Juices

Fruit juice is an excellent source of nutrients but it can be lower in fibre, or contain added sugar, fat or salt. It is important to encourage children to eat raw fruit as well as drinking pure fruit juices or smoothies. In addition, fruit juices can be acidic as they contain natural sugars. This can be bad for children's teeth, and children should be limited to one glass of juice each day.

Fruit juice 'drinks' are not the same as pure fruit juice. Many are simply flavoured water and sugar with very little real fruit juice added. Make sure that your fruit juice contains 100% unsweetened pure fruit juice to ensure you are giving the children the best option.

## How to add variety to your menu?

**Do taster sessions** – Once a week or once a fortnight, try a new food. Have small portions of these foods available on tables for children. Foods could include different types of fruit, new breads or fruit juices. Encourage children to sample small amounts and get their feedback. Try to make it a fun, social experience where children feel relaxed about tasting new foods. Different foods can then be introduced into the breakfast club more regularly.

**Themed days** - Pick a specific theme and serve foods appropriate to this theme. For example, you may choose a specific country and serve typical breakfast foods from that country. It could be linked to a certain time of year, for example Easter or linked to events taking place at the school. You could get the kids involved by asking them to make decorations for the room linked to the theme. You could play themed music.

**Get feedback** – Ask the children what type of foods they would like to eat at breakfast. Provide them with different healthy options and ask them to choose which ones they would like. This could be done on a regular basis and ensures that the children feel involved in the club and have a say in how it runs.

## How can I encourage children to eat healthy options?

- Make food look attractive.
- Encourage children to try new foods, even in small portions. Rewarding children for trying something new is also effective for encouraging healthy eating habits in children. For younger children this may include stickers.
- Put healthier options first so children are likely to eat these first before asking for less healthy items.
- Use a ‘half and half’ approach, where a breakfast cereal traditionally used is mixed with a healthier option. This mix is then gradually reduced over a period of time until only the healthy option is left.
- If you are charging for foods, make healthier options cheaper to encourage children to buy these choices.

Be persistent! Changing eating habits will take time. It often takes more than 10 exposures to a new food before it is accepted. The key message is for staff to be positive and enthusiastic about healthy eating. If the adults involved are keen and motivated, the children generally will be too.

### ‘Family Style’ Service

Breakfast clubs are a good opportunity to encourage the development of social eating habits in children. Creating a ‘family style’ meal time leads to a positive eating experience for children. In a ‘family style’ service, children are encouraged to serve themselves. This can help develop hand-eye co-ordination<sup>26</sup> in younger children. Adults typically sit at the tables with children and encourage children to talk to each other and with adults. This aids in language development<sup>27</sup>. It can also be an informal opportunity for teaching appropriate eating behaviours, such as use of cutlery, and suitable portion sizes<sup>26</sup>.

**BREAKFAST  
CLUB ★**  
—————





## How can I do this?

- Lay food out for children to serve themselves. Make sure portion sizes are appropriate.
- Use age-appropriate tableware, including bowls, glasses, cutlery.
- In larger breakfast clubs, take turns sitting with different tables of children. Encourage conversation by asking children to tell fun stories.
- Encourage children to clear their plates after they have finished eating.
- Children should not handle foods that they are not going to eat.

## Shopping and Storage

It is important to think of where you are going to buy and store your foods. This will depend on the storage facilities available, the average numbers of children attending, and local suppliers.

### What storage facilities do you have?

The size of your fridge will determine how much milk, yoghurt and other cold foods you can store at one time. Check the cupboard space available for storing breakfast cereals and bread. If you have access to freezer space, it could be used to freeze bread.

### How many children are going to come to the breakfast club?

You need to have enough food available each day to serve all the children that are going to come to the club. If you expect a large number of children each day, it is likely that you will need large amounts of storage space.

### What foods are you going to serve?

You will need adequate cold storage space if you are going to serve foods that require refrigeration, such as milk and yoghurts. Consider what storage space you have available before you plan what foods you are going to serve to make sure you will have adequate space.



## How often are you going to purchase food?

You will need less storage space if you are going to get food delivered every day compared to a food delivery once a week. Enquire with your suppliers about their delivery times and if it fits with the opening times of the club. Are they able to deliver food in time for the breakfast club each morning or do you need to have an extra day's supply available?

## How are you going to purchase food – through a supplier or from local shops?

Sometimes having food delivered is not the best option for a club. It may be that delivery times are not appropriate or there is a lack of storage space for big deliveries. It might be more suitable for staff members to purchase food in local shops. Staff members will need to be paid for their additional time and any other expenses paid, such as travel expenses. It may be possible to set up an account in your local supermarket and payment made directly to the supermarket. This may not be suitable for larger breakfast clubs as one person may not be able to carry large amounts of shopping or may not have access to a car.





## Developing a Healthy School Food Policy

After the home environment, schools have a key role to play in influencing health behaviours. This section is designed to help your school develop, write and implement a Healthy School Food Policy.

A healthy school food policy helps to:

- Promote Healthy Eating awareness within the school community.
- Positively affect food choices from an early age.
- Establish and maintain clear links between the policy and the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum.

A school's food policy should reflect the needs of the whole school community – staff, parents, and children. It is important to have the whole school community involved to create a sense of ownership and ensure that the policy is accepted at all levels.

A **HEALTHY** Diet  
for **EVERYONE**

## Key Steps in developing a Healthy School Food Policy

### ? More Information

Contact your local Community Nutrition and Dietetic Service or Health Promotion Department at the HSE who will be able to provide you with advice and resources to develop a Healthy School Food Policy, [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)

The following are the key steps in developing a Healthy School Food Policy<sup>13</sup>:

### Step 1: Getting Started

An important first step is to set up a working group/committee tasked with developing a school food policy. This group should be representative of the whole school community, including children, parents, teachers, members of the Board of Management. Children are key members of this group. It is essential that they are given the opportunity to interact with other group members and contribute to group discussion in a meaningful way. This will give children a greater ownership of the policy and ensures that it is appropriate for pupils. Each school will decide how many pupils and which age groups are most appropriate for their own individual setting.

### Checklist



- Set up a working group meeting to outline the initiative and develop an action plan.
- Review existing policy (if any) and related policies and legislation, including code of practice, environmental health policy, litter policy.
- Review current practice: What Healthy Eating guidelines are already in place? What are the health and safety procedures? Where is food eaten in the school?
- Review staff training, support and resources: What training is available for staff relating to Healthy Eating?
- Discuss and agree why you want a school food policy. What are the potential benefits? What do you hope to achieve with this policy? What are the real needs?

## Step 2: Conducting a Survey of Food and Drink in School

The purpose of this step is to look at the foods currently provided in school and the foods that pupils are typically eating. Ask children what they usually eat for breakfast and lunch and for snacks throughout the school day. Use tools that are already available to collect this information and adapt to your own needs. Contact your local Community Nutrition and Dietetic Service or Health Promotion Department at the HSE on suitable tools to use.

Schools can also look at nutrition within the curriculum and extracurricular activities. A good way of getting children involved at this step is to get older pupils involved in collecting information on the eating habits of younger children. This step will highlight areas that need improvement, as well as things that are working well. It will provide baseline information which can be used to look at progress over time.



eat well

HEALTHY

### Checklist

- Conduct the survey and write up the results.
- Decide on key areas of focus for your school.
- Write aims and objectives for your policy.

## Step 3: Draft Policy

In consultation with the working group, draft a policy that draws on the information gathered in the survey and that reflects the needs of the school. Consider whether there is consistency between what is taught in the classroom and what happens in practice in relation to food and drink in school. Are children taught that it is best to have lots of fruit but no fruit is provided at the breakfast club?

The policy should be structured as follows:

- Aim (sample) 'To ensure that all aspects of food and drink in school promote the health and well-being of pupils, staff and visitors to our school'.
- Rationale i.e. state why you are writing the policy.
- Objectives i.e. state what you want to achieve.
- Guidelines i.e. state how the objectives will be met.
- Monitoring and evaluation i.e. state how you will assess whether your objectives are being met.



## Checklist



- Put the policy down on paper and review it at a working group meeting.
- Allow working group members to provide constructive feedback on this draft.
- Make any necessary changes so that the policy is ready for wider consultation.

### Step 4: Consultation on the Draft Policy

The draft policy should be circulated to staff, parents, Board of Management members, Parents Association, and pupils to gather feedback. It will be important to engage with all groups at this stage to create a sense of ownership amongst the school community, and ensure their feedback is incorporated into the final policy.

Send the policy to parents, teachers, and Board of Management members with a structured feedback form to gather their views. It is also important to set a deadline for feedback and decide who will be involved in collating and reviewing this information.

Try to think of creative ways to gather feedback to maximise the response rate. For example, older pupils could visit each class and read through the draft policy with other children. It is important to summarise the draft policy in an age-appropriate manner so younger children can fully understand what is actually written in the policy document.

Schools could also set up a comments box which will give everyone an opportunity to respond to the draft policy. Post information about the process on school notice-boards, and include it in the school newsletter and/or website.

## Checklist



- Make a list of who needs to be consulted.
- Set a deadline for the consultation process.
- Decide who the responses will be returned to.



## Step 5: Amending the Draft Policy Following Consultation

It is important to review all the feedback on the draft policy and adapt the policy appropriately. Give consideration to both positive and negative responses. Once you have finalised the policy, send the document to the Board of Management for their approval.



### Checklist

- Review the feedback and make necessary changes.
- Include a date on the policy so that it is clear when it was written.
- Acknowledge those who contributed to the policy.
- Submit to the Board of Management for approval.
- Print the final policy when all feedback has been received.

## Step 6: Disseminating and Implementing the Policy

The whole school needs to be aware of the school food policy. Think about the different groups that need to know about the policy, and how you are going to share this information. Interactive activities may be a suitable approach for children, where possible. You may need to think about getting the policy translated into different languages for some of your parents.



### Checklist

- Provide copies of the policy to all school staff and ensure that they are confident using this new policy.
- Provide a copy to each family in the school.
- Display the policy clearly in the school.
- Ensure everybody is aware of the changes that the policy will make in practice.
- Put information about the policy in the school newsletter, and/or website and announce its introduction at year meetings and parent-teacher meetings.
- A shortened version of the policy could be put into school journals (where appropriate).
- Ask each working group member to take responsibility for a particular aspect of the school policy.

## Step 7: Reviewing and Evaluating the Policy

Review the policy every one to two years in light of developments and changes within the school. New targets may need to be set or effort moved to new priorities and challenges. Nominate members of the working group to take responsibility for this stage and provide feedback to the whole group.

### Sample Topics for review

- Are the objectives of the policy being met?  
How can you tell? How have you measured outcomes?
- Have there been difficulties? Why have these arisen?
- What have been the successes? What made these possible?
- What do the parents think of the policy? What do the children think of the policy?
- Is it having an effect on food and drink choice, educational attainment, attendance and behaviour? (These will be the best markers of progress).



### Checklist

- Include the policy as an agenda item for staff meetings and the board of management.
- Continue to give people an opportunity to feed into the policy. You could set up a comments box, send questionnaires out or arrange an open meeting where people can offer opinions.
- Tell people about your successes.



### ? More Information

Check out 'Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Primary Schools', 2003.

This document is available to download from the Department of Health website, [www.dohc.ie](http://www.dohc.ie)

## ? More Information

'Healthy Eating Guidelines – A Resource Pack for Primary Schools'  
This was developed by HSE West and Department of Health. Please contact these organisations for further information or your local Health Promotion Department at the HSE.

HSE: [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)

Department of Health: [www.dohc.ie](http://www.dohc.ie)

## The Food Pyramid

The Food Pyramid<sup>24</sup> is designed to make healthy eating easier. Foods that contain the same type of nutrients are grouped together on each of the shelves of the Food Pyramid. This gives you a choice of different foods from which to choose a healthy diet. Following the Food Pyramid as a guide will help you get the right balance of nutritious foods.



Copyright: Department of Health

## ? More Information

Check out 'Your Guide to Healthy Eating – Using the Food Pyramid'  
- This resource can be downloaded in the Publications section of the HSE's Health Promotion website, [www.healthpromotion.ie](http://www.healthpromotion.ie)



# Different Models of Breakfast Clubs



This section outlines the different types of breakfast clubs that are commonly run in Ireland. It illustrates the key elements of each model, including the benefits and challenges associated with each.



## Tea and Toast Model

This model is a basic breakfast club service where there is limited or no access to cooking facilities. It is usually held in a classroom, hall, or other communal space in a school.



### Foods Available:

- Breakfast cereal
- Toast
- Fruit
- Fruit juice

### Suitable for:

It is mostly suitable for those schools where there is inadequate access to kitchen facilities. It is also generally used for targeted provision to smaller groups.

### Equipment Required:

- Fridge
- Toaster
- Cutlery
- Crockery
- Tables and chairs (age-appropriate)

### Skills Required:

Basic training in food safety would be beneficial. Previous experience of working with children would also be useful, especially if being delivered to a targeted group of children. All staff members, including volunteers, need to undergo Garda Vetting.

### Funding:

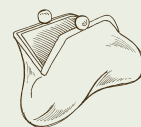
This model has the lowest level of funding required. Funding is required to cover the food items and basic equipment. Staff numbers are low so there are limited funds needed for staff costs. This may be further reduced by using volunteers, such as parents and older pupils.

### Benefits:

- Low running costs
- Low staff costs
- Flexible location
- Basic equipment required

### Challenges/Constraints:

- Limited menu options.
- Adequate access to washing, waste disposal and toilet facilities needs to be arranged.
- Limited numbers can be served.



# Case Study

## **Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál, Inchicore, Dublin 8**

The breakfast club at Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál is open to all children in the school and their families. School staff want the club to be an opportunity for the community to come together in a relaxed, social environment. The clubs also allows teachers, parents and children to engage in an informal manner before the start of the school day.

### **How does it work?**

The breakfast club is open from 8:30am to 9am. Breakfast is served in the school hall. Tables and chairs are set up in one part of the hall. The large space is ideal as it encourages families to spend time in the club, and interact with other families and teaching staff.

### **What foods are available?**

The foods available on a typical morning are toast, cheese slices, boiled eggs and fruit juice. Toast works well as children can easily take what they want and no extra support or equipment are needed. There are limited cooking facilities available at the school so this combination works best for the needs of the school and the resources available. This approach also reduces the number of staff needed to run the club.

### **How is the club funded?**

Funding for the food is accessed through the School Meals Programme. Funding for staffing is through School Completion Programme funds. The necessary equipment, such as tables, chairs, and cups was purchased using funding from both core school funds and School Completion Programme funds.

### **Who works in the club?**

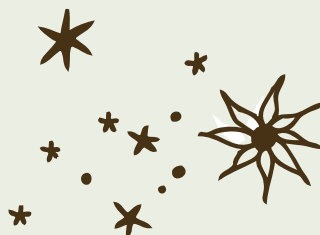
The breakfast club is co-ordinated by the School Completion Programme Officer, who attends the breakfast club each morning. It is a useful way of engaging with children and families on an informal basis and helps build relationships with the local community. The school caretaker is paid for extra hours to run the breakfast club each morning.

There are usually two older pupil volunteers each morning who help to serve the food. Pupils sign up to a volunteer rota and helpers change on a regular basis. This additional responsibility gives children greater confidence and sense of involvement in the breakfast club. There are a number of teacher and parents who also volunteer in the club. There is no formal rota system in place, but volunteers have got involved through word of mouth.

Over recent years the school has put a lot of effort into fostering positive relationships with the whole community. It is considered important to have parents involved in school activities and make the whole community feel part of the school. The breakfast club is seen as an informal means of engaging with parents and getting them involved in school clubs. It has taken time to build up these relationships but it has proved worthwhile as there is now greater involvement of parents on all school activities.

### **What have been the benefits?**

Running the breakfast club in the school has had a real impact on the whole school community. Teachers have seen an improvement in the behaviour and participation of children in class. The club is a key initiative in Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál to improve attendance and educational attainment. It is also an important way of building positive relationships with parents and bringing the whole community together.



## Summary Box

How many children attend the club each morning?	100
How many staff members are needed each morning?	3 – 4
Funding Source – Food	School Meals Programme
Funding Source – Venue	School Funds
Funding Source – Equipment	School Completion Programme
Funding Source – Staff	School Completion Programme
Is there a charge?	No

### Contact Details:

Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál  
8 Tyrconnell Road  
Inchicore  
Dublin 8  
Email: [smgs@ireland.com](mailto:smgs@ireland.com)  
Telephone: 01 4541641



## Servery Model

A Servery Model provides a variety of foods including a small selection of hot food. A servery bar or table is set up where foods are served by staff members or from where children can choose their foods.

### Foods Available:

A wide range of foods are typically available in this type of breakfast club.

These can include:

- Breakfast cereals
- Toast
- Fruit
- Fruit Juice
- Yoghurt
- Hot foods, such as Eggs/Baked Beans



The availability of food items differs depending on the needs of each group. Typically one hot food item will be available each day and the choices change on a regular basis.

### Suitable for:

This model is suitable for those schools or centres where there are adequate and appropriate facilities for cooking, washing, storage and waste disposal. It is suitable for all age groups and larger group sizes.

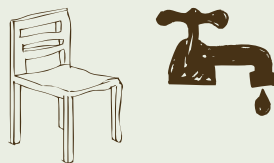
### Equipment Required:

The equipment required depends on the average numbers that will be attending. For example, a catering style toaster may be needed for clubs with large numbers attending regularly. The following are the usual pieces of equipment needed:

- Toaster
- Oven
- Microwave
- Fridge
- Cutlery
- Crockery



- Chairs and tables (age-appropriate)
- Storage
- Sink
- Waste disposal
- Dishwasher (optional)



### Skills Required/Staff:

All staff members should have sufficient training in food safety. It may also be beneficial for the coordinator or designated staff member to have completed HACCP training, depending on the facilities and the numbers being served.

### Funding:

Funding requirements of this model are medium to high, depending on the average numbers that are being served. Food and equipment costs will depend on the options chosen. Savings may be made by offering certain options on specific days rather than all options available every day. The numbers of staff required to run this model are higher than the basic tea and toast model. Training and payment of staff members will increase costs. Savings could be made by using pupil or parent volunteers. Due to the larger number accommodated in this type of club, administration of the club will require staff time.

### Benefits:

- Wide range of food options.
- Larger space and facilities so can accommodate more children.
- Older children and parents can get involved in running the club.
- Dedicated space is appealing to children.
- Greater social aspect to the club which aids personal development.

### Challenges/Constraints:

- Greater funding needed than the basic model to cover food and equipment.
- Larger number of staff needed so greater staff costs and training.
- More administration and coordination requirements than basic model.

# Case Study

## **St. Patrick's Senior National School, Corduff, Dublin 15**

The breakfast club at St. Patrick's National School initially provided breakfast to a small number of families in the local community that needed additional support. The positive impact of the club on the children was immediately clear to staff members and additional funding was sought to expand the breakfast club and open it to all pupils.

### **How does it work?**

The club is open from 8:15am to 8:50am every morning. Breakfast is served in the dining room which has access to a fully equipped kitchen. On average, 120 children come to the breakfast club each morning, which is about a third of the total children in the school.

### **What foods are available?**

A variety of cereals are always available, along with toast, fruit juice and yoghurts. Pupils can choose their own foods. Once or twice a week boiled or poached eggs are served.

Children are encouraged to try new foods through taster sessions where different types of fruits are offered in small portions. Themed days are also run. A specific country is chosen and different foods are served from that country. This adds something interesting and fun for the children. This approach has worked well and the children are more open to trying new foods. No food is wasted. Any food scraps that are left over are saved and fed to the birds after the club finishes!

### **How is the club funded?**

Funding from the School Meals Programme is used to fund food items. Funding was accessed through the Dormant Accounts Fund to build and equip the kitchen and dining facilities. Funding for maintenance of equipment is from core school funds or School Completion Programme funds.



Two staff members are paid through the School Completion Programme and one member is paid using core school funds.

### **Who works in the club?**

There are two staff workers and one co-ordinator each morning in the club. All staff members have training in HACCP and have previous experience of working with children. Having the appropriate training and experience has been very beneficial as staff members understand how to communicate effectively with children and engage with families.

Older children are involved in serving food at the club. There are usually two children each day. This peer system works really well as the children enjoy the responsibility and the extra help is a real support to the staff members. Pupils sign up to volunteer and a rota system is put together.

Staff members try to make the club a warm, social environment by being approachable and supportive to all children. They play the radio and sing and dance with the children to make it a fun place to come to. There are sofas at the back of the room where children can sit and chat with each other after they have finished eating. The emphasis on creating a social environment encourages children to come regularly.

### **What have been the benefits?**

The principal and all the teachers are really supportive of the breakfast club as they have noticed significant changes in attendance rates and the behaviour of children in class.



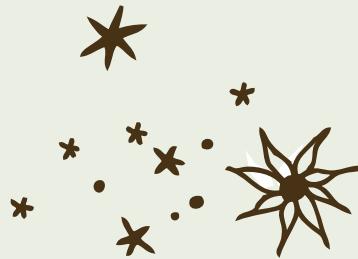
**ATTENDANCE**

## Summary Box

How many kids attend the club each morning?	120
How many staff members are needed each morning?	3
Funding Source – Food	School Meals Programme
Funding Source – Venue	Dormant Accounts Fund
Funding Source – Equipment	School Completion Programme & School funds
Funding Source – Staff	School Completion Programme & School funds
Is there a charge?	No

### Contact Details:

St. Patrick's Senior National School  
Blackcourt Road  
Corduff  
Dublin 15  
Email: [info@stpatrickscorduff.ie](mailto:info@stpatrickscorduff.ie)  
Telephone: 01 8216563



## Canteen Model

In the canteen model, a full breakfast service is provided and is run by catering staff. A large range of hot and cold foods can be served. This allows children to explore new foods on a regular basis and adds variety to their diet. This model tends to be run in schools which also provide a lunch service. Breakfast provision is an extension of this service. It is also an option for breakfast clubs which are held in community centres where appropriate kitchen facilities are available.

### Foods Available:

There is typically an extensive range of hot and cold foods available daily in this model. The availability of food items differs depending on the needs of each group. All foods will typically be available each day. Foods can include:

- Breakfast cereals
- Scones
- Hot drinks
- Hot foods - Eggs/Baked Beans
- Toast
- Fruit
- Yoghurt
- Bread
- Fruit Juice



### Suitable for:

This model is mostly suitable for schools which have full catering facilities and serve large numbers of pupils, and possibly families, each day. It is mostly suitable in schools where lunch is also provided as costs are likely to be too high to provide breakfast alone. The canteen model may also be appropriate for breakfast clubs that are run in community centres who have access to adequate catering facilities.

### Equipment Required:

A fully equipped catering kitchen is required to run this model. Input will be required from a designer to identify the exact requirements appropriate for your venue and average numbers attending. It is also recommended to get advice from your local Environmental Health Officer to ensure your facilities meet the appropriate standards required.

The following pieces of equipment are important considerations:

- Chairs and tables (age-appropriate)
- Toilet and handwashing facilities
- Adequate storage space for bags
- Waste disposal facilities

In larger clubs, where there is a high turnover of children, it may also be beneficial to have an extra space for activities or socialising. This could involve having an extra table for board games, drawing or other activities. Couches and chairs for children to chat once they have finished eating are also good additions. This will encourage children to stay at the breakfast club and provide an opportunity for children to engage with staff members and other pupils.

### **Skills Required/Staff:**

It is recommended to get advice from your local Environmental Health Officer to identify the training requirements for staff members. Staff members will need appropriate training in food safety. Other training may be required depending on the skills of staff members and their previous experience of catering and working with children.

### **Funding:**

A larger amount of funding will be required to run this model of breakfast club compared to the previous two models. Initial funding is needed to build and equip adequate kitchen and dining facilities. On-going costs include food, staffing costs, administration, heating, lighting, and maintenance of kitchen equipment. Costs could be reduced by making links with local community centres with suitable facilities. It might be appropriate to charge families for using the breakfast club but ensure that the club is affordable and consider support options for families on low-incomes.

### **Benefits:**

- Can accommodate a large number of children.
- A large range of foods can be served so adds variety to children's intake.
- Good facilities available which can provide food throughout the school day.
- Dedicated staff members.

### **Challenges/Constraints:**

- Significant costs involved for set up.
- Large number of staff members needed.
- Large numbers means there may be less opportunities for staff to engage with targeted children.

## Case Study

### **St. John's Junior National School and St. Paul's Senior National School Breakfast Club, Drogheda**

A breakfast club has been running at St. John's Junior National School and St. Paul's Senior National School since 1998. Between 150 and 170 breakfasts are served each morning. The aim of the breakfast is to ensure children are getting the best start to the school day by eating a nutritious breakfast so they can participate fully in class.

#### **How does it work?**

Breakfast is served in the school canteen between 8:15am and 8:55am. The club is open to all children and their families. Parents and siblings are also encouraged to come to the breakfast club so that families can eat together.

#### **What foods are available?**

A large selection of hot and cold food is available, including breakfast cereals, toast, fruit, juice, eggs, sausages and rashers. Children are restricted to one sausage or rasher. This is done to ensure that portion sizes are appropriate for children.

#### **Paying for your breakfast**

The food in the breakfast club is not free. Each item has a price although this is kept low to ensure that it is affordable. The average spend is 20c-40c per day. There is a very flexible payment method. Parents can choose to pay on the day as some children would not come to the club on a regular basis. Parents can also choose to pay weekly or at the beginning of term. In these cases, an account is kept of what each child spends and this amount is taken off the balance for that child. A note is sent home when a 'top-up' is required.

The payment is waived for a number of families who are unable to afford the breakfast club. A note is placed next to their name that their family pays on a weekly basis. In this way, no child is made to feel any different and it ensures that those children in most need are able to access the club. The Breakfast Club Co-ordinator, Principal and Home School Liaison Officer are all involved in the decision on waiving the fee. Links have also been made with The Society of St Vincent de Paul to ensure those families in most need are being targeted. It is seen as important that not all staff members are aware of this system to prevent stigmatisation of these families.

### **How is it funded?**

A key source of funding is the School Meals Programme, which covers the cost of the food items. The charge for breakfast covers the wages of the Breakfast Club Co-ordinator and overheads, including heating bills and water. Funds from the EU Peace and Reconciliation Fund were used to build the canteen and dining area, with funding from the Dormant Accounts Fund used to make subsequent upgrades and repairs.

### **Who works at the club?**

The majority of staff members are employed through the Community Employment (CE) Programme. Drogheda Youth Development is the sponsor organisation. There are generally six CE staff members working each morning. There are an additional two monitors in the dining area to supervise the children, and these are funded by the School Completion Programme. There is a club co-ordinator who is responsible for managing all food provision for the schools throughout the entire school day. A local accountant manages the accounts on a voluntary basis.



## Summary Box

How many children attend the club each morning?	150 – 170
How many staff members are needed each morning?	9
Funding Source – Food	School Meals Programme
Funding Source – Venue	Dormant Account Funds
Funding Source – Equipment	Breakfast Club Charge & Community Employment Materials Grant
Funding Source – Staff	Community Employment Scheme & Breakfast Club Charge & School Completion Programme
Is there a charge?	Yes

### Contact Details:

St Paul's National School

Rathmullen

Drogheda

Co. Louth

Email: [office@stpaulssns.com](mailto:office@stpaulssns.com)

Telephone: 041 9833681



## Community-led Breakfast Clubs

Some breakfast clubs are run by a local community or voluntary group, for example in a Family Resource Centre. Community-led breakfast clubs tend to be set up because:

- There are inadequate facilities available in the local schools to run a breakfast club.
- There is a need for this type of family support service in the local community.
- Community project workers may be more suitable/skilled to run breakfast clubs targeting groups of vulnerable children.
- A need for such an initiative is identified across a whole community rather than one single school.
- They are an important opportunity for children to mix with each other outside of the school setting. It is also a good way for community services to engage with more members of the community.

### Additional Considerations

Many of the steps in setting up and running a breakfast club are similar for a community setting, but there are some additional considerations.

- It is essential to consult the Principals and Boards of Management for any schools which you are hoping to engage. Their involvement is necessary to encourage pupils to attend the breakfast club and to ensure the club is as effective as possible. It is important to highlight the positive impact of breakfast clubs on school attendance rates and behaviour in class. It is also important to discuss club opening hours and travel arrangements to school to ensure children arrive in school for the start of the school day.
- Will the club be open to children in all schools or a targeted group, i.e. specific group of families, or a specific school? If you want children from all schools to attend, you will need to consider the location of the club carefully.
- Is the club within walking distances of local schools, or is public transport needed? Do the children need to be accompanied on their walk to school? If so, how many staff members will be needed? While older children may be able to walk to school on their own, it might be necessary to accompany younger children. It will be important to inform parents and the school of such details.



- What time does school start? If children are attending from multiple schools, it will be important to consider the timing of the club so that there is adequate time to get to each of these schools.
- Funding sources may be different for community-led clubs. Check if you can access funding through the School Meals Programme, through links with the schools. How are you going to show the benefits of the club? It will be important to link with the school to show any impact on attendance or behaviour of pupils.
- Who is going to run the club? Are there staff members within the Centre that can work in the club? Can any of the school staff members be involved? Are there volunteers working at the Centre, or can you engage parent volunteers? Check with the Garda Vetting Unit on vetting requirements for staff members. See Section C for further details.
- How many staff will be required to effectively run the programme? It is important to consider what current adult:child ratio operates in the Centre.
- Ensure that the current insurance policy in the Centre covers the running of a breakfast club and if not, make the appropriate amendments with your insurer.
- It is important to maintain regular links with schools in order to continuously evaluate the effectiveness for the programme and consider ways that could improve the running of the breakfast club. Attendance records of the children attending the club should be shared with the school.

If the breakfast club is being held outside of the school grounds, an extra incentive must be given to the pupils to attend the club. Get children involved from the beginning to identify what would encourage them to come to the club on a regular basis.

The breakfast club should be promoted as a support to families that gives an extra advantage to these children and is a great start to their school day. Links with other initiatives run by the community group should be made where possible, such as homework clubs.

# Case Study

## **The Society of St. Vincent de Paul Breakfast Club, Kildare**

The Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP) runs a breakfast club for local school children in Kildare town. The club began in 2004 when just ten children were being served breakfast. Knowledge of the breakfast club spread through word of mouth and they now serve between 60-80 children each morning. The main aim of the breakfast club is to provide a warm, enjoyable environment where children can come to eat a good breakfast and to socialise with their friends before school.

### **How does it work?**

The breakfast club opens at 8am each morning and they stop serving food at 8:45am. For breakfast clubs in a community setting, the location of the club is important. In Kildare, the club is ideally located close to both the primary and secondary schools in the town. This means that children can easily walk to school after they have had their breakfast. There is no charge for the breakfast club.

### **What food is available?**

There is typically a choice of five breakfast cereals, toast, fruit juice, milk or tea. It is also seen as important for the children to try new foods so different types of fruit and fruit smoothies will be served on a regular basis. Fruit smoothies have proved very popular with the children and they look forward to these mornings.

There is no formal healthy eating policy but the staff members try to encourage healthy eating where possible. For example, children are not allowed to add their own sugar to the breakfast cereals so that the staff members can ration how much sugar is consumed. They are also very mindful of food waste. Any toast or crusts that are not eaten is collected by a local resident who feeds it to the ducks!

### **How is it funded?**

Funding has been attained from the HSE which funds the food served. Any shortfall is covered by funding from SVP. The breakfast club is held in a day-care centre which is run by SVP which has adequate facilities for the breakfast club. All the equipment, including furniture and tableware, are supplied and maintained by SVP.

### **Who works in the club?**

All those involved in running the breakfast club are volunteers. There are two club co-ordinators. There is at least one co-ordinator present at the breakfast club each morning. The remainder of the volunteers change on a daily basis. There is typically between four to six additional volunteers each morning. Overall there is close to 30 volunteers for the breakfast club.

### **What have been the benefits of the club?**

The breakfast club is seen as a vital element of the local community. Many local families benefit from the breakfast club, and the children love coming every morning as an extra chance to see their friends and enjoy a nutritious breakfast. The principals and teachers in the local schools are very supportive of the breakfast club, and have noticed a change in the behaviour of those pupils that attend the breakfast club regularly.



## Summary Box

How many children attend the club each morning?	60 - 80
How many staff members are needed each morning?	6 - 8
Funding Source – Food	HSE & St. Vincent de Paul
Funding Source – Venue	St. Vincent de Paul
Funding Source – Equipment	St. Vincent de Paul
Funding Source – Staff	St. Vincent de Paul volunteers
Is there a charge?	No

### Contact Details:

The Society of St Vincent de Paul  
Bride Street  
Kildare  
Email: [info@svpsouthmidlands.com](mailto:info@svpsouthmidlands.com)  
Telephone: 045 521748



## Breakfast Club Activities

Running activities in a breakfast club can be a useful means of engaging with children and allowing them to interact with one another in a fun way. Activities can be a useful tool to promote the club as a fun, social environment and to encourage children to attend the breakfast club on a regular basis.



## Running Activities – things to consider

Breakfast club activities should reflect the needs of the children attending the club. They should enhance, rather than distract from, the key aims of the club. It is important to consider the ages of the children attending the club, and to make sure there are activities appropriate for all age groups.

### What do I need to think about?

Before you start planning your activities, there are a few things to consider:

- **Will you need extra staff?**

Staff supervision may be needed for certain activities. It is important to consider this when planning activities to ensure there are enough staff available. If you are going to run outdoor play, it is likely that you will need extra staff members to supervise.

- **Where are the activities going to be held?**

Do you need extra space for the activities or a spare table? You may need a larger space or additional equipment if you are running certain activities.

- **How will the activities be funded?**

You will need to include money in your budget to purchase equipment for your activities. Are you able to get donations from local businesses to run activities?

## Ideas for Activities

### Reading corners

Make sure there is always a wide range of reading material available. See whether a local bookstore might donate some books or a local newsagent might donate some magazines. It is important to ensure there are books suitable for all ages attending the club.



### Board Games

Board games can stimulate the mind and lead to great personal and interpersonal development. Children could be nominated as ‘games monitors’ to ensure that all games are put away at the end of the club and that nothing is missing.

## Physical Activities

If you have access to an outdoor play area, you could run physical activities such as skipping, dancing, hopscotch, or other outdoor activities. Adult supervision may be needed for this activity.

## Homework Corners

Homework corners can offer a good opportunity for children to discuss their school work and seek advice from one another. Some children may need additional supports on their homework and it is important to give these children an opportunity to do their homework at school. These 'corners' may also be a chance for children to discuss any problems they may be having with an adult at the club.

Try new activities on a regular basis so children are kept interested. This will also be important for new children joining the breakfast club. Activities should be accessible to all.

### Get children involved!

Ask the children what types of activities they would like at the club. You could have a suggestion chart where a new suggestion is tried every month.

### ? More Information

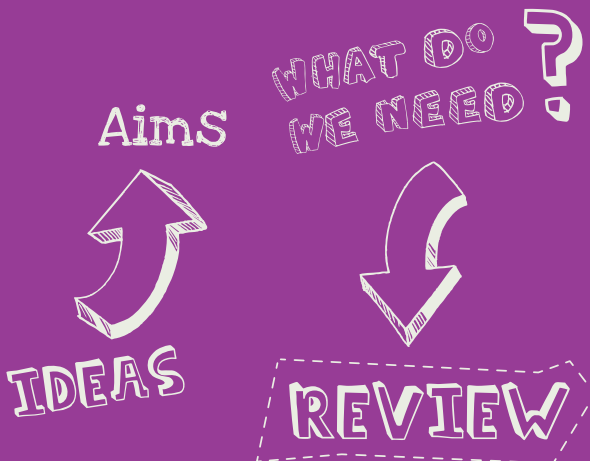
Check out the ContinYou website for lots of great activity ideas that you can run at a breakfast club. Check out the Breakfast Club section on [www.continyou.org.uk](http://www.continyou.org.uk)





# Evaluation

Evaluation is about reviewing your breakfast club and using this information to ensure that the club is meeting the needs of the children in your school or community. The evaluation should provide useful information on the impact of the club which will inform the future running of the club.





## Why should I evaluate my club?

- Shows you what is working and what is not working.
- Tells you if you are meeting your aims and objectives.
- Identifies what changes could be made to keep attendance high and make sure it is appropriate for children.
- Evaluation is required by some funders.
- Shows how well you are doing and can be useful information for future funding proposals.

## How do I carry out an evaluation?

It is best to think about evaluation right from the start. It is important to gather some information at the beginning so you can see the changes over time. Develop an evaluation plan in partnership with your key stakeholders, such as teachers, principal, School Completion Programme Officer, Home School Community Liaison Officer, parents, and children. Identify what information is important to collect, how this information will be collected, and who will be involved. Make sure everyone is clear about why this information is being collected and how it will be used to inform practice.

Start small! There is a lot of information that might be useful to collect but you do not have to gather all the information right from the beginning. Think about what information you could collect that would be useful and build on this over time.

There are many ways in which you can gather information. The method used may change depending on the information you are collecting and who you are asking. If you are collecting information on attendance or the foods that children are eating, it might be more useful to have a checklist that is completed on a regular basis by designated staff members.

If you want to get feedback from children attending the club, parents, teachers or others in the community, it might be useful to put together a questionnaire or do interviews with these groups. Please see Section A for further information on using these methods of collecting information, including fun ways of getting children involved.

## ? More Information

The ContinYou website has many useful tools and resources available for evaluating your breakfast club. These include a planning form for club co-ordinators, attendance registers, and review forms for breakfast club attendees. Check them out on [www.continyou.org.uk](http://www.continyou.org.uk)

Using questionnaires and forms that are already available can be useful. You must remember to adapt them for your own breakfast club to make sure you are collecting the information that is most appropriate for your club. Check out the ContinYou website for some examples.

### What information should I collect?

The information collected should tell you what is working and what is not working, and help identify what changes could be made. Examine your aims and objectives and see what information is needed to show that you are achieving them.

- **How many children are attending?**

Recording the number of children attending the club on a regular basis will be useful. This will highlight days when attendance might be typically low. Changes may be needed on these days to encourage children to come to the club, such as running different activities or new foods being served. It can be useful to record how many boys or girls are coming to the club, or the classes that children are in.

- **What foods are being eaten?**

It can also be useful to collect information on the foods that the children are eating, where possible. This will show any changes that occur on particular days or terms and may highlight a need to make changes to the menu and foods purchased. For example, more children might eat toast in the winter than in the summer terms. This is useful to know so extra bread can be ordered at these times.

- **How much does the club cost?**

Recording information on the running costs of your breakfast club is important. Funders often require this information. This will show the cost of the breakfast club, allow you to monitor spending and enable you to budget in advance. It will show the benefits gained for a specific

cost. This information could be fed back to the Board of Management and will be useful to include in future funding proposals.

- **What do the children think of the breakfast club?**

Feedback from children is essential. You need to know the club is suitable for their needs and is somewhere that they want to come. Ask them what they like and do not like about the club. Get them to make suggestions about foods they would like, new activities, or other changes to the club.

Try to think of fun, interactive ways to gather information. You could have a suggestion box in the club at certain times throughout the year and encourage children to make suggestions.

It is also important to consider the ages of the children. Make sure that the method and language used is appropriate. Younger children may not be able to complete a questionnaire on their own, and it may be useful to have a teacher or adult involved in collecting information from this group.

If possible (and appropriate) try to get feedback from those children that do not come to the breakfast club. Try to find out what might encourage them to come to the breakfast club.

- **What do parents think of the breakfast club?**

Ask parents what they like and do not like about the club. What impact does it have on their home life? Are changes needed to support local families, for example changing opening times? It is important to engage with parents to ensure that the breakfast club is supportive of their role and their family.

It is important to consider parents with low literacy levels, and the most appropriate means of gathering information from these families. It may be useful to work with the Home School Community Liaison Officer in your school or support worker in your local community to support these parents in completing questionnaires and providing feedback.

- **What do teachers and the school principal think of the Breakfast Club?**

It is important to gather feedback from the teachers and the principal. Is the club having an effect on attendance and behaviour in class? This information is useful to show the impact of the breakfast club. The breakfast club should be supportive of their role and their feedback is important to ensure that this is true.

# Sample Questionnaire for Children



We would like to know what you think of the breakfast clubs.  
Please ask Catherine if you need help with any of the questions.

1. What do you like about the breakfast club?

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2. What do you not like about the breakfast club?

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3. How could we make it better?

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4. What do you tell your friends about the breakfast club?

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Thank you for answering these questions.

Please put it in the box when you are finished.

## Staff feedback

Regular feedback from staff members at the breakfast club is essential. They are best placed to feedback on children's welfare, attendance, foods available, and to provide practical suggestions on improvements to the running of the club. Staff members should be encouraged to be observant and reflect on how the club is being run. They need to be aware of the importance of their input and how the information is used to improve the club.

These are just some examples of the information that could be collected. Remember to make it appropriate for your club and the community in which you work. Think about the information that would be most useful to inform the running of the club.

## How often should I collect information?

This will depend on the type of information you are collecting and how you will use the information. The number of children attending the club can be collected each day and reviewed each term to look at attendance rates over the whole term and see what changes are needed. Feedback from children could be collected at the end of each term if it is possible to make changes for the next term.





## Remember

- Allow adequate time for staff to collect this information and complete the analysis. Plan who is going to collect the information and build this into their role. Do they need training or further support to complete the evaluation?
- Think of how often information needs to be collected. Attendance records could be examined each term. Feedback from children, parents and teachers may only need to be gathered at the end of each year and changes made for the next year.
- Set aside time to analyse the information so that it can be used to monitor progress and inform future changes to the club.

## Tell people!

Write a report based on your feedback and give it to parents, teachers, relevant community organisations, and your key partners. Tell the children what the report says. It will be important to highlight the successes of the breakfast club and the challenges along the way.

FEEDBACK



# Case Study

## **BEST SCP Early Bird Clubs, Ballymun, Dublin 11**

Ballymun Educational Support Team School Completion Programme (BEST SCP) runs Early Bird Clubs (EBC) in six sites for nine primary and secondary schools in Ballymun. The Early Bird Clubs were set up to provide a warm, social environment where children can eat a nutritious breakfast and have an opportunity to interact with friends and adults on an informal basis.

### **How are the clubs run?**

BEST SCP put together a proposal for the principal and Board of Management of each school. This included information on the benefits of breakfast clubs, where the club would be held, what food would be served, funding sources, insurance details, and the commitment required from the school. This differs for each school depending on the facilities available and the needs of the children attending. BEST SCP provides the on-going support for the EBC Co-ordinator, assumes the roles and responsibilities for the employment of EBC staff, implements the evaluation processes and the health and hygiene policies and procedures. BEST SCP is also responsible for interagency work and the engagement of targeted children in the clubs.

### **How are the clubs funded?**

The main funding is sourced by the Ballymun Local Drugs Task Force through the City of Dublin Youth Services Board (CDYSB). This funds all EBC staff members, food and necessary equipment for all Early Bird Clubs.

### **How is the club evaluated?**

Evaluation is a key part of the Early Bird Clubs and is used to recognise achievements gained and to inform the running of all clubs. Evaluation is ongoing throughout the school year, and involves all staff members, children, parents, school staff and BEST SCP personnel. Different methods are used to collect the information. Review meetings are held each term with the BEST SCP Worker, Home School Community Liaison Officer and School Principal for each school. The review process is facilitated by BEST SCP and an annual report is completed at the end of each year.

**Daily**

- Attendance Record
- Relevant hygiene checks

**Weekly**

- Staff feedback on welfare of children
- Challenges that arose during the week
- Relevant hygiene checks

**Term**

- Review of attendance records
- Review attendance of 'high-risk' families
- Staff training needs
- Menu review and planning
- Parental engagement

**Annual**

- Feedback from Children
- Feedback from Parents
- Feedback from School Staff and On Site Care Teams (Principal, BEST SCP Worker, HSCL)
- Feedback from Early Bird Staff
- External Health & Hygiene Audit
- Spending Review

**What information is collected from children?**

Teachers facilitate completion of questionnaires with their classes, and find it a useful exercise for developing children's skills in recording thoughts and completing forms. Children are asked what they like and don't like about the club, what improvements could be made, and effects on their social and personal skills. Questionnaires are used to gather feedback from children that do not come to the Early Bird Clubs to understand what changes could be made to encourage their attendance.



### What information is collected from parents and school staff?

Parents and school staff are asked about the effect of the breakfast club on children and the impact it has on their own day, such as better routine in the morning for parents or improved concentration of children in class for teachers. They are also asked on suggestions for improvements or other comments on the club. Home School Community Liaison Officers will complete the questionnaire with parents, where necessary.

### Feedback from Early Bird staff

Regular feedback from staff members in all Early Bird Clubs is an essential element of the evaluation process. Staff members are best placed to feedback on attendance and welfare of children to ensure any problems are addressed promptly. They can also provide a practical insight into the running of the club and suggest appropriate improvements.

### Summary Box

How many children attend each morning?	337
How many staff members are needed each morning?	21 (includes 1 Co-ordinator)
Funding Source – Food	CDYSB
Funding Source – Venue	CDYSB
Funding Source – Equipment	CDYSB
Funding Source – Staff	CDYSB
Is there a charge?	No

### Contact Details:

Ballymun Educational Support Team School Completion Programme (BEST SCP)

Geraldstown House

Ballymun

Dublin 11

Email: [bestscp@hotmail.com](mailto:bestscp@hotmail.com)

Telephone: 01 8422166

**BordBia**

[www.bordbia.ie](http://www.bordbia.ie)

**Business in the Community**

[www.bitc.ie](http://www.bitc.ie)

**Community Food and Health Scotland**

[www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk](http://www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk)

**ContinYou**

[www.continyou.org.uk](http://www.continyou.org.uk)

**Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine** (EU School Milk Scheme)

[www.agriculture.gov.ie](http://www.agriculture.gov.ie)

**Department of Children and Youth Affairs**

[www.dcy.gov.ie](http://www.dcy.gov.ie)

**Department of Health**

[www.dohc.ie](http://www.dohc.ie)

**Department of Social Protection** (School Meals Programme)

[www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie)

**Food Safety Authority of Ireland**

[www.fsai.ie](http://www.fsai.ie)

**Healthy Food for All**

[www.healthyfoodforall.com](http://www.healthyfoodforall.com)

**HSE Health Promotion**

[www.healthpromotion.ie](http://www.healthpromotion.ie)

**Health Service Executive**

[www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)

**National Dairy Council Fresh Milk Club**

[www.thefreshmilkclub.ie](http://www.thefreshmilkclub.ie)

**safefood**

[www.safefood.eu](http://www.safefood.eu)

**Volunteer Ireland**

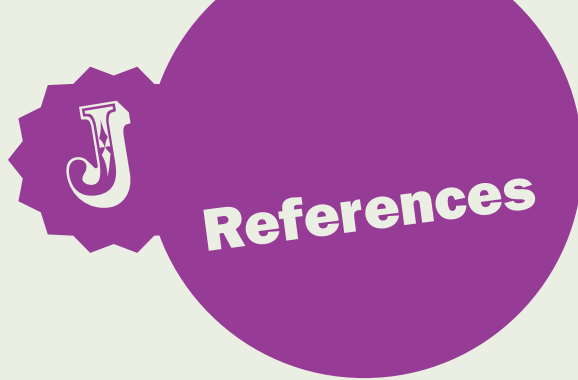
[www.volunteer.ie](http://www.volunteer.ie)

**The Wheel**

[www.thewheel.ie](http://www.thewheel.ie)



**Useful  
Websites**



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- 16 Department of Agriculture: [www.agriculture.gov.ie](http://www.agriculture.gov.ie)
- 17 National Dairy Council – The Fresh Milk Club: [www.thefreshmilkclub.ie](http://www.thefreshmilkclub.ie)
- 18 Health Promotion Agency Northern Ireland. (2009) *School Food: the essential Guide - Healthier Breakfast Clubs*. Health Promotion Agency Northern Ireland.
- 19 ContinYou: [www.continyou.org.uk](http://www.continyou.org.uk)
- 20 FÁS: [www.fas.ie](http://www.fas.ie)
- 21 JobBridge: [www.jobbridge.ie](http://www.jobbridge.ie)

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# NOTES

A large grid of graph paper for taking notes, consisting of 20 columns and 30 rows of small squares. The grid is light blue and covers most of the page.



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access | availability | affordability