

# SAVE OUR SCHOOL FOOD STANDARDS!

Friday 20 March 2015

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Dear xxxxx

## **School Food Standards in England – will you support us?**

With the General Election looming we thought this an excellent opportunity to celebrate all the good things we've achieved under the current administration and to find out your position on school food standards.

The challenge is simple. We want the next government to continue the good work of the School Food Plan and make school food standards mandatory in **all** schools. Currently academies formed after September 2010 and before June 2014 are exempt. That's 3,844 schools where food goes unregulated and over half of them are receiving funding from the Department for Education for infant free school meals.

**Will your party make the school food standards mandatory for all schools?** Here are the facts to inform your decision:

- The Department for Education understands and acknowledges the importance of a healthy school lunch and continues to support the actions of the School Food Plan by working with its Expert Panel to implement radical change.
- One of those actions in the School Food Plan was to develop a new set of school food standards, to act as a "nutritional safety-net ... to guard against the reintroduction of the worst practices".<sup>1</sup>
- There is clear endorsement of the standards from the Department. The Schools Minister said, "These new food standards will ensure that nutritious, tasty meals can be enjoyed by all children who choose a school lunch. Providing healthy school food boosts children's health and education. It gives them the fuel they need to concentrate inside and outside the classroom and establishes healthy eating habits for life."<sup>2</sup>
- The School Food Plan recommended that the standards be made mandatory across all types of school. The Plan's authors said, "... we know from international evidence that rules are only followed when they are backed up by law."<sup>3</sup>
- The Secretary of State agreed with this principle and went on to revise funding agreements for new academies created since June 2014 to include the requirement to follow the school food standards, **but academies formed after September 2010 and before June 2014 are still exempt.**

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<sup>1</sup> School Food Plan p95

<sup>2</sup> Schools Minister David Laws. School Food Plan website 5 January 2015

<sup>3</sup> School Food Plan p95

- In January, the Department wrote to all these academies to ask them to voluntarily sign up to the new school food standards. This followed a concerted effort by the School Food Plan to encourage academies to sign up. To date 1,065 academies have shown great leadership and have committed to comply with the standards - but that's only 28% of those in the 'regulation gap'<sup>4</sup>.

We need the next government to make that final step and make the school food standards mandatory across **all** schools. We have been advised that the process is simple; if the Secretary of State made a small amendment to the regulation, this would supersede the funding agreements in place with academies which allows them to disregard the standards.

**Will you support us? Tell us what your party will do.**

We will publish your response on our website and alert the Department for Education to these position statements. On 15 May, it's Food Revolution Day and Jamie Oliver will read out the statements from the parties holding power in the new government. This will be a great opportunity for the world to hear that your party is committed to healthy nutritious food for **all** children in England.

Please write to us at the address below or email [saveourstandards@schoolfoodmatters.com](mailto:saveourstandards@schoolfoodmatters.com)

Yours sincerely

**Save Our School Food Standards**

c/o School Food Matters  
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*The Save Our School Food Standards campaign was launched in February 2012. It calls for academies and free schools to be required to comply with the same mandatory standards for school food currently safeguarding the quality of food available in maintained schools. The campaign represents a coalition of support for the standards, led by the Jamie Oliver Food Foundation, Children's Food Campaign, Children's Food Trust, Food for Life Partnership and School Food Matters.*

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<sup>4</sup> School Food Plan website <http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Academy-Free-School-sign-ups-190315.pdf>