

School Food Waste Audit Guidance



Bring together your School Nutrition Action Group for planning your School Food Audit, ensuring that a member from the school catering team and the midday supervising team are able to attend. Their help and support with your audit will be key to its success!

Here are 6 points for a successful Food Waste Audit:

1. A food collection point
2. Interviewers to find out why food hasn't been eaten
3. A form to record reasons for why food hasn't been eaten
4. A way to separate out food waste
5. Weighers to separate out and weigh the food waste
6. A form to record the weight of food waste

It is possible to do an audit without steps 2-4 and without separating out the waste in step 5. However, by finding out which foods aren't being eaten and why, there is the chance to make changes to meals and lunchtime arrangements to eliminate problems causing this waste.

1. Food collection point

You will need a food waste collection point – a table in a prominent position in the school hall. Make sure everyone knows to take their tray to the collection point when they have finished eating.

However, make sure that this collection point isn't close to the serving hatch or too close to children eating as it may put them off their food!

2. Interviewers

Before waste is tipped into the relevant buckets, the interviewers' role is to find out why the food hasn't been eaten.

Top tip: to avoid having only very general answers such as "I didn't like it," follow up that answer with another question: "What didn't you like about it?" For example, if the jacket potato wasn't eaten because someone "didn't like it," their answer to the follow-up question might be "It was too dry" or "It was too mushy," which is more helpful.

3. A form to record reasons for why food hasn't been eaten (see Food Waste Interview Sheet)

4. Separating out food waste

Separating out food waste into different types of foods helps you to then be able to take action to reduce the waste. What is being wasted the most? Is there a reason for this?



To separate out food waste, you will need:

- A set of buckets (ideally all the same so that you can weigh just one bucket, record its weight, and then deduct this from the weight of the bucket when it is full of food waste). These will be used to separate out different food items (fruit & vegetables; pasta/rice; meat/protein etc.)
- Signs for each bucket so it is clear what food goes into each bucket.
- Scales – hand-held luggage scales or bathroom scales are both easy to use.
- A recording form (see Food Waste Recording Form).

5. Weighers

Recruit at least 4 pupils to help separate and weigh the food waste during lunchtime. An incentive (if needed) might be that they can have their lunch before the normal lunchbreak that day, so that they are full and ready to help!

Members of your School Nutrition Action Group (SNAG), eco club or school council might be keen to help.

Here are some actions from other Food for Life schools which you might want to adopt:

- Take photos of the food waste bins at the end of lunchtime and share these in assembly or on your Eco notice board – it is everyone's waste so make sure they know about it and take responsibility for it!
- Use a metre stick to measure the depth of food waste in each bucket at the end of lunchtime. Record this and include the measurements in assembly or on your display board, then record and shout about progress made on reducing the waste.

6. A form to record the amount of food waste.