

BUILDING THE LUNCH TEAM

Recruitment



Why It Matters

The job of supporting lunchtimes in schools is a highly skilled one that requires skilled personnel. Typically, staff are low paid and have low self esteem and low expectations. They must work for the children in a less structured time and space and with less training and less knowledge of the children. Recruiting the right people is the key to success.

Tools



- A draft job description and job advert are included in the appendices to this Toolkit.

Building the Team

Why It Matters

It can feel a very lonely job with little appreciation from elsewhere. Staff will feel better and function at a higher level if they feel that they are part of a team, valued and appreciated by all and that there is always a support structure through the team.

Tools and Top Tips



- Give the team a job title that reflects the role you want them to perform. If you call people supervisors, they will supervise. If you call them assistants, they will assist. If you want them to lead, call them leaders.
- Make them feel like a team with a “team kit”. Smart, professional looking tee shirts and fleeces with the school logo serve to:
 - Make the wearer feel professional and valued
 - Enhance their professionalism in the eyes of the children
 - Make them more visible in the lunch hall and playground
- Recognise the education involved in the job by having the team line managed by education staff, not admin. It's NOT an admin role!
- Meet regularly for line management and ensure that the team have time to meet together. They should have the same opportunities to work together as any other department in the school.
- Have a team structure with the best leadership. Think about who is best skilled to be a leader and ensure that these leaders are empowered to make things happen. Having a leadership structure for your lunchtime team also means that there is something to aspire to for junior members of the team.



Staff at work in Hythe Primary

Make sure that “Staff Wellbeing” for the team is a priority. Think about ways to boost their wellbeing as a team and ensure that they are part of any staff wellbeing activities being done in the rest of the school.

Excerpts from “A Toolkit for Lunchtimes in Hampshire”

(Hampshire County Council / Hampshire Healthy Schools / Flexible Solutions HC3S)

Communication

Why It Matters

Communication Matters on two levels – for a team that covers a wide geographical area each lunchtime, the need to communicate effectively is essential to a smooth operation. For ensuring that the lunchtime is a seamless part of the school day, communications between the lunch team and the teaching staff is critical.

Tools and Top Tips



- Have walkie talkies for the inside and outside lunch teams to be able to talk to each other. This allows the throughput into the servery during lunch to be as smooth as possible. Importantly, it will allow for a much more rapid response in the case of an emergency.
- A system needs to be in place to allow the lunch team to communicate effectively with the teaching staff. There should be no change in behaviour or expectations for the children at lunchtime and sharing information is the way to ensure that there are no gaps. This can be done:
 - Orally with a handover at the end of lunchtime
 - Through the afternoon where the lunch team are also teaching assistants
 - With a written referral system although this supposes that people have time to write them and other people have time to read them and then act upon them
 - Have an e system within the school

It's important that these communications are for good as well as bad things.

- Have a system whereby any problems that arise at lunchtime are dealt with but do not interrupt the start of the afternoon's learning. A "parking" system where issues are placed somewhere at the start of the afternoon for dealing with at a convenient time is the suggested method for achieving this.
- Communication through assemblies is important. Assemblies are the place where whole school issues are discussed and lunchtime needs to be a feature. The lunch team should be involved and seen to be leading this aspect of school life. They can promote the school ethos as it is lived through the lunch hour and share with the children, developments and reviews as they happen.
- Rewards need to be communicated. It means a lot to the children that recognition at lunch leads to recognition in the classroom. It also reinforces the idea that everyone is part of the same staff team. One example would be that a reward from a lunchtime leader would lead to a "marble in the jar" back in the classroom.

Excerpts from "A Toolkit for Lunchtimes in Hampshire"

(Hampshire County Council / Hampshire Healthy Schools / Flexible Solutions HC3S)

Misbehaviour

Why It Matters

Misbehaviour can spoil lunchtime for other pupils and can lead to demoralisation of the lunch staff. It takes up learning time in afternoon school because issues have to be dealt with.

Tools and Top Tips



- Ensure that any behaviour management training includes the lunch team.
- Be consistent about the language used to deal with poor behaviour so that lunch staff say the same things as teachers.
- Recognise that most misbehaviour at lunchtimes is as a result of boredom rather than malice and provide an exciting lunchtime so that children are positively occupied.
- Work with the lunch team and with the children so that behaviour expectations are clear. Make these expectations visible in both the hall and the playground.
- Agree the system of consequences for poor behaviour and ensure these are based on the ethos that pervades the rest of the school.
- Support lunch staff in dealing with the small minority of children who persistently misbehave.
- Have a duty member of staff each day that the lunch team know they can call on to support at lunchtime.
- Instigate a system whereby issues that arise at lunchtime are "parked" to be dealt with later, rather than taking time out of the learning in the afternoon.

Appendix 7 – Draft Job Description for Lunchtime Leader

JOB DESCRIPTION

Lunchtime Leader

At ***** School, we are committed to giving our children the very best education possible. This commitment applies through the lunchtime as well as in class and at playtimes. Our lunchtime team are a vital part in the promotion of the best welfare and education for all our children. The job of Lunchtime Leader is a vital one, with high expectations and equally high job satisfaction..

The Role

- To ensure the health and safety of pupils during the lunchtime
- To lead the children in enjoying a calm and pleasant lunch by
 - Modelling and encouraging calm, respectful behaviour in line with the school ethos
 - Encouraging the children to eat healthily, try new foods, respect the rights of others
 - Rewarding children who do the right things
 - Maintaining a clean and pleasant environment in which to eat lunch
 - Supporting the lunch team to ensure that all children have their lunch during the lunch break
 - Supporting children with specific needs to have the right lunch and in the right environment
- To lead activities in the playground as part of the lunch team
- To promote and reward positive behaviour in the playground and be proactive in dealing with inappropriate behaviour
- To support the school's overall ethos and behaviour policy
- To liaise with other staff about the children in our care

The Person

A Lunchtime Supervisor needs to be:

1. Passionate about helping and supporting all children
2. A good team player
3. Willing to lead and show initiative
4. An optimist with a sense of humour

Appendix 8 – Draft Job Advert for Lunchtime Leader

Can you make a difference in the lives of our children?

WANTED

Lunchtime Leader

We are looking for a caring, talented individual who shares our passion for providing the best experience possible for our children. The role of lunchtime leader, working as part of a highly valued team, is to lead activities such as skipping games and ball games and support children to eat well and play well throughout the lunchtime.

The Key Skills

1. A passion for helping and supporting all children
2. A good team player
3. A willingness to lead and show initiative
4. An optimistic outlook and a sense of humour



If this is you, please apply.

(For more information, please ask to speak to an existing member of the team.)