England to tighten school meal rules by 2027

LEVEL B1


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I. WARM-UP

1. What did you usually eat for lunch at school?
2. How healthy are school meals in your country?
3. Should schools limit sugar and fried food? Why?

II. KEY VOCABULARY

ban
an official rule that stops people from doing or offering something

standards
agreed rules that show the level of quality required

nutrition
the process of getting the food your body needs to be healthy

monitor
to watch and check something regularly to see if it follows the rules

processed
changed in a factory and often with added salt, sugar or other ingredients

portion
a measured amount of food served to one person

eligibility
the fact of being allowed to get or use something by the rules

wellbeing
a state of being healthy and feeling good

III. READING

England is bringing in new school food standards, which the government calls once-in-a-generation changes. Deep-fried food will be banned, while fibre and wholegrains will increase.

Sweet desserts will be limited to twice a week in secondary schools and once a week in primary, and each dessert must come with a portion of fruit. Processed meats such as ham, sausages and chicken nuggets will be served only once a week with vegetables or fruit.

From next September, breakfast clubs will follow nutrition rules for the first time: pastries and fried eggs will be off the menu, some cereals will face a sugar cap, and chocolate spread and Coco Pops will not be permitted.

Schools must publish menus and food policies online, and monitoring will be developed with the Food Standards Agency. The reforms aim to tackle childhood obesity and support concentration, learning and wellbeing. Most changes take full effect in 2027 and will use existing school funding.

Free school meal eligibility is expanding to families on Universal Credit, so more pupils will benefit. Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own rules and timelines.

Reading text adapted from reporting by **BBC News**: *"Deep-fried food banned under new school dinner...". Original article linked at theenglishwire.com.*

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. When will most of the new rules take full effect in England?
2. What happens to deep-fried food under the new standards?
3. How often may schools serve sweet desserts in primary and secondary?
4. What must schools publish online under the reforms?
5. What change is coming to breakfast clubs from next September?

V. DISCUSSION

1. Should desserts be limited at school? Why or why not?
2. Is banning deep-fried food a good idea for pupils?
3. How could online menus help parents and students?
4. What makes a good breakfast for learning?

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Connecting words

Connecting words (linkers) join ideas. Use because to give a reason and so to give a result. Use but or although to show contrast; despite also shows contrast, but it comes before a noun.

> *"Schools publish menus online* **because** *parents asked for them."*
>
> *"Fried food is banned,* **although** *some treats remain available."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Circle the correct option in each sentence.

1. Menus will change (because / although) obesity is a problem. _____
2. Breakfast clubs limit pastries, (but / so) children eat less sugar. _____
3. The changes are big, (but / so) schools will get no extra money. _____
4. Pupils need energy to learn, (although / so) breakfast matters. _____
5. Processed meats will be limited, (because / despite) their popularity. _____

Teacher's Notes

TEACHERS ONLY

These notes are designed to help you get the most out of this lesson. Please do not share this page with students.


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I. LESSON GUIDE

- Timing: 8–10 minutes warm-up, 10 minutes vocabulary, 12–15 minutes reading and comprehension, 8–10 minutes grammar, 10 minutes discussion.
- Pre-teach key items (ban, nutrition, processed, eligibility) and check pronunciation of wellbeing and portion.
- Set a first skim for main changes, then a second scan for details like dates and frequencies; pair-check answers before whole-class feedback.
- Differentiate by role: stronger students summarise the aims in two sentences; others list three concrete menu changes with examples.

II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. Ask for quick examples from students' schools, then push for reasons and effects.
2. Run a quick poll, then pair up opposing views to find one agreement.
3. Have students read a sample menu on their phone and suggest improvements.
4. Board food ideas, then rank them by energy, cost, and ease to prepare.

III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Survey: In groups, design a five-question survey on school meals and collect five responses.

Writing: Write a 70-word sample weekly menu that follows the new rules, including one dessert.

IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

Comprehension questions: short factual answers from the text.

Grammar exercise: Connecting words

Discussion: open-ended. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

Answer Key

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IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. When will most of the new rules take full effect in England?
   In 2027.
2. What happens to deep-fried food under the new standards?
   It will be banned.
3. How often may schools serve sweet desserts in primary and secondary?
   Secondary: twice a week; primary: once a week.
4. What must schools publish online under the reforms?
   Menus and food policies.
5. What change is coming to breakfast clubs from next September?
   They will follow nutrition rules for the first time.

V. DISCUSSION

Open answers. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Key point: Connecting words (linkers) join ideas. Use because to give a reason and so to give a result. Use but or although to show contrast; despite also shows contrast, but it comes before a noun. (Examples constructed.)

> *"Schools publish menus online* **because** *parents asked for them."*
>
> *"Fried food is banned,* **although** *some treats remain available."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Circle the correct option in each sentence.

1. Menus will change (because / although) obesity is a problem. **because**
2. Breakfast clubs limit pastries, (but / so) children eat less sugar. **so**
3. The changes are big, (but / so) schools will get no extra money. **but**
4. Pupils need energy to learn, (although / so) breakfast matters. **so**
5. Processed meats will be limited, (because / despite) their popularity. **despite**