

# Food School Guide

Explore the food culture of  
Copenhagen food schools



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The guide is a collaboration between the food schools in Copenhagen, the Children and Youth Administration in the Municipality of Copenhagen and Meyers Madhus. The collaboration has taken the form of workshops, interviews and conversations, and builds on the experience gained from more than a decade of practice at the food schools.

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# Inspiration for Copenhagen food schools

A food school is a school where healthy and tasty food is made every day from fresh ingredients, where students are involved in the kitchen, and where adults and children eat together and talk, taste and experience the world of food.

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The food schools are public schools in Copenhagen with students from ages 6 to 15. The food schools are equipped with a local production kitchen and a big dining area; and in addition to the normal curriculum there is a strong focus on food. In a food school, there is great potential to make a difference in children's education, learning and well-being through food and meals. This guide is an inspiration to unlock and realise that potential. The guide is for all food school staff - management, kitchen staff, teachers and educators.

## **The guide does not stand alone**

All food schools have the opportunity to get free advice from the City of Copenhagen's culinary advisors, which offers courses and counselling tailored to your needs. For example, help with recruiting a kitchen manager, menu development, food waste initiatives,

organising tasks and much more. Find more information at [maaltider.kk.dk](http://maaltider.kk.dk)

As a supplement to the guide, there are a number of materials that can be downloaded and used in the daily life of a food school. These can be found at [www.bornemenuen.kk.dk](http://www.bornemenuen.kk.dk)

Have a great time!

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1.

## A common set of values

The food schools stand on a common set of values, while leaving plenty of room for local, creative and individual solutions. There's a lot we share, but also many ways to be a food school.

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In 2017, the food schools, the City of Copenhagen's Children and Youth Administration together with Copenhagen House of Food created a manifesto. The manifesto was a response to a growing need for a common starting point at a time when more food schools were emerging. On the next page you can see the 10 dogmas of the manifesto.

The dogmas reflect a holistic perspective. Namely, when you talk about a food school, you're talking about the whole school; and that food schools create value in many areas, including food literacy and education, interdisciplinary learning and social communities that also include parents and the neighbourhood.

The dogmas can be unfolded in different ways. For example, if you don't have the opportunity to create a garden in the traditional sense, you may be able to find space for planters or similar. In most schools, "everyone eats together" means in practice that adults and children eat together in shifts, as there is rarely room for everyone at the same time.

This guide provides inspiration for working with the dogmas in practice.



The 10 dogmas from

# The Food School Manifesto

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1. The food school is the whole school
2. At a food school, everyone eats together
3. At a food school, food is made from raw ingredients
4. At a food school, parents are inspired and learn from their children
5. At a food school, there is a garden
6. The food school creates interdisciplinary magic
7. The food school is the heart and pulse of the local community
8. The food school is a learning space
9. At a food school, children cook
10. At a food school, the meal is at the centre

## The Food Strategy

The food schools are part of the ambitious goals for health, sustainability and the social potential of meals that have become a Copenhagen landmark. These ambitions are expressed in the City of Copenhagen's Food Strategy from 2019, which is built around five overall goals:

- Food should provide the right nutrition and strengthen health
- Focus on flavour, quality and food enjoyment
- Meals must be sustainable and climate-responsible
- We must strengthen social communities, food culture and food literacy and education
- Copenhagen must be a healthy, green and vital food city

The section on sustainable and climate-responsible meals covers three specific goals: to reduce the climate footprint of meals by 25% per kg of food by 2025, to achieve at least 90% organic food in all public kitchens (with a few specific exceptions) by 2025 and to reduce food waste by 50% by 2030.

Today, food schools are good ambassadors for all three SDGs. On average, the food schools are over 90% organic, and they are working hard to reduce their carbon footprint and food waste. The food schools are also well placed to fulfil the

other goals of the strategy, not least because of their focus on food and meals as a space for community and education.

The shared core values are the common thread in the themes discussed below. All based on the experiences and practices of food schools today and sharing of best practice.

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In 2023, there were 20 food schools in Copenhagen. More are coming as many new public schools are being built with production kitchens. This means that even more children will be able to eat a freshly prepared and healthy lunch and have the opportunity for interdisciplinary learning in the special learning spaces that food schools provide.

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**The food school is the whole school - and all students are involved**

The food schools also have students, who eat packed lunches. Part of the food schools' vision is that students who do not eat lunch from the kitchen can and must still be included. Students with packed lunches are a full-fledged part of the community and participate in the production of lunch, tasting sessions and all other parts of the food school activities.



2.

## Culture and organisation

The first dogma of the manifesto is “The food school is the whole school”. This may seem like a trivial observation, but here lies perhaps the most important key to making these values flourish on a daily basis.

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A conscious organisation of tasks and roles around the whole school's food life is crucial. What good organisation looks like will vary from school to school, but this section describes some of the initiatives that have been shown to work well.

### **A Food Committee**

Many food schools organise themselves into a multidisciplinary team, which some call a Food Committee or Food School Committee. It provides a framework for planning the year and an opportunity to continuously address the questions and challenges that arise during the school year.

Most often the committee consists of kitchen staff, teachers, pedagogical staff and perhaps a technical property manager. Often the school principal is a member of the Committee either

permanently or a couple of times a year to be involved in major decisions. It takes a lot of management support and involvement to succeed, so that both the food and interdisciplinary magic can happen. A couple of times a year, you can also invite student representatives – for example from the student council – so that the students' voices are heard; and members of the school board can also be invited along.

### **Participants in the food committee**

- The management team
- The kitchen team or representatives from the kitchen team
- Teacher/educator/pedagogue – in large schools, several representatives from the teaching team, e.g. one from the primary, middle and secondary school team.





- Technical staff – one or more depending on the size of your school and your needs
- Two student representatives – e.g. from the Student Council
- Representatives from the School Board (can participate a few times a year)

If you're starting up a brand new food school, the organisation needs to be established from the start – and this will often require a slightly more intensive process in the Food Committee, where fundamental issues such as the division of responsibilities in relation to children's involvement in the kitchen, communication to parents about food and meals, collaboration between the kitchen and the rest of the school, the academic and pedagogical priorities for food and meals, etc.

The Food Committee can meet approximately once a month, but it can be adjusted according to your needs, and be even more frequent or less frequent.

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## Key tasks of the Food Committee

### Every year

- Economy
- Annual plan

### Every month

- Adjusting the annual plan
  - Agreements during the month – who does what and when is the deadline
  - Events during the month
  - The everyday meal – is it working or does something need to be adjusted
  - Follow-up on finances
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### **Annual cycle and annual planning**

Once a year, preferably in connection with the teachers' subject allocation and timetabling, it would be fruitful to discuss the bigger picture of the school's food life. Make sure the kitchen staff are included in the development of the school's annual cycle and annual planning to ensure that the production kitchen is an integral and important part of the whole school.

Specifically, the annual cycle can cover topics such as the food school's ambitions, goals, learning objectives, events throughout the year, themes, seasons, teaching programmes, the meal and much more.

This also ensures that teachers incorporate the production kitchen and interdisciplinary opportunities in their annual plan.

### **Food School Coordinator**

The school management has overall responsibility for activities around food and meals. Many food schools choose to place the ongoing, coordinating responsibility with a food School Coordinator. Having a kitchen and a shared lunch meal is the epitome of a cross-cutting task – and someone needs to be in charge of logistics, communication and coordination. The Food School Coordinator can't do it all alone but can ensure that the tasks around food and meals are taken care of.

The Food School Coordinator is often a teacher, but not necessarily. It can be a cross-functional role for e.g. the primary, middle and secondary school, but it can also be several people sharing the task – with the additional coordination tasks that this entails.

The Food School Coordinator is often the one who:

- Coordinates the work of the Food Committee
- Follows up to ensure that decisions made in the Food Committee are followed through
- Communicates and shares knowledge
- Helps new employees on board with food and meals
- Deals with changes on a weekly basis – e.g. student participation in the kitchen, menu changes, etc.

### **Communication supports the whole organisation**

It makes sense to have an ongoing focus on communication with everyone who comes into contact with food and meals. This way, the whole school knows what's going on and can get inspiration on how to use food and meals in their teaching. Parents are also best equipped to be supportive if they are informed about the perspectives of being a food school. To realise this in practice, you may need different communication materials, for example:

- Letters about lunch and kitchen activities for parents and students
- Guide for mealtime hosts – for teachers, pedagogues and substitute teachers
- Food and mealtime pedagogy – for all employees
- Information material for parent-teacher meetings that teachers can use (e.g. powerpoint or film)

At [www.bornemenuen.kk.dk](http://www.bornemenuen.kk.dk) you'll find templates for these and other materials that you can customise and make your own.

### **Parents as ambassadors**

Parents are important partners for the school in all aspects. In addition to other orientations for parents, you can also use parent meetings and monthly newsletters to tell parents about initiatives in the kitchen, the menu or a good story from mealtime. With simple steps you can involve parents in supporting the food and mealtime initiatives:

- Send out the menu well in advance so parents can familiarise themselves with it
- Include information from/about the kitchen in the school's monthly newsletter as a regular feature so that parents feel that food and meals are an integral part of the school day
- Share great stories from the kitchen, mealtime, the subject 'home economics' and/or other food activities









3.

## Learning and pedagogical perspectives

Having a production kitchen, a dining area and multiple disciplines in a school can contribute positively to the school's core mission of learning and education. Being a food school provides another learning space.

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The practical-musical subjects – including home economics – all have an inherent potential to support theoretical learning in both their own and other subjects. Food schools provide unique opportunities, and not least, good conditions for strengthening students' practical skills.

### **What is food literacy and education?**

A particularly favourable environment for children's food education is an obvious advantage of being a food school. But what do we really mean when we talk about food literacy and education?

If you go to the Ministry of Education, a definition is offered, namely: "the acquisition of knowledge and skills in the field of food and the development of the ability to make critical,

development of the ability to make critical, reflective and conscious food choices based on knowledge in the field".

Helle Brønnum Carlsen has also offered a definition of food literacy as "knowledge about food and health, considerations of morality, animal welfare, resources and production conditions, and the importance of food as a social factor and as an area of enjoyment through the experience of flavour". Children's food literacy and education can involve, among other things, that they:

- Acquire an understanding and language of sensory experiences including flavours, aromas and textures

- Understand the context of food and develop a sense of social and environmental responsibility in relation to food consumption
- Learn to collaborate and become part of a food and meal culture where people help each other
- Gain practical kitchen skills that will benefit them for life

Regardless of how exactly you define food literacy and education, like education in general, it is a broad concept with both practical and theoretical aspects.

### **The practical approach – students in the kitchen**

You can work with food education at any school. The special thing about being a food school is that we can take food education into the kitchen on a daily basis. All food schools have students producing food in the kitchen every day, from early morning until afternoon. The number of students involved daily varies from school to school, but there are usually 3–8 students in the kitchen daily. Students help with all tasks, and only the largest machines or dangerous tasks are handled by the kitchen staff alone.

There are many ways to organise student involvement. Here are some options to consider based on good experiences from food schools:

#### ***Student composition on kitchen teams***

Regardless of how many students are in the kitchen at a time, it's a good idea to think about the mix of students to ensure the best possible conditions for a good experience for everyone.

#### ***One week at a time***

Students are often in the kitchen for a week at a time, with the tasks in the kitchen filling up their school day. Working in the kitchen for a week allows students to get used to the working conditions and build a good routine with the adults in the kitchen.

#### ***Involved in menu planning***

Helping to plan the week's menu or parts of it is a great way to prepare for getting into the kitchen. Often, students are already involved the week – or month – before, so there is time to order ingredients and products based on what is planned. In some places, students have a say in the entire week's menu, but it may also be one or more days or even individual dishes.

#### ***The dialogue between kitchen and classroom***

Successful student involvement requires communication and coordination between teachers and the kitchen team. Use the dialogue between kitchen and classroom actively before, during and after the students' time in the kitchen. Consider whether the teacher can visit the kitchen the week before to discuss practical training and pedagogical perspectives; and whether the kitchen manager can visit the class to talk about what will happen in the kitchen.







### **The kitchen and the subjects**

The world of food can bridge the gap between theoretical teaching and practical understanding of teaching in several subjects. The practical work in the kitchen can bring theoretical knowledge into play. For example, when students pour a litre of sourdough into a mixing bowl and see that it has the same volume as 1000 millilitres and 10 decilitres, it activates their understanding of decimals, units of measurement and mental arithmetic. You can find many similar learning opportunities related to most subjects.

You can work purposefully to integrate learning objectives from food science – and other subjects – into your kitchen work. On a general level, this can be done under the auspices of the Food Committee. As part of this, you can organise interdisciplinary collaborations and courses that also involve the production kitchen. You can for example:

- Organise a course on fish in biology and home economics where the kitchen can put the fish you work with in class on the lunch menu
- Create a sensory lab. Some food schools have developed a room or mobile sensory bins that can be used both in the school's different subjects and in after-school clubs. Learning bins may use food and meals to work with word groups, maths, etc. and are created in collaboration with the kitchen and Food School Coordinator.

- Explore recipes and food cultures from other countries in a collaboration between language classes and home economics. If the production kitchen is involved in menu planning, these dishes and food cultures can likewise be encountered during the kitchen activities and lunchtime
- Use recipes from the production kitchen both theoretically and practically in home economics
- Organise collaboration between the home economics teacher and the production kitchen to rehearse exams with students for the home economics elective
- Allow students to do work experience in the production kitchen

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*“When we bring the children into our sensory laboratory and do exercises with a mushroom theme, for example, it has a positive effect on the meal and on the children’s food courage. Once we ‘play’ with the food, they become comfortable tasting the food when we subsequently serve a dish with mushrooms. And teachers realise the learning potential of working with mushrooms and working with us in the kitchen.”*

**Kitchen Manager, Kalvebod Fælled School**

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### **The kitchen and major events**

Over the course of a school year, there will be several events that the kitchen can contribute to – and perhaps be the driving force behind – for the benefit of everyone and as a way of raising the profile of the kitchen. It can be anything from the school's birthday to the sports day before the autumn holidays or the annual age- and subject integrated week such as mini-city week that is tradition in many schools. Holidays and local traditions can also be anchored in the kitchen. At some food schools, the kitchen organises and hosts the 9th grade graduation celebrations together with the 8th graders and their teachers. The possibilities are endless – find out what you want and build it into your annual plan.

### **Training the senses**

Consciously working with the sensory aspects of food can help provide a strong foundation for children's food literacy and education. In the appendix on page 43, you will find three examples of exercises that can be brought into play on an intro day in the kitchen.









## 4.

# The meal

The daily lunch meal is both a major logistical task and potentially a space for different and fruitful interaction that enhances both well-being and learning. If you can get the logistics right, you have the opportunity to realise the potential of the meal.

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The goal of focusing on logistics, physical framework and role distribution is to create the foundation for a great meal. A meal where you can enjoy the food, recharge for the rest of the day, talk to each other and generally utilise the unique social and sensory space that meals can provide.

### **The practicalities of the meal - getting the basics right**

Getting the logistics and responsibilities right usually requires a dedicated effort from the Food Committee. A good place to start is to assess whether the school's structure supports being a food school and where something could be improved.

The logistics and roles connected to the meal leaves many questions - big and small:

- Who should eat together and when?
- What are the tasks and roles of the adult participants in the meal - before, during and after?
- How to make the best transition from teaching in the classroom to eating in the dining area?
- How to eat - e.g. table service with platters, buffet, or picking up the food from the kitchen?
- How to create a flow so that all tables get food at approximately the same time?
- Where do you wash your hands; and where do kids put their coats when it's winter?

- Are there things you agree that educators and teachers shouldn't do? For example, getting up during the meal, checking mobile phones, preparing the next lesson, correcting assignments, etc.?
- What are the guidelines for phones in the dining area?

Write down your agreements (e.g. as part of a food policy or in the annual cycle and schedule).

### ***Ideas for decorating the dining area***

Some food schools are designed with a dining area from the very beginning, while other schools are converted into food schools later on. Whatever your starting point, there's a lot to be gained by working with the layout of the dining area. Once it's decided how students will eat, it's obvious to organise according to these choices:

- Think about creating zones for movement and zones with as much quiet as possible. For example, if students are picking up their food and queuing, you can work with shielding to separate movement and queuing zones from eating zones
- If possible, place the tables at a good distance so that the classes don't disturb each other. Have fixed tables for each class, making it easy and timesaving to arrive
- Acoustics can be a big factor. Sound absorbing materials, acoustic panels etc. can make a difference, but you can also work with 'traffic lights' method for quiet: where and when may you speak loudly and when should you aim for more quiet

- Both for inspiration to talk about food, but also to show flow, you can for example use pictograms to guide children and adults in the right direction: to the food, to the dishwasher, etc.
- Signage placed with the dishes can help with contents/allergens/components, but also to guide children to take and serve the food in the obvious order – e.g. rice before sauce
- Screens in the dining areas that show the menu of the day, a theme or help facilitate the meal can also be used

### **The possibilities of the meal**

The meal is a unique social and communal event – one of those everyday rituals where we have some time to be together without having to be productive or fulfil certain goals. It can be a space for conversation that can reach into all corners of the world. On other days, it can be a place to be quiet and let our minds wander. What sets the stage for a great meal is the hosting.

### ***Hosting the event***

When you host a meal, you take the lead and show the way. When it comes to socialising around the table, you as an adult are also the anchor for how the children behave. You show how to involve everyone around the table and how to share and care for the common good. You don't have to like the food yourself, but you are positive about it and support the students' curiosity and senses. It's an obvious advantage if hosts either eat together with the students or at least taste the food.





**Points to consider for meal hosts:**

- Consider who should sit where. If there are children who typically eat everything, sit them next to children who may be more cautious about tasting
- Help pass the food around and articulate what you do when you do it
- Recognise needs at the table when the food is served. You don't always have to get up yourself, but make sure the need is met
- Be present during the meal and talk about the food, but also about other things. A professional or social theme might come up here. Grab it, because the meal is a great opportunity to gain insight into the students' everyday life at the food school
- Consider whether there could be synergies in placing friendship classes across large and small year groups together, for example, so that the large ones can co-host the younger ones. This is a great opportunity to work with the older students' understanding of what it means what it means to be a good role model, and it helps to create a sense of community across year groups.

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*“During the meal, we have two kitchen staff walking around between the tables. They answer questions, talk to both children and adults about what they think about the food, and they support the mealtime activities to succeed. With feedback from here, we can more easily make adjustments to menus and logistics.”*

**Kitchen Manager, School in Sydhavnen**

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### **The conversation at the meal**

Mealtimes can be a great setting for creating new relationships both between and with children.

This can be an opportunity to talk about things that you don't always have time for in class, such as leisure time, family life and friends. Of course, it's also natural to talk about the food. It's a good idea to help children challenge the "like/dislike" level of the conversation and find a more nuanced way to talk about food, for example by talking about the basic flavours - sour, sweet, salty, bitter, umami - about textures, what tastes good together, about the ingredients in the meal, etc.









5.

## Food – flavour, craftsmanship, health and climate

At the food schools, children and adults encounter food that is made with good craftsmanship, from fresh ingredients, and where health, flavour and taking responsibility for food's impact on the climate and environment are a natural part of the practice.

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Making food that tastes good, is put together in a healthy way and takes into account sustainability goals, budget and other considerations is a big task that requires continuous attention and strong professionalism in the kitchen.

### **Healthy meals with craftsmanship**

The food at the food schools must follow the official dietary guidelines of the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration to ensure that children get healthy, climate-friendly and varied food with a good balance of nutrients. Taking this into account is always part of the menu planning in a food school.

The starting point for a good meal at the food schools is food made from scratch with fresh, seasonal ingredients. This provides variety throughout the year and the opportunity to experience many different ingredients on the plate. Good kitchen craftsmanship is also the way to fulfil the sustainability goals.

### **Sustainable meals - goals and practices**

From the very beginning, the Copenhagen food schools have taken responsibility for the environmental footprint of food. In the Municipality of Copenhagen, the public kitchens have completed an ambitious organic transition

– and here the food schools have led the way with a high percentage of organic food. The food schools are included in the City of Copenhagen’s food and meal strategy and committed to three specific sustainability goals:

- We use 90% organic products and have the Organic Food Label in Gold
- Reduce the carbon footprint of food by 25% by 2025 (from 2018)
- Reduce food waste by 50% by 2030

Achieving and maintaining these goals requires a professional focus in the kitchen on working according to good, artisanal principles of organic and climate-friendly kitchen operation:

#### ***Basic principles of organic and climate-friendly kitchen operation***

- Cook from scratch – half- and wholefood solutions are expensive and harmful to the climate
- Cook seasonally - this means organic at the best price, more free-range and less transport
- Use meat in a new way – use the cheap cuts, choose light-coloured meat and use smaller quantities
- Use other protein sources – make friends with legumes, nuts, seeds, etc.
- Use many different vegetables – use vegetables in all colours and prioritise coarse vegetables
- Minimise food waste – it frees up budget for organic food and reduces climate impact
- Shop consciously – knowing your budget and spending in detail is the key to the best solutions

In kitchens, many are also focused on changing and challenging habitual thinking. For example, using as much of the different foods and produce to avoid throwing away what could have been good and nutritious food. Examples include using the cabbage stem and pulp from juiced beetroot. But some people also use banana peels, etc. Of course, not all peels and similar are useful. When leftover food and produce is discarded and go into the bio bin, there is also a potential learning opportunity for the students when they take part in sorting waste.

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*There are more detailed guides behind the benchmarks, which you can find at [www.borne-menuen.dk](http://www.borne-menuen.dk)*

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# Benchmarks for healthy and climate-friendly food

As a guide to creating meals that are both nutritious and climate-friendly, the Technical University of Denmark (DTU) has developed 10 benchmarks in collaboration with Meyers Madhus.

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1. Serve greens with every meal and in many colours
2. Serve legumes frequently
3. Use nuts and seeds frequently
4. Use mainly vegetable fats and limit animal fats
5. Serve wholemeal products and potatoes in particular
6. Serve fish dishes regularly and go for the most sustainable ones
7. Use dairy products and eggs in moderation
8. Use meat in limited quantities and avoid beef, veal and lamb
9. Offer water with your food
10. Follow the season and preferably use fresh ingredients

### **Allergies and other considerations**

Food schools usually take into account if you are vegetarian or have one of the most common food allergies. Likewise, if you have a large group of children with a Muslim background, it may be obvious that the food is halal. It makes sense to discuss the considerations in the Food Committee – it's up to the school to decide what is prioritised.

### **Food that fills you up and challenges you**

What different children find tasty can be different, which of course makes it difficult to fill their stomachs if the food is not eaten. There may be ingredients or dishes that children need to build up the courage to put on their plate, not to mention putting it in your mouth. It's very individual but can be helped along the way. If the child thrives socially, both at school and at home, it can help strengthen the courage to try new things. Food schools experience that children who are in a safe social context – e.g. together with their class with a familiar and reassuring teacher – can easily be challenged and successfully expand their preferences.

Of course, the challenges must be dosed carefully. It's not every day that food courage needs to be on the agenda. And for many children, the very fact that they are served varied food with different ingredients in season is challenging enough. Food courage can also be challenged with a tasting or presentation of a new ingredient without it being part of the meal that day.

Have an ongoing dialogue with students, teachers and parents about the balance between the familiar and the challenging. If the support for school meals declines, investigate if one of the factors could be this balance.

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*“At our school, students often drop by the kitchen and make suggestions for dishes they would like to eat for lunch. For example, it could be well-known fast food dishes that we turn into a more climate-friendly, healthy and nutritious dish in the kitchen, where the flavour is still great, also according to the students.”*

**Kitchen Manager, School at Islands Brygge,  
lower secondary school**

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6.

## Kitchen with surplus

When running the kitchen, several considerations and tasks need to be aligned – from menu development and purchasing to production planning and involving students on a daily basis. The good experiences from the food schools can be used as inspiration to find the surplus in everyday life.

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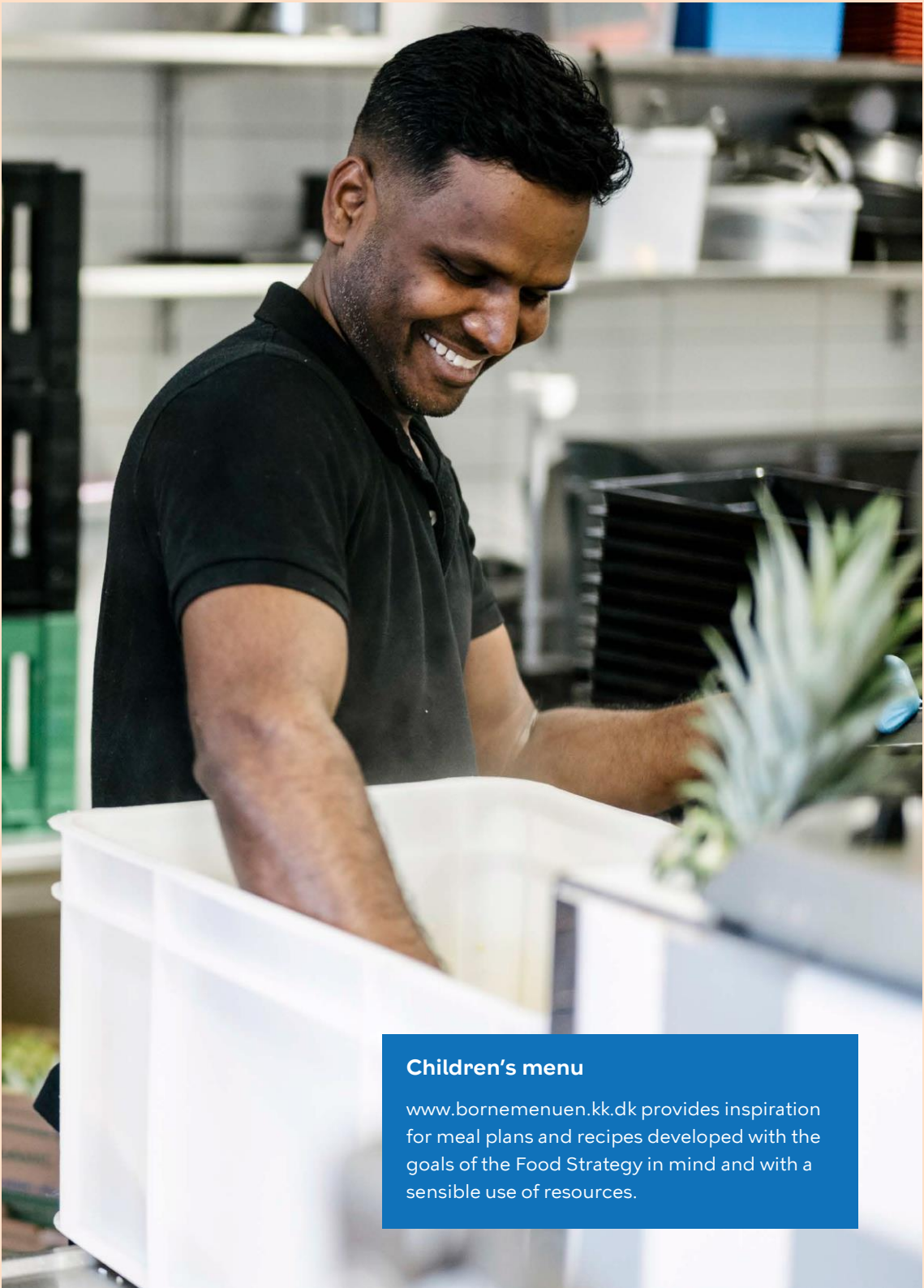
Often, it's timely planning and good communication that lays the foundation for an operation with surplus. Here are five tips based on the experiences of food schools:

- Start your day by dividing tasks between you in the kitchen
- Make a good plan each day for what students in the kitchen will be doing and which adults they will be with
- Agree internally in the kitchen how you interact with the students and what kind of routines you want to have with them
- Keep an eye on sales figures. If they go down for a month, be curious as to why
- Hold a quarterly financial overview meeting with the Kitchen Manager and the School Principal

### **Menu plans and good repetitions**

The planning of menus is largely the backbone of kitchen planning. The menu plan dictates what to buy and when, and what to communicate in the different channels.

It can be good practice to broadly plan the menu a month in advance and then go into more detail each week. Some food schools structure their menu plans in an annual cycle, building up a 'bank' over time that you can be inspired by and draw on later. Other food schools keep menu plans and recipe lists in seasonal folders for this same purpose. Whatever system you use, it's a good idea to make a note on each recipe or menu plan if something worked particularly well or not well enough.



### **Children's menu**

[www.bornemenuen.kk.dk](http://www.bornemenuen.kk.dk) provides inspiration for meal plans and recipes developed with the goals of the Food Strategy in mind and with a sensible use of resources.

### **Economy and sales**

Much has been written about the benefits of food and meals – but there’s no getting around the financial side of things. In that sense, running a kitchen at a food school is almost comparable to running a restaurant: You have to take into account income and expenses and the factors that ensure a stable economy throughout the year. Of course, to do this successfully, you need to closely monitor income and expenses on a daily, monthly and yearly basis. To stay on budget on a day-to-day basis, food schools use the Food School Calculator to help balance the budget with income and expenses. You can find it on the task portal.

When you use the calculator, you can also see the number of sold meals that make the economy work. So, keep an eye on student attendance and your sales, and remember to advertise – and possibly bring it up in the Food Committee – if you see that attendance is dropping. Remember to tell new students and their parents about the school’s food life – both in new classes, but also when students arrive from other schools.

The School Principal can theme the food and activities around the kitchen in a newsletter, and the kitchen team can post on the assembly hall and Instagram about the delicious lunch – and/or other channels and platforms depending on which channels you use at your school. You can also draw attention to the subsidy scheme (for families with low income). Food can also be sold at school events or meetings where food would otherwise be bought from outside sources.

### **Roles and culture in student kitchens**

Professional kitchens have a widespread reputation for having a unique culture of bluntness, a slightly harsh tone and straight talk. Whatever the truth of that reputation, food schools have been exceptionally good at embracing the positive and educational parts of the food profession and leaving out the less edifying elements. When working with children and young people, you naturally want to be an adult role model that they look up to. Therefore, the harder and edgier tendencies of kitchen jargon have no place in a food school kitchen. A good tone of voice also promotes good teamwork.

See tips for getting the kids involved in the kitchen on the next page.

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## **Good advice - when there are children in the kitchen**

- Consider which tasks students should participate in, for how long, with rotation or not. Whether to work in pairs or alone with a kitchen staff member
  - Decide whether students should help produce all items on the menu or focus on individual parts together with kitchen staff, while other kitchen staff ensure the large-scale production
  - Use a whiteboard to communicate with students - they know this from the classroom
  - Start the day by clarifying the day's tasks and making students comfortable with what's going to happen and who they need to be at the work-station with
  - Communicate the importance of doing your job. Everyone relies on each other and the whole school relies on the food and meals being on time
  - Also use the whiteboard at the end of the day. For example, to evaluate the day; How did it go today? What has been the most fun? What have you learnt that you haven't tried before?
  - End the day by making it clear to students what will happen the next day
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# Appendix

## - about operation and tools

This appendix outlines the practical and formal elements of being a food school - and points to tools and resources available to food schools.

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### **Administration and finance - worth knowing**

Running a kitchen involves administrative tasks. Some of the tasks are solved locally at the school, while others are run in collaboration with the municipality's other administrative resources. The Central Administrative Offices contribute to ensuring the operation of the food schools and to the schools' financial management by paying invoices, providing insight into budgets, accounts and other financial matters. Some food schools hold monthly financial meetings with a consultant from the Administrative Offices. To plan the kitchen's finances, you can use the Food School Calculator tool, which allows you to ensure that expenses and income are balanced. The responsibility for administrative tasks varies from school to school, but it's a good idea to discuss responsibilities in your interdisciplinary food school committee.

### **Purchasing in Kvantum and purchasing agreements**

The kitchen is responsible for purchasing ingredients, planning menus and daily work. Ingredients, food products and other purchases are made via the municipality's purchasing system, Kvantum, where you can find all the municipality's purchasing agreements for goods purchases.

### **Sales**

School meals are sold online and parents buy food for their children for a month at a time. As a kitchen manager, you can also monitor sales trends on an ongoing basis so that budgets can be met. The income from sales is transferred to the school's operating account each month and booked directly in Kvantum, the municipality's financial system.

### **Parent subsidy**

Parents can receive subsidies for school meals for economic or social reasons. Parents can apply digitally and the application will be processed based on the income information.

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The school can also apply for a subsidy for school meals for individual students if there are family, social or other compelling reasons to give one or more children free lunch for a shorter or longer period. This application must be signed by the parents but is sent from the school to the Central Administration Offices.

### **Task portals**

Find out more about running a food school and tools for finances, subsidy schemes, budgets and calculators on the task portal.

### **Networks and clusters for kitchen staff**

Several times a year, kitchen staff meet in network meetings for all food schools and in smaller clusters. The network meetings typically consist of professional presentations and inspiration, while the cluster meetings provide an opportunity to discuss everyday challenges

and solutions in small groups. Participation in longer meetings may require the school leader to find substitute cover. Funds have been set aside for temporary cover in the budget allocation for the food school.

### **Open School**

Open School has a wealth of different subject-oriented programmes that are closely linked to the purpose and daily activities of the food school. Open School offers can be found at [www.aabenskole.kk.dk](http://www.aabenskole.kk.dk)

### **Bridging programmes**

You can also make use of bridging programmes at, for example, the Hotel and Restaurant School or other schools related to food and meals to make students aware of the educational opportunities and jobs available in food and meals.

### **Templates and tools available on 'the Kids Menu'/BørneMenuen**

Here you will find an overview of templates and tools available online on BørneMenuen [www.bornemenuen.kk.dk](http://www.bornemenuen.kk.dk). The templates are meant to inspire and help facilitate a busy workday, so that each food school doesn't have to start from scratch, but you can still adapt the tools to your school's everyday life and local practices.

#### **• School Food and Meal Policy**

About how food is incorporated into teaching and how we eat together at our school.

*Target group: All employees at the school and especially new employees*

#### **• The role of the meal host**

About the roles, responsibilities and tasks as well as food courage knowledge and inspiration for conversations at the table.

*Target group: All teachers, pedagogues and substitute teachers who will be meal hosts.*

#### **• Food school letter about our food school and lunch**

About how food is integrated into teaching and how we eat together at our school. What characterises the menu and how parents can support their children in tasting new things. Reference to ordering system etc.

*Target group: For parents*

#### **• Presentation for parent-teacher meetings**

Power Point template for presenting our food school and lunch at parent-teacher meetings. About how food is incorporated into teaching and how we eat together at our school. What characterises the menu and how parents can

support their child in tasting new things. Reference to ordering etc.

*Target group: For parents at parent-teacher meetings.*

#### **• Start-up plan for new food schools**

About tasks in different phases from six months before the food school opens to after opening.

*Target group: School management*

### **Menu planning**

Inspiration for menu plans and recipes can be found at [www.bornemenuen.kk.dk](http://www.bornemenuen.kk.dk) and [www.madopskrifter.kk.dk](http://www.madopskrifter.kk.dk)

In the food school Sharepoint folder, you can share recipes and menu plans.



# Exercises

The exercises here help children understand and develop a language for flavours, aromas, textures and other sensations.

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## Exercise – aroma or basic flavour (10 minutes)

This exercise can be done by anyone of any skill level and does not require you to be in the kitchen.

- Everyone covers their nose thoroughly with one hand or with a nose clip
- With the other hand, take a single leaf from an herb (basil, mint, coriander or wild garlic are good for this exercise), put it in your mouth and chew it while still holding your nose. Without letting go of your nose, you need to assess what the herb tastes like. Talk about it.
- Let go of your nose and feel what you're experiencing. Let the children describe the experience

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This exercise shows that much of what we colloquially refer to as 'taste' - such as the 'taste' of liquorice or basic herbs - can be described as 'flavour'. Aromas are actually flavours that we can only perceive with our sense of smell. If children hold their noses carefully, the herb will taste of almost nothing - just a hint of bitterness and possibly a hint of something sweet or sour. Ramson will feel a bit strong on the tongue. When you let go of your nose, the aroma of the herb will come out in full bloom.

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## Exercise – tasting (5-15 minutes)

The exercise is best done in the kitchen and can be done as a stand-alone exercise or integrated into the kitchen production.

- Start with a dish or component that has not yet been flavoured/seasoned. It can be a soup, a sauce, a dip, a spread, a stew or something else
- Taste the food - and talk about what it tastes like. Do the students think something is missing and what could it be? Put into words what's missing. Basic flavours (sour, sweet, salty, bitter, umami) aroma, 'hotness'/heat
- Talk about what could provide what's missing - get the children's suggestions
- Add what's missing and taste again
- Repeat until you think it's there

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The exercise provides practical training in being able to recognise and work with basic tastes and the other aspects of an eating experience. It helps children become aware of their senses and sensations and gives them a language to express them.

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### **Exercise - menu development**

Decide which part of the development the students should be involved in: a dish, a day, a week or a month? Decide what the menu plan can be used for - is it a specific week to be planned at school, or is it a suggestion for inspiration that students can take home - and perhaps search for recipes or similar.

Set criteria for students: e.g. weekly structure: Monday soup/porridge, Tuesday green inspiration, Wednesday fish, Thursday world food with lots of legumes, Friday leftovers. Or give students an ingredient criterion such as: this dish must contain legumes and be meat-free. What do you suggest?

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