



Ministry of Rural Affairs and infrastructure

School Meals Coalition
Sweden's commitments to school meals

National level in Sweden

- **Continue with free and nutritious school meals to all children in compulsory school.**

Students who eat school lunches are in a better position to learn, promoting concentration, ensuring a good atmosphere at school and it is also possible to use meals as an educational tool by integrating them in teaching activities. These were just some of the reasons why schools begun serving lunch in Sweden. In the 1840's school food was introduced among the poor or ill children in some regions. In 1940's state gave governmental grants to municipalities that wanted to serve school lunches for free. In 1970's most schools served a free school lunch. The Swedish Education Act from 2011 stipulates that all pupils in primary school (age 6-16) will be served a school lunch that is both free and nutritious.

There are today 290 municipalities responsible for both the finance and the management of the school meals in Sweden, (funded by local taxation). Five days a week during the school year (178 school days per year). Local governments are also responsible for public procurement of the food. In 2022-2023 there were 2,132,504 pupils in preschool, primary school and secondary school. All of them received free school meals.

While it is up to every municipality to manage the school meals (with trained nutritionists in position to plan and prepare school meals), nearly all 290 municipalities have competence in nutrition and/or meal management. Nearly all chefs receive special training in

nutrition, portions/measurement, menu planning, food safety/hygiene, and business/management.

Statistics show that a school meal costs an average of 6,800 SEK per student per year (2023). However, there are large differences between municipalities.

- **Start with the participation in EU fruit and vegetable scheme**
The EU School Scheme is funded by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF). The scheme supports the distribution of fruit, vegetables and milk in schools across the EU as part of a larger education program on agriculture in the EU. The aim is to teach children to eat healthily, and the scheme also includes explaining how food is produced. Since joining the EU, Sweden has used EU support for school milk but has not introduced the school fruit component. Starting in the 2025/2026 school year, Sweden will introduce the school fruit and vegetable component of the school scheme.
- **Continue with the participation in EU school milk scheme.**
Municipalities voluntarily seek support for milk that is provided in schools. Sweden has taken part of this scheme since we became a member of the EU in 1995.
- **Continue with support to the activities on school meals through the Competence Center for public meals at the Swedish National Food Agency**
In 2011 a national Competence Center for public meals in healthcare, schools and social services was established at the National Food Agency. The Competence Center works for continued development of the public meals with the aim of promoting sustainable and healthy food consumption, also providing national guidelines for ex. school meals.
The guidelines include a holistic view of school meals called “**the Meal Model**”. It includes the following six quality areas: 1) **tasty**, 2) **safe**, 3) **nutritious**, 4) **eco-smart** and contribute to environmentally sustainable development, 5) served in a **pleasant** environment, and 6) **integrated** into the core activities and be a natural part of the of the education. The model is now well established in Sweden as a

support for decision and policy makers and meal planners to develop meals from a holistic perspective.

International level

Active member of the Rome Based Agencies.