

Food and Drink purchased 'Through the School Gate'

Principal Investigator: Professor Wendy Wills, University of Hertfordshire

Tel: 01707 286380 Email: w.j.wills@herts.ac.uk

Transcript

School 4 Focus Group Year 8

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Interviewer: Okay, thank you, thank you.

Interviewer2: Shall we turn the light on so you can see the board properly, or...?

Interviewer: Think it's too dark? [Overspeaking 00:00:13]. Roll with it. If you don't, okay, if you don't give your permission to video record what you say then you can't be part of the focus group. If you don't want to do it, that's totally fine. You sure?

Interviewer2: And remember, if at any point you change your mind, because it's not seen, but you [inaudible 00:00:39]. If you don't feel comfortable staying then you don't have to.

Interviewer: So, you just need to pop your name and your signature and the date. [Overspeaking 00:01:01].

Interviewer2: Right, so just before we get going, one fairly important thing to say we haven't yet mentioned is we're going to go through a series of questions, the order of the questions might jump around a little bit because we want it to flow like a normal discussion or a normal conversation that you'd have with your friends. So, questions might jump around.

When you do want to answer, if you could raise your hand that would be fab, because when it comes to us having to transcribe and then listen to these recordings and try and understand the

important points that you're all coming up with, we can't do that if there's multiple people talking at the same time. So that's what we need to do.

Respondent1: Does everyone answer every question?

Interviewer2: Well, that would be great if you could, but you don't have to. So, it's contribute where you feel like you want to say something. Yeah? Okay, great.

Interviewer3: Okay, so we've got some pictures of your school environment, not that you can see them very well with it being so bright in here, and it's basically a picture of the menu that you have at school and also where you buy your food in the canteen.

We want to know what do you think about the food that's offered in your school and what's on the menu, what do you think about the space where you eat your food. You can be honest; we're not going to tell anyone in school what you think about the food.

Interviewer: Won't get you in trouble.

Interviewer2: Yeah, as honest as you can be, really.

Respondent1: I think the school menu should be more like a variety of food, like different kinds of food. The food isn't that great. It needs a bit more like, maybe like salt or pepper or maybe ketchup, or let us

have, like on the side on the table, let us have like salt and pepper and ketchup.

Interviewer: Okay, all right.

Respondent2: Like outside the canteen it says, there's a massive board saying, 'This is what we serve here' and it's all like these nice foods and stuff, but yet they never serve it.

Interviewer3: Okay. How often does that happen?

Respondent2: Yeah.

Interviewer3: All the time?

Respondent2: Well, when I first came in year seven I thought 'That looks nice' but I never saw it being served.

Interviewer3: Okay.

Respondent3: The custard, like, it's just bad. It has this like thick layer at the top, if you touch it, it's just disgusting.

Interviewer: It's got the skin on the top?

Respondent3: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. That keeps all the goodness in.

Respondent3: No, and it's brown at the top and in the corners sometimes.

Interviewer3: And what do you think about the spaces where you eat your food? So, I know there's a separate room for like packed lunches and there's the main hall, where do you tend to eat your food? Do you eat it outside? Just a little bit about that.

Respondent4: I like the hall, but I think if you have only a drink or something you can go outside, but if you've got like hot or a plate, obviously if you have a plate you can't go outside, I think usually if you have a pot you should be able to go outside because there's not always space for you and a friend to sit, and it's like, obviously you want to sit next to your friends, but every time you go to go outside they say 'No, you can't go outside' and we have to carry [inaudible 00:04:25] have to ask people to move [inaudible 00:04:31] everyone to sit.

Respondent2: I think that the environment is good, but in the summer, I think you should be able to take the food outside because it gets a bit stuffy in there because of the amount of people.

Interviewer3: Okay, so you'd like to be able to take all types of food, including the hot meals or just...?

Respondent2: Not on a plate.

Interviewer3: Not on a plate, okay. And at the moment you can't take...?

Respondent2: No.

Interviewer3: You can't take the pots and you can't take, what about the baguettes and sandwiches?

Respondent2: [Overspeaking 00:05:01].

Interviewer3: You can't take them outside either?

Respondent1: You can take like slushies, drinks, like an ice lolly, that sort of thing, fruit pots, but you can't take anything else.

Respondent4: I think like, you know like when they separate us, the sandwiches and things, like for people with packed lunch, I don't think that's like fair because some people who have a packed lunch and some of their friends are school dinners and they want to sit next to each other in the hall.

So, I think it should be like a bigger hall so there's more chairs and more people can fit in there.

Interviewer: Okay, so does it feel like a bit like people are separated based on the choices about where they buy their food, from home or...? Can I just get a sense going back to what Josy was saying, how many of you buy food at school? Okay, so about half, maybe a bit more than half. Okay, most of you then, all right. Who brings packed lunches? Okay.

Interviewer3: Two.

Interviewer: All right. So sometimes. Okay. Tell me a little bit about, okay, so we know about the custard, we know about some of the problems that have been, some about the seating. What do you like about the food? Hello. Come and sit [inaudible 00:06:27]. Yes, what do you like?

Respondent1: Well, yesterday we had chicken wings and they were really nice.

Interviewer: They were good?

Respondent1: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. [Inaudible 00:06:38]. The cake?

Respondent5: And the slushies.

Interviewer: The cake and the slushies, okay.

Respondent2: The slushies go like, when you have them at dinnertime, you go to get like, it's icy.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. [Overspeaking 00:06:52].

Respondent1: Because every time you to ask for something, it's not working or it's like too icy that you can't get it out and the tap's blocked.

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent1: And that happens on really hot days, like 20 degrees, and I really wanted a slushy but it was broken, and that was daily.

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent5: And in the vending machines sometimes, some of the drinks aren't available.

Interviewer: Okay, what drinks have you got available in the vending machine?

Respondent5: Water, like milk, fruit juices and milkshake.

Interviewer: But they're not always all there?

Respondent5: No. Like the water ones, [inaudible 00:07:35] most of the water.

Interviewer: Is water offered for free? I think we were told that water is free. It's not free?

Respondent1: Only if you have a cup, but they don't have them, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent7: And then there's like, in more summer time, they put like jugs out with apple juice, orange juice, they're free. And with the vending machine, and like they wouldn't like stock it up once everything is gone, everyone likes cold water, so I go to the vending machine to get some juice and it's not there, so I think they should like start stocking it up like not straight away but maybe [inaudible 00:08:15] after something.

Respondent2: I think they should have a few more vending machines, maybe, like around the school. Because it's quicker using vending machines and you don't have to queue up in the lunch line to have a drink, but usually by lunch the drinks are all gone. And then, but

having a few more means you don't have to queue up and you don't have to fill the vending machine up like more.

Interviewer: Okay. Did you have your hand up as well?

Respondent3: I think with the vending machines we should be able to like pay with money, with coins. Because some people, maybe like if they're packed lunches, they don't have like money on their thing, so if they want to buy something from the vending machine they want to be able to do it, because you can't put money inside them.

Interviewer: It's only the finger?

Interviewer3: So, your parents top up your fingerprint card, is it a card?

Interviewer: Account, fingerprint account.

Interviewer3: Are you allowed to top up your fingerprint account...?

Respondent1: Yeah, there's a machine.

Interviewer3: With money? So, you could technically put some money on [overspeaking 00:09:22] it's broken?

Respondent6: It is broken, yeah.

Respondent4: You can bring in your own money, like coins, in the hall there's a little machine and you can put in how much you want and then [inaudible 00:09:36] most of the time it's either jammed or broken. When people go there they're like 'Oh, can't top up' because sometimes people don't have that much money to top up daily, even weekly, so it's quite for people, so I think they need to do something about.

Interviewer3: And when that happens, is there an alternative, is there...? No?

Respondent1: I think your parents can do it on PayPal or [inaudible 00:10:00].

Respondent: Then you pay it back later?

Respondent1: Yeah.

Interviewer3: Okay.

Interviewer: Just to the people who do buy food at school, who buys the hot meals, who buys sandwiches, do you mix it up? What are the things that you actually buy to eat?

Respondent4: I sometimes get like sausage paninis.

Interviewer: You get what?

Respondent4: Sausage paninis or bacon paninis.

Interviewer: Paninis, right.

Respondent4: And then I also get, like one of my favourite pots is carbonara, and then there would be roast dinner [inaudible 00:10:46].

Interviewer: Oh, okay, all right. What about other people?

Respondent1: Well like the spaghetti is all right but it just needs like salt. Like I always get a pot...

Interviewer: You're going to be a chef one day, you can tell, with this salt thing.

Respondent1: I always get like the hot stuff but it's not really like great.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent2: I always get like, I usually go at break to get like a sandwich or a panini or something because I don't really have time to get

anything at lunch because I'm usually playing football with my friends.

Interviewer: Okay, so you have to make time and financial decisions? What about the prices of things?

Respondent4: I feel quite bad saying, but I think sometimes like some of the things are quite a bit ridiculous. I can't put my finger on what I'm thinking of, but there's like a pot, salad pots, and they're always £2 and they're not even that nice and you don't even get that much in there. [Overspeaking 00:11:49] and more bacon, it's just not that nice. It's gone up to £2, so I think that's a bit [inaudible 00:11:56].

Interviewer: All right.

Interviewer2: You don't think perhaps the salad pots are very good value for money for what you get inside them.

Interviewer: For those of you, I think a couple of you said that you, I think you were saying that you sometimes buy food at school, sometimes bring a packed lunch and others of you might do that too, is price part of the decision to do that or just your own variety?

Respondent1: Yeah, sometimes in the morning I have like time to [inaudible 00:12:18] go to Sainsbury's and buy lunch, because like the price, especially like the stuff in the vending machine, the big ones are

like £1-something and in our school they're like the smallest ones for £1.20 as well. It's just better to buy it in a shop before you come to school [inaudible 00:12:48].

Interviewer: Okay, so Sainsbury's is emerging for the savvy shoppers amongst you all, maybe that's where we should go next, outside of the school gates. How many of you would buy school money, no, how many of you would buy food and/or drink on that way to school or the way home from school?

Interviewer3: And what sort of food do you buy and bring in?

Interviewer: Okay, so the majority of you. Okay, everybody but, okay, right. Let's canvass this; where do you go and what do you do and what do you buy and why?

Respondent3: After school we usually buy doughnuts, crisps or cookies or like doughnuts, sweets, chocolate, drinks.

Interviewer: What sort of drinks? What would that be?

Respondent3: We'd probably buy like...

Interviewer: So, you've got cookies...?

Respondent3: Yeah, and then doughnuts, fizzy drinks, sugary drinks.

Interviewer: Sugary drinks, and where would you get that from? Sainsbury's?
Right, and is that something that you do every day?

Respondent3: Three to four days.

Interviewer: Three to four days, okay.

Interviewer3: And that's after school, sorry? So, do you buy anything before school?

Respondent3: Well, not like the day before, in the morning.

Interviewer: Listen, there's no judgement, you can tell us about your chocolate bars, it's all right.

Respondent3: I don't know, just whatever I feel like.

Interviewer: Okay, so do you see it as like a treat and that's where you're going to get the things that you like?

Respondent: [Inaudible 00:14:36] get dessert at school, I'll get something at Sainsbury's.

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent3: So, it's like that. So, it's just like weighing it up.

Interviewer: Okay, all right.

Respondent5: Yeah, I go to Tesco on the way to school and get a drink and something [inaudible 00:14:52].

Interviewer: Okay, what would you get?

Respondent5: Like crisps or sweets.

Interviewer: Okay. Everybody relax.

Respondent7: So, every Monday, once you find out what I eat it's hard to believe that I'm a dancer. So, I get cookies, this is every Monday, I get cookies, get a Pepsi, I get a Fanta, I get a Lucozade, I get crisps, I get a sandwich, I get a Kit Kat and then I get a chocolate bar. This is only on a Monday for an hour.

Interviewer: No, that's all right. I'm very impressed.

Respondent7: And then on a Thursday I usually get a bag of five cookies and a drink. [Overspeaking 00:15:39] yeah, okay. And then on a Saturday I have biscuits and cakes after five hours of training, I get a cookie, I basically get what I get on a Monday but then get another sandwich, I get another drink, I get another bag of crisps and then sometimes my mum will bring me McDonald's.

Interviewer: Okay, wow. So, you probably keep fit from carrying all your shopping around?

Respondent7: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay, all right.

Interviewer2: And did you say five hours of training on a Saturday?

Respondent7: Two hours on a Monday, another hour on Thursday.

Interviewer2: You're burning a lot of...

Interviewer: Yeah, you're burning a lot of the cookies I would say, yeah.

Respondent8: My friends tell me that [inaudible 00:16:26] eat and eat all the time.

Interviewer: Your friend said you were fat? [Overspeaking 00:16:35].

Respondent8: They just look at me and say how am I not fat because in the morning I don't really eat breakfast [inaudible 00:16:48] and then...

Interviewer: You eat through the night? Okay. So, you would eat midnight feasts and things like that? Okay.

Respondent8: I love popcorn, specially like Lidl's popcorn [overspeaking 00:17:07]. It's proper filled to the top, you know how you can get popcorn and it's like air in it, Lidl's is like filled to the top. And like after school, because I have a long journey because I live all the way in [inaudible 00:17:18] I have to get like trains and stuff, I get like wings from Sainsbury's which are £1.60, I might get like [overspeaking 00:17:28] or I might get like ice cream from Iceland if it's hot.

Interviewer: Is that every day? It's okay, I'm just asking, is it every day?

Respondent8: Sometimes.

Interviewer: What is sometimes? How many times a week would you stop to get food after school?

Respondent8: Oh, yeah, that's every day. But not every day it would be something big, just something little.

Interviewer: So, it changes? Okay, that's all right.

Respondent3: So, every day after school I [inaudible 00:17:57] if I have like more money I'll get like chicken and chips [inaudible 00:18:04] and chips, and then if I have like a little less money I get doughnuts from Sainsbury's and, but in the morning I don't eat because I don't really like breakfast because I don't like things in the morning.

Then when I come to school, sometimes like in the hall they sell like bacon rolls or something like that, sometimes I'll get a bacon roll when I come to school. Before school like you know when I said I bought my packed lunch, if [inaudible 00:18:41] packed lunch I will just buy something, like today I bought like cookies, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. Well, you're sorted for today's lunch anyway.

Respondent3: Yeah.

Respondent2: So, I don't really go to Sainsbury's that much to buy sweets and stuff, I might sometimes like on a Friday. I usually share stuff that my friends offer to me on the bus, like usually my friends, Samuel and Martin, they come on the bus with massive trays of doughnuts and they share it with everyone.

Interviewer: Okay, and that's important too, talking about that social element, so we'll talk about that later. Yes?

Respondent9: When I go home from school on Fridays, not doing anything, or like Tuesday I get like chicken, I might get some stuff from Sainsbury's, biscuits and things.

Interviewer: Okay. All right, so you're looking at things like good value but also things that you like, they don't, they sound very different to the options that they have at school.

Respondent4: Well I have, I think it's called a fast metabolism, so I usually eat so much [inaudible 00:20:00] I also work out, I train, I do dance, but sometimes I just bored eat. I'm so bored the only thing I can do is just eat, so I just eat.

Interviewer: You're bored at school? Okay, and so you would eat out of boredom at school?

Respondent4: And at home.

Interviewer: Is the sort of food that you would eat at school similar to what you would eat at home?

Respondent4: No, at home I eat sweets, popcorn, crisps, food like chicken, and then chips, and then just... actually I normally have a salad as well, so not all junk food, I have a salad.

Interviewer: Okay, all right.

Respondent5: Like today we have like [inaudible 00:20:49].

Interviewer: It's all right, we'll blank it out, we're not going to...

Respondent5: We go like to this club called Sammie's and then like then they give us like food and sweets and stuff doing the actual club, yeah, so I don't eat that much at lunch on Tuesdays but on other days I do.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent3: One of the reasons why I buy so much is because like at school I don't really like finish the food because it's not that good, so I like eat half of it and then by the time, during my lessons I'm thinking about food, food, thinking about what I'm going to have after school and like I have to have something.

Interviewer: Are you hungry at school? [Overspeaking 00:21:38].

Respondent4: I've got nothing at home.

Respondent7: Yeah, like sometimes we eat in lessons.

Interviewer2: And what would you eat? Is that food that you've bought from the school or food that you've brought with you on the way to school?

Respondent7: On the way.

Interviewer2: So, this is the Sainsbury's shop in the morning, your [inaudible 00:21:56]?

Respondent10: I usually buy stuff when I'm like hungry at school, but after, [inaudible 00:22:02] don't eat my lunch because it's not that nice, won't eat that, then I'll buy something after school. So then like three to four days a week I don't eat my lunch. I buy it, but I don't eat it, then I end up buying something.

Interviewer: Yes, you're hungry. Okay.

Respondent8: When I'm hungry in class, when I have food as well, so I know I have food and I'm hungry and I'm bored, so it just makes me even worse. I have an example, I had five [overspeaking 00:22:36] in one period, so I was so hungry because I didn't have breakfast.

Interviewer: Okay, all right. Did you have your hand up? Right, okay, that's all right. Okay, it sounds to me like there's a lot of buying going on, and so I'm a little bit interested in what sort of financial arrangements there are for you to be able to buy this.

Is this something that comes from an allowance, is this something, obviously you'll have your fingerprint account like Josy was talking about, but it sounds like money on top of that, and is that something that, you know, if you are buying doughnuts and things and whatever every day, is that something that your parents are interested in in terms of cost or do they worry about what you're choosing to eat, do they want to know?

Respondent4: Well, sometimes I'll pay from my own, I'll ask my account, my dad to give me more because, you know, so it's fair for my mum and dad so they don't have to spend as much, but then sometimes mum will be like 'Don't worry, Sonya, I'll get these, pay me back later from your account' and she will just buy it for me.

But sometimes if she doesn't have that much money on her, [inaudible 00:23:57] what I get, just cookies and a drink, [inaudible 00:24:02].

Interviewer: Okay. Other people?

Respondent8: So basically, like before my mum used to put money on my thing, I asked her like if she can give me like money, extra money, so in the morning like, throughout the week I would be putting it on from the machine, so then I would like, I would have like extra money for myself to like buy stuff and so I wouldn't like be spending as much. Because like before I used to really like think, I used to just

buy [inaudible 00:24:38] I used to buy salads and put it on every day so then I have less money, because I knew I wasn't going to eat anyway so then I have more money to buy something after school.

Respondent9: Because I don't really spend that much money at school, at the end of the week I still have like money left and my mum will just, say if it's like £15 my mum will just give me £15 in cash and so I just go out.

Interviewer: And do you find that £15 would be enough to cover what you would buy in the average week?

Respondent9: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. [Inaudible 00:25:19]. No? Would it be more for you? So how much would you spend in an average week?

Respondent6: Maybe like 20.

Interviewer: Okay, all right.

Respondent3: With my mum, I feel like, I think that's a lot, because I spend so much a week like on school food because it's so expensive, but I've got two other sisters in this school, one in year six and one in year 11, so when my mum tops me up she'll have to top my two

other sisters up. Sometimes she doesn't top Cally up, the eldest, because she can go out and get something. But it's still quite a lot because she topped us up with the same amount, so she does a tenner a week, so that's £30 a week, each week, for school meals.

Interviewer3: And money on top of that to each of you for after and before.

Respondent3: Yeah.

Interviewer3: So, in terms of like socialising, is there anywhere near the school that you go to, to sit, eat with your friends or hang out?

Respondent8: There's like a lot on the high street, like near here, so everyone [inaudible 00:26:35] that's the thing, normally there's like [inaudible 00:26:42] shut down and then normally I just do a bit of shopping with my friends or go [inaudible 00:26:49] go there.

Interviewer3: Okay. I think you had your hand up?

Respondent7: Oh, yeah, I was going to say, like basically on the bus a lot of people, I see sometimes a lot of people, my friends down there, so I don't really go anywhere, we just go to the bus, we talk on the bus.

Interviewer3: So, the bus, your journey in a sense is a way that you socialise, and you mentioned sharing food on the bus is a way that you also socialise with your friends. Anyone else like maybe on half days go out with your friends and eat anywhere nearby school just so you can sit and eat out?

Respondent9: Well, I sometimes do it but you have to arrange it ahead of time, and then you get a tenner to spend some money.

Interviewer3: Okay, and how do you and your friends choose where you go to eat?

Respondent9: Well, we usually just go to Sainsbury's.

Interviewer3: Okay, so you go to Sainsbury's, buy food and then eat?

Respondent9: Yeah.

Interviewer3: Okay.

Respondent1: Like today maybe like Domino's, [inaudible 00:28:02].

Interviewer3: And is that a social thing, are you doing that with your friends or is that something you do every now and again?

Respondent1: Sometimes I'll get it, like they might be doing something else, if we're going the same way we'll just sit on the bus and eat.

Interviewer3: Okay, yeah.

Respondent2: So usually like if it's a half day, like [inaudible 00:28:27] maybe it's the end of the year or near Christmas, I'll go to like somewhere with my friends to eat, like Nando's or somewhere. I went to [inaudible 00:28:41] with my friends, but only on like half days if we have time. Otherwise I'll get home and play some Xbox with my friends.

Interviewer3: Okay.

Respondent8: So, because some of us live a bit further and we have half days, we might go to the [inaudible 00:28:59] but because I wasn't always in this school, from year seven, my old school used to have like when you walk up the road the high street is just there so there was like Domino's, like something, like Texas BBQ, like much easier for us because we had like different like junk foods around and stuff.

Interviewer3: So, do you feel that it's different here?

Respondent8: Yeah, because everything is a bit more spread out and there's not even a KFC anymore, so...

Interviewer3: And do you feel that that impacts you, like socialising with your friends and what you eat?

Respondent8: In a way, because I guess like food gives you moods.

Interviewer3: Food gives you what, sorry?

Respondent8: Moods.

Interviewer3: Moods?

Respondent8: I like chicken, so if you're eating chicken it might make you feel happy, but if you're eating something like brussels sprouts, just like no.

Interviewer3: Okay, so if you're eating food that you like and you're with friends it's more enjoyable? Okay.

Respondent4: Some, when [inaudible 00:30:09] I'll get like, [inaudible 00:30:14] so I'll get like a quarter pounder and then my friends will be over there, sitting there, eating a Big Mac [inaudible 00:30:22] but they go the next day 'I want to be thin, I don't want to be fat anymore' but they don't work out, they just sit and eat... I'm not saying I'm thin, I'm like the best person at food or whatever, because you've heard what I eat, but, you know, I work out to like keep my weight

down and they don't do anything, they do a little bit of a workout but not as like hardcore as what I do in the week.

Interviewer3: So, you feel, when you eat out, you're quite conscious of what you're eating and maybe the impact it might have on your weight, but some people aren't as conscious? Okay.

Interviewer: Do you ever feel pressure from your friends about what you choose to eat? Do you ever make choices about what you eat based on peer pressure? No? Does anyone?

Respondent8: Well, like, you know what Sonya said about she's got a fast metabolism? I have that, so I don't really like see like, you know how some people eat a lot and they can see like they're gaining weight? I don't really see it because obviously I can't see it, so whenever I get like food and stuff I never really think about it, because some people will say they're getting bigger or fat then they like see 'Maybe I shouldn't get this' but I can't really see it so I just keep, keep, keep getting fatty stuff. It's bad.

Interviewer: Wait until you hit 25. Then it'll catch up with you.

Interviewer3: What about the boys? Do you feel there's some of that in terms of like food or peer pressure or...? No? Or do you like, when you're eating with your friends does it impact what you choose to eat or where you go? No?

Respondent2: Only if it's in like choosing or something, then you might want to try something to see if you like it or not.

Interviewer3: Oh, okay, so you feel like when you see your friends eating things, you're more likely to try it?

Respondent2: Yeah.

Interviewer3: Okay.

Respondent1: If they're getting something, I like it, but if there's something on the menu I want more than that, like I don't have enough money, I might just ignore them.

Interviewer3: Okay. Yeah, we'll start with you.

Respondent7: I don't do it, but my friends always say to me like food always looks good on somebody else's plate, like even if you're eating the exact same food, the exact same drink, it just always looks better on someone else's plate.

Interviewer2: [Overspeaking 00:32:55] peer pressure, it's more like when you see someone eating it, that looks appealing to you, like food envy.

Respondent3: It's sort of [inaudible 00:33:06], I know someone who eats so much but then I hear people say, she'll walk past, because she's quite skinny and they'll be like 'Oh my god, she's probably anorexic or she probably doesn't eat that much' like [inaudible 00:33:23] no, if you see how much she eats, I cannot, believe me.

But sometimes I feel like people just think too far into it, like there's scientific ways and that about the body, like fast metabolisms, like that obviously gets rid of it faster or whatever, but some people just need to stop because that makes them really self-conscious.

Like if someone eats so much and they're still thin and they eat less but they're still quite big, then they're sort of thinking 'Well, how is this working?' and it sort of leads them into anorexia or whatever and it sort of makes people jealous, which I think we should stop doing because if someone is thin, they're thin, but it just sort of drives them away to, it's driving someone to become thinner and then they start thinking so bad about themselves that they're anorexic or, you know...

Interviewer: I think that's really important because we, you know, I think the thing is that the problem with thinking about your body like a machine is that we think that all machines are the same and not all bodies are the same and not everybody is going to react the same way. We all have our own stories, so it's important to remember that. That's great.

But given that everybody has their own stories, I think what we'd like to ask you about now is the free school meal programme, okay? Now this is something, do you like that segue that I did, did you like that?

So, given that we talked about this in the questionnaires today, who had already heard of the free school meal programme? Okay, so most of you. And those of you who hadn't heard about it are now aware that this is a government initiative to support, provide meals in school for students who are from families who are not able to provide money for them to buy food in school. That's all it is.

So, I'm interested in hearing from you a little bit more around your thoughts. We asked you what you thought about the free school meal programme, I'd be interested to hear more about what you thought. Yes?

Respondent4: I think it's fine because I had it. I think it's just easier for my mum and dad, because sometimes you don't have the money to keep on doing like the £10-a-week thing, so it's just easier on my mum and dad and on me, not stressing about if I'm going to eat lunch today or if I can only get a drink.

Sometimes that's fine, but if all I have to get is just like a main meal, a dessert and drink and I can get that for free.

I think it's good because say like people have money problems or can't afford the weekly allowance, there's not as much pressure for them to say, 'Why don't you go and get something to eat?' when you don't want them to know that you're sort of having a bit of trouble. So, I think it's like easier to have that sort of money.

Interviewer3: So, if you have access to it, do you eat school food every day?

Respondent4: Yes.

Interviewer3: Yes, so you get something to eat at school every day. At lunchtime? Yeah, okay.

Respondent7: I think it's fair because like Sonya was saying, some people can't afford it, but I think it should be like free for everyone because I know like some people they can't afford it, but I mean everyone earns money, like has to like work for money, so I think that's still money going out of other parents' houses, so I think it should be free for everyone so everyone has like the [inaudible 00:37:18].

Interviewer: Okay. That's the difficulty, isn't it? Yeah, I mean those decisions are really hard to make, and yes, this issue, should it be across the board.

Respondent10: Like, it's not going to be, like for rich kids it's not really like a big issue, like school lunch, they can get a school lunch. But I think for kids who can't get school lunch, because they're all like friends with people who can get afford it. So, then I think it should be a bit cheaper for like everyone, it should be a bit cheaper, kids can still get like free stuff then people won't like not get loads and loads of things.

Because that makes other people feel like not that good about themselves because they won't get it.

Interviewer: That's true.

Respondent4: I agree with you actually, having everyone have it for free, because like all the parents are putting in the same amount, maybe a bit more, maybe a bit less, but all the parents are still trying to put in the money for their children to get and they're working every day and there are some rich people that can afford it, but I feel it should be easier for everyone, because everyone does go through sometimes money trouble or some trouble in their life or whatever.

So, it would just make it easier on everyone's life, not just the people that can't afford it.

Interviewer: Somebody over here had their hand up?

Respondent10: [Inaudible 00:38:51] like a limit on what you're allowed to spend. Because you know like five, like £6-7 is your limit, like your max money you can spend.

Interviewer: For people on the programme or just everybody?

Respondent10: Just like everybody.

Interviewer: Everybody. Right, okay.

Interviewer3: Did you say you think the limit should be lower or...?
[Overspeaking 00:39:15].

Interviewer: There is no limit? [Inaudible 00:39:20]

Respondent4: They tell you like you're only allowed to spend £3 today. I feel like there should be a set limit on it, because some people, like the rich people are quite wealthy, they've got loads and loads and then you feel quite embarrassed because you can't get all the food that they're getting or you might have to ask them to get you something.

I had to ask Tracey to get me something because I don't have money in my account, so, and it's quite embarrassing to ask because your friends, they're your friends so you shouldn't be embarrassed but I am because it's like money problems, some people do have money, if I don't have money, why do you? So, it's just...

Respondent7: And I think like if it's free for everyone then like people, like she was saying, you could be embarrassed if someone can get like a lot, if it's free to everyone then they'll all have the opportunity to get like maybe not like a lot, lot of things but have the same opportunity as like the person who really like has more money or something like that. So, if it's free then everyone has like the same opportunity and comes to school not feeling [inaudible 00:40:29].

Respondent4: Sorry, one more thing. My friends are really caring about like my situation, I don't have it all the time, but they're 'Oh, Sonya, it's fine, I'll get it for you' and then I'll be like, 'When I get money, I'll get you a drink or something', like 'Sonya, you're my friend, you're not going to get me anything, it's what friends do'. So sometimes I feel quite comfortable to tell them 'Oh, can you get me

something?' I can't take too much because they're going to
[inaudible 00:41:02] it's a bit weird.

So that's why I'm sort of embarrassed to say all the time.

Interviewer3: So, in some senses food is quite a vital part of that friendship in being able to almost care for each other or feel like you're being taken care of by a friend?

Respondent4: Yeah, because I feel like it actually makes, what I'm going to say is [inaudible 00:41:26] sort of like buying someone else food because they're having trouble, like that's sometimes a big thing, and that sort of says 'Oh, they really care about me' and I'm having trouble.

Interviewer3: Yeah. So, slightly different topic, but in your school the under-year-11s aren't allowed to go out during lunchtime, but the sixth formers are. How do you feel about that and what do you think, do you understand why that's the case? We'll start over where with the boys.

Respondent2: Yeah, I think it's fair because like you can't have loads and loads of kids running out of school, because like some of them might not even come back. Sixth formers are more like mature than [inaudible 00:42:19] so they know to come back, and plus sixth formers only have like three lessons a day because they're taking A level, we have five so for us to be back in time... they have more free time.

Interviewer3: Okay.

Respondent9: I think it's right, I just feel because like it's hard to account for all of those people just going in and out of school in break and when you said that, they might not even come back. Sixth formers should be able to because they don't have as many lessons and they have more free time. Like the younger children don't have as much free time and they have more lessons and it would just be loads of people going in and out of the school gates.

Interviewer3: Okay, [inaudible 00:43:20].

Respondent8: I think like if you're going out of the school gates, I don't think it's fair because maybe like a couple of members of staff or something, like someone could come with you, like if everybody wants to go to like McDonald's then like it's almost [inaudible 00:43:36] go somewhere else, then that way everyone will come back and there can be a register or something.

Or then again, I see where they're coming from because they don't, like young people have more like diabetes and stuff like that, so if you're going out to eat you're getting more like fatty food.

But I just don't really think it's fair because not everyone enjoys the food, meals, like they might not finish it all or they might go home hungry or something like that.

Interviewer3: Okay, yeah.

Respondent5: Yeah, because, well, I mean in a way I think it's not fair but fair at the same time, because like [inaudible 00:44:17] was saying, we could maybe have like little tags and we scan them when we come in or out or something. Like when you're out you get a little more variety in meals, like your parents will buy [inaudible 00:44:30] it's basically just like coming, like if you go to school [inaudible 00:44:36].

Interviewer3: Okay.

Respondent7: It's kind of like if someone leaves and doesn't come back it's the school's responsibility because they've let them out and they haven't returned. But I think it's fairer in a way because if someone has like dietary things and they buy other food at least they get a variety of options.

Interviewer3: Yeah.

Respondent6: I think it's fair because like now people are looking for young people to take, at the moment where this school [inaudible 00:45:18] so if we get taken you would be in big trouble. So, I think it's fair.

And the second thing is [inaudible 00:45:28] my sister is in sixth form so she can go out, so if they don't let the school [inaudible 00:54:40] she goes to Tesco or whatever and sort of [inaudible 00:45:45] because then obviously I don't have to go out and get lost and get back in time, you know, I'll get taken, we're so young, we don't have that knowledge yet, you get what I mean, to go out,

where sixth formers have more responsibility and parents trust the older ones more.

Interviewer3: [Overspeaking 00:46:20].

Interviewer: Most things.

Interviewer3: You've covered some of the other...

Interviewer: Covered pretty much, yeah.

Interviewer3: But I guess we should, so you mentioned earlier some of you sometimes feel hungry at school, just any other comments about that? So, does it affect your day in school when you're learning and...? Yeah?

Respondent3: I think it kind of affects your learning because like your focus is always on food and stuff like that. I know sometimes if I have food sometimes I will eat it in class. I don't, like [inaudible 00:46:59] it's like on my mind and I'm hungry so then it kind of like cuts my, not focus, but it helps me to like if I've eaten then it won't be on my mind anymore and maybe like sometimes in the test or something your marks will go down or something like that because you're constantly thinking about food.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay.

Respondent10: You just get like really tired and you're always thinking about it and sometimes you want juice but we're not allowed juice, you're only allowed water, you're just sitting there because we will like go outside and have exercise, but especially if you're going a long way, there's nothing you can get like after school as a snack [inaudible 00:47:47] going to Sainsbury's and buy something.

Interviewer3: Yeah.

Respondent4: I agree with them two, it does affect your learning because obviously your mind is on food. But the class is so quiet all of a sudden there's like this rumble [overspeaking 00:48:09] heads up, everyone is looking who it is and you're like 'Not me, guys'. But yeah, I think that it does affect your learning. Obviously, the teacher is talking and then my mind is on food like all the time and sometimes you have to have a nibble or a drink. But I don't do it much. [Overspeaking 00:48:37].

Interviewer3: Only got a couple of minutes.

Interviewer: Is there anything else that you would want to tell us about, I mentioned this to you earlier, but just everybody, do you make different, the food that you get at home is most likely the food that you're given, right? That's the food that your parents cook for you and buy for you.

Now, is there a similarity between what you eat at school, what you purchase before and after school and what you eat at home?

And if there is, explain it to me. If there isn't, let's talk about it.
Yeah?

Respondent5: Sometimes it depends, like [inaudible 00:49:21] chocolates and sweets at home, that's more likely in your [inaudible 00:49:26] it's more like you're not eating it because you're hungry, you're just eating it because you just want to buy some stuff.

But like the food that your parents give you is much different, obviously, I know some people that [inaudible 00:49:42] what they're eating out of school.

Respondent3: I think sometimes like when you're at home, like it's not like you can't get your own food but it's just like your parents, it's like they're [inaudible 00:49:46] so you have to, not eat it every day, but eat is constantly. You kind of want a variety, just like at school. So, like in between school and in between home, like you've got that time to yourself so you can buy what you want and things that you [inaudible 00:50:13] at school.

So, buying stuff is like, not really because you're hungry, because school and home, it's like two hours to get home or something like that, it's not like a long time but it's just so you can have something that you've been waiting for.

Interviewer: So, it's like a treat or a reward and a comfort as well.

Respondent9: My mum gives me like chocolates and sweets, like my older sister, she buys them, sometimes whatever is left over she lets me and my brother have it.

Respondent6: I agree, like you're at home and you're really comfy and so you eat what you have and not what you want, but with school it gives you that sort of less variety. But there are like a carbonara [inaudible 00:51:11] pasta but they're sort of like the only two things my mum would make at home, my mum makes such a variety of food [inaudible 00:51:26] I feel more comfortable to eat at home than at school [inaudible 00:51:33] I'll have to leave my food and that makes me more hungry the next lesson, because obviously you don't miss [inaudible 00:51:43] but at home, everyone is, you know, sort of used to that.

Respondent5: This isn't something about like the school [inaudible 00:51:56] salt, like salt and they're quite fatty and they're not really good for you, especially because, yeah, diabetics and stuff like that so it's not good, so maybe we should have like separate food, but like a little bit more seasoning. I don't know why. I wish we had like more varieties. I know people can't cook [inaudible 00:52:21] food but like maybe one time, every Friday or something, or Tuesday we might have something [inaudible 00:52:29].

Interviewer3: Okay, so more like different cultures in the menu? Okay.

Respondent3: Or like ask suggestions of what we want. Like you know at Subway you can get what you want, maybe we should have it at school, have like choose what you want or like, you know, pick stuff, maybe like salad or maybe like create food that you might want and stuff like that. Not everyone would like what they're served.

Respondent6: I think when there's like a [inaudible 00:53:07] that comes with like carbonara let's say, you have to have the pasta and the sauce, I think you should be able to say like if you want loads of sauce [inaudible 00:53:17] and it's quite dry. So, if you don't really want it to be dry, so you can just ask how much you want of it. Doesn't mean like just sauce either, like curry or whatever else we have, a little bit, because not everyone is that hungry.

Interviewer3: So small alterations in terms of they can still serve what they serve, but just so you can say you want a bit more of that, bit less of that, and a bit more say in what goes onto your plate rather than a standard...? Perfect.

Interviewer: Okay, well I think we've run out of time. Thank you so much for all your contributions, for being so generous and for coming to the focus group. Thanks so much. [Overspeaking 00:54:03].

Interviewer2: Thank you.

Interviewer: You're ahead of the game. [Overspeaking 00:54:08].

END OF AUDIO