

Food and Drink purchased 'Through the School Gate'

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Transcript

School 1 Interview Head

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Interviewer: Yeah so Tom consented to me audio recording this conversation.

Respondent: Yes I do consent to you recording this conversation.

Interviewer: Excellent, good. Okay so thank you for making some time to speak to us. We're kind of interested in the policies that you have around school food, both food that is bought outside of school, food that is inside, where the kids eat and what happens after school.

Respondent: Okay.

Interviewer: So what are your policies about at break time and at lunch time about eating?

Respondent: So the way our school is structured, students can eat any time which is part of their social time, that would be any brunch or lunch. We use the terminology brunch and lunch because all students choose to eat during that time. It used to be break and lunch before but as our school has expanded, all students have chosen and said that they would like to eat, have something provided for them early in the day rather than at traditional at lunch time. Quite a lot of our students live quite close to the school, especially after school some students will just go home to eat straightaway and you know some students will like to eat outside of school but we actually encourage students not to eat any of the food, chicken, chip shops...I don't know if any students have spoke about that at all...

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: ... but it will be myself or some members of staff that just do normal patrols outside the school just because of safety but just we just tell students to go home and eat rather than eat some of the food from the shops just because the quality, you can't always guarantee the quality of the food that's going to be cooked. I know the price is very, very cheap which is great for young people and great for families that may not be able to afford or believe they may not be able to afford the right food and just given the child £2, could you sort them out for dinner but we just tell, we'll tell students there are other alternatives and we encourage students to eat during brunch as well as lunch time as well. We done some work previously two years ago about what is the right packed lunch but I think that's almost kind of changed a little bit and what we're starting to see now is some students bringing in their own food and packed lunch. Some of it's cooked meals, some of it is sandwiches, it is crisps. What we don't allow in the school really is sweets. That's the only thing we're quite hard on. We've got more relaxed on crisps because I think again we've had a forum and a survey some students, they shared that there wasn't many other things they could bring into school. So we had a very big hard crack down on...so it's things you could bring in where we've had to relax it just last year to have a little bit more choice and that really came from the community leaders who I believe, the majority of the Year 8s that spoke to actually are community leaders, this year's community leaders.

Respondent: Okay.

Interviewer: And the Year 9 are students that want to participate in different surveys...want to do their own survey so that's why they've kind of worked to view, that way they could see how it's done and that way they can do their own survey with Year 7s which is the aim so it was quite, it was obviously a good experience for them to see what you guys are doing and they're gonna be following a very similar pattern

of I was gonna say experiment but your project or your research with the students. Focusing on food as well I do believe we have quite a great range. We've got a lot of selection but I think the quality is good so either have two main options in terms of their main food, one being Halal vegetarian kind of option and one being not so much. However, because the majority of our students coming from a Muslim background, even if there is a meat option, you would find the meat 100% all the time is Halal. It's only so options where sometimes we have beef burgers but that will be on the last day of school when that one's actually with the [inaudible 0:03:30] the same in terms of chicken burgers which are Halal, beef burgers which are non Halal but again we don't have a big selection of those because that's mainly just dependent on a few students because again through Patrick's survey with some parents they found that some of their children don't that get offered. We explained why to a small group of parents but we decided to still to kind of open that choice to 11 kids that we get in the school. That's the main, that kind of where we're at as a lunch. We do believe that before school as well so obviously they'll get to eat as well so we do offer free breakfast to any student, whether they're disadvantaged, disadvantaged in terms of pupil premium or free school meals, whatever six, or if they're not, if they're not disadvantaged, I feel that what it does it encourages students to come to school early and be somewhere just nice. I wouldn't rather them just being at home and trying to come on to school in time and obviously we're fully aware that some parents work and sometimes trying to find somewhere where the child goes between 7.30 and 8 o'clock is quite difficult but then again we're looking to do another survey to see if that's the right time, if that actually is something that parents want but I do envisage that some parents will say a little bit earlier but it's about us balancing whether or not in terms of costing it works out because what we do we aren't gonna know...so numbers of pupil premium kids that come to it then we kind of shift our pupil

premium money towards providing that service as well. But in summer it's quite popular so that...

Interviewer: Yeah but how many students roughly come to breakfast club?

Respondent: About 70 kids on average but around exam time it shoots up because you get the majority of Year 11s, Year 13s, the Year 12s come in alongside their siblings so instantly Year 11 has to come and revise and obviously he'll bring his younger siblings as well to have breakfast, they'll probably go into to the library to do like some of the small clubs that we run in the mornings. The rest of the Year 11s will just stay in the street, the main area that you see with the breakfast, revise in the street until the 9 o'clock exam. So just recently we've had that, like just now with the mock exams which has finished. We expect to see that again in March for the spring mock exams and again for more exams towards the end but because of the different times when we have exams, you find the take-up changes and it varies but more or less, if there's nothing on at all, we're round about 70 kids, mixed across every year groups. A lot of Year 7s and it kind of drops as it gets towards the middle years then it spikes up again towards sixth form Year 12, Year 13s come in quite early because their timetables are a bit different, they're done by lunch so... With the sixth formers in terms of their lunch, they mainly eat, a lot of them eat outside school.

Interviewer: So they're allowed off site are they?

Respondent: They're allowed off site yeah, they're allowed off site mainly because a lot of them finish school sometimes by that period.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: So in terms of...we haven't really looked at with the sixth form, Year 12, Year 13s where they eat or where they don't eat mainly because in our eyes, their, most of them their schooling finishes at that time but I think that's [inaudible 0:06:15] that we could probably look at in our next survey about looking at Year 12, Year 13s.

Interviewer: Be interesting to see where they went and...

Respondent: Yeah. Because I've done you know those sort of questions...a lot of our kids literally live in the estate you can see right behind you but then we have some students that live further out, further out and as they start walking further out there are so many options on the main road which...it's difficult, you've got the very cheap chicken and chip shops, then you've got KFC, which is not really that popular, only popular to our Year 11s unfortunately and then we've got the McDonald's which is round the corner which quite a lot of our students...but a lot of our students know our expectations so if I do my walk it's only one or two kids I have to speak to, to remind and sometimes because kids with their parents completely fine because that parent's made that choice.

Interviewer: It's the parents making...

Respondent: That choice, yeah but there's one parent that said to me that once a week when their child goes to McDonald's on a Friday so when I see that child there I was like 'I know why you're here' and they'll go in if you show them but for all other students I feel I always really they need to just go straight home. So that's our rule. There's one or two that maybe get food and that and I'm fully aware of that but I think students understand why we're doing it. The only reason why we're doing it, it came student-led through a programme called Rock which one of our Year 10s when he was a Year 8 started a programme, he

wanted to lose weight so started doing a kind of 'get fit' programme and looked at the students' quality of food, then there was a conversation with the kitchen, the food changed in the kitchen. I think they're now much more engaged with the staff in the school. I think sometimes we go to some schools, the kids and staff are quite separate and sometimes you see that they don't really engage really with their students, they complain most of the time but a lot of our kitchen staff are actually like...if they're concerned about anything at all or in terms of needing support...we had one member of staff that does like reading in the mornings with some Year 7s. I think that then allows relationships at lunch time to be a bit more cohesive and I think that adds students wanting to eat more in school. I think if you have people that work within the kitchen staff I think there's an element as well where they're quite very negative, that then builds a relationship with students in that street area. But I think you just have to walk through our street to see that, so supervision, there's a member of staff walking around, looking at what students are doing and just the buzziness of it as well, the conversations. We try to keep the noise quite low down, quite low, we all talk about decibels but to be honest I think a slightly loud but I don't know what the right word is...loud but...it's not like loud, I think it's though it's not crazy loud, sort of out of contro...it looks very, not uncontrolled, suits all the routines and the systems and I think the students are enjoying it. I think it's still amazing how we get all the students in but I think it only works because again I think students are engrained in the token system, getting inside, going inside. There are things we are looking to do to improve it but I think just a quick look at the food wise about what's on offer I think, not a lot of choice but a great quality. I don't know if that's what you would have got from the students as well but...

Interviewer: Some. It's interesting to see kind of what they eat at home and what they eat here...

Respondent: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: ...and the differences so when we spoke to the kitchen staff they said that they tried to make the food that they cooked here similar to what the kids would have at home so they'd make things spicier...

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: ...and that kind of thing which is really that the kitchen staff take that on board.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah. Wednesdays and Thursdays I think there's like, yeah, I think the options are tailored a lot towards what some students have at home on those days but on Fridays normally they have fish and chips. I think that kind of just...but as soon as they know what days or what food I think it's easier for them to know in terms of 'Oh I'm having lunch on this day' or sometimes people are like 'Oh it's something different today, is there a celebration, is it Thanksgiving?' and then sometimes the food will tailor and change.

Interviewer: So it's nice to kind of involve them in different kind of cultures and celebrations and things.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay, [inaudible 0:09:57] good point. So I think there's quite a lot of students in this school that are on free school meals. Is that right?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Yeah and they get, is it £2 a day they get?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: From, yeah and that gets them the whole meal deal at lunch time?

Respondent: Yes, yes, so...

Interviewer: So they can't get anything for brunch if they...

Respondent: Well they can but it will be taken out, yeah.

Interviewer: But then it will be taken off so they would...okay.

Respondent: So they have a choice. Again some students choose to eat earlier, some choose to eat later. It all depends on them really.

Interviewer: So it gives them that, yeah and something that did come up and that we actually noticed as well is that you don't sell drinks anywhere. Is that, was that a conscious decision by the school just to remove all juices, fizzy drinks etc.

Respondent: Only water. All students are encouraged to have a bottle of water which they can fill at the fountains. Anyone that has any kind of water, any drink, anything at all it's confiscated and then we ask parents if they would like to collect it. If not we say that if they do not want to collect it then we can put it in the bin but it's up to them so if they want their child to have it they can come and collect it, mainly because we just think that in school you should only be consuming water and I think students have spoken about it, said they wanted to have fizzy drinks and stuff like that in school but we've had quite a hard line, said that's what is there, water's there so it's easy for anyone to get. If a student's really thirsty they can get a cup from reception, come and drink it in any of the offices and there's water

offered in lunch but I think water's the only thing that really should be really consumed in school, except for tea and coffee for teachers.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: But...

Interviewer: But that's a must (ALL LAUGH). So what about energy drinks? Do you have...do lots of kids buy energy drinks before school?

Respondent: Energy drinks are not allowed in school so we...

Interviewer: But do you have kids that try and sneak them in or not really?

Respondent: No. I think we get some students that we see...if we see any students purchasing it after school and before school take the [inaudible 0:11:46] or take the note down, the name down then we ask parents to make sure that they don't have it again. If they are found with it again they are walked back on site and their parents have to come and collect them or we'd say they've got a detention after school but it depends on what it is. If a student says...we keep seeing the student purchase it at all, keep purchasing it, we'd have to speak to the parents about what they're consuming and how that kind of affects their learning in school. I mean very easy you can tell if someone has had a bottle of Boost before school. I think that's something that we found quite a lot, some of the kids that, some of our students that had a lot of energy, I think times that with two cans of Boost, if that's what they choose to have for breakfast, I think just results in the student being very high energy and then flat-lining by period 5 and period 6 which means that their day of education has been largely affected and I think that's why we've got quite a hard line of it as well. If it's seen in school it's taken off them straightaway and

students know that as well, I think they know that they're not allowed. I think even this morning I think a student I saw that was drinking juice, I went to collect it straightaway and as soon as I said it he said to me 'Sir, get rid of it, Mum's not gonna come for it' and he knew straightaway as soon as he looked at me. He did try to hide it but as I walked into the classroom he gave it back to me straightaway because he said...he kind of shrugged and someone said to me 'Why would you bring it...?' Someone said to him 'Why would you bring it into school?' and I think they know and understand why we're doing it. I mean it's good for staff as well if it means we drink more water as well.

Interviewer: Yeah but it's good to have a line like across the whole...

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: ...thing because if you start making caveats here, there and everywhere, it's difficult to kind of monitor isn't it?

Respondent: Yeah. I think they do...they probably do have it at home but I think it's about reducing the amount of time they have it. I think it's about...it's not about trying to say 'This is completely bad, you can't have it'. I think you can have fizzy drinks if you want at home but I think it's about reducing the amount of time, reducing the amount they have because if not, if they were just allowed to bring whatever you like in school we'll have bottles of coke all over the place, you'll have all other drinks and that will affect students day to day in the school because I know some schools do teach about balanced diet, I think sometimes what happens at home is quite...we can't tailor that, we can't control that what happens at home so if we make sure at least the breakfast as soon as when they come in, so it needs to be the lunch is what it needs to be for the students then...

Interviewer: Yeah so you're doing as much as you can to encourage healthy eating...

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: ...and drinking and then it's up to the parents to...

Respondent: Hopefully but yeah.

Interviewer: Definitely, yeah and do you think a lot of them, a lot of the kids do have healthy food at home or does it really vary?

Respondent: I think because of cultural backgrounds of some of the students I think a lot of what some students, what you [inaudible 0:14:18] have them, if they're a student from Bengali background they explain to me about they have a rice or curry, if it's students from like Caribbean background, they'll speak again, they'll speak about in terms of rice, a lot of it with chicken. I can't really say much about what actually happens at home. I think what I can base it on is stereotypical kind of what, what a stereotypical person will have at lunch and what the kids talk about would have a lunch or I mean for dinner at home but yeah...so I think it's about knowing exactly what students eat at home, if it would change I think students take that [inaudible 0:14:51] twice, but it's not something we can really gauge so we just make sure as a school we kind of given them the balanced even of all those different things as much as we can and that's all we can do and what we'll keep on doing.

Interviewer: Brilliant. I think that's done I think. I thank you for that.

Interviewer: Yeah you've covered everything. Thanks. END OF AUDIO