

A professional standard for a general kitchen/catering assistant

A general kitchen/catering assistant works as part of the kitchen team to help ensure the effective and efficient preparation of lunch in a school dining area. Duties may be varied and include setting up the dining area, basic food preparation and cooking, regeneration of cook-chill items, service of ready-to-eat meal deliveries, cash handling, customer service, cleaning and maintaining equipment and service items. Clean as you go and scheduled cleaning are vital to a safe operation and a general kitchen / catering assistant needs to make good use of available resources and reduce waste wherever possible. Correct completion of kitchen documentation is important to ensure legal requirements are satisfied. As part of the catering team, assistants must work to the standards contained in the client's / school's food policy to meet healthy eating and wellbeing requirements and provide pupils with a varied and tasty selection of food.

The structure of the standard

The table in this document contains the professional standard that employers have agreed for the role of a general kitchen/catering assistant in a school catering operation.

The standard is presented in three parts covering:

PART 1 Knowledge (Know it!)

PART 2 Skills (Show it!)

PART 3 Behaviours (Live it!)

Element of the standard	Knowledge (Know it!)	Skills (Show it!)	Behaviours (Live it!)
Food preparation and cooking	<p>Know the basic food groups used in school catering environments and their common preparation methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starchy foods (bread, rice, potatoes, pasta) • Milk and dairy • Fruits and vegetables • Protein (Meat, fish, eggs and beans) • Fat and sugar 	<p>Perform basic food preparation tasks as directed, following kitchen procedures and maintaining food safety and quality</p>	<p>Create food which tastes good and keeps the nutritional goodness by best use of tools and equipment</p>
	<p>Know how to store, prepare, regenerate, cook and serve ingredients to meet food safety and quality requirements in own organisation</p>	<p>Store, prepare, regenerate, cook and serve ingredients correctly to produce good quality, safe food within the organisation's procedures and operational style</p>	<p>Work safely, effectively and efficiently</p>
	<p>Understand how to store and use ingredients and resources effectively and efficiently, and the importance of and procedure for minimising and recording waste</p>	<p>Follow procedures regarding usage and waste of resources</p>	<p>Set an example to others by working in ways which minimise waste</p>
Dining area	<p>Know how to set up the dining area(s), including tables, chairs and service equipment safely and efficiently</p>	<p>Work with the midday supervisor to set up the dining area in line with requirements</p>	<p>Work with the midday supervisor to ensure the most appropriate and efficient set up and clearing of the dining area</p>
	<p>Know how to clear and close down the dining area and store of equipment such as tables, chairs and serving equipment</p>	<p>Clear and close down the dining area and store equipment in line with organisational requirements</p>	
Customers and service	<p>Know when food should be ready and how it should be served</p>	<p>Ensure food is ready at the right time and available for service</p>	<p>Take pride when presenting food for service and consider how it looks through the eyes of a child to ensure it is attractive and appealing</p>
	<p>Know the common requirements and requests in a school catering operation</p>	<p>Serve food and drink, listening carefully to pupils and responding to their needs</p>	<p>Make pupils and staff feel welcome, developing a rapport during food and drink service</p>

Element of the standard	Knowledge (Know it!)	Skills (Show it!)	Behaviours (Live it!)
Nutrition, allergens and dietary needs	Know what makes up a healthy balanced meal in line with the food based standards and guidance, and how to ensure these are met and why this is important to pupils	Follow instruction when preparing, cooking, regenerating and serving food to keep the nutritional goodness (e.g. by not adding salt, using healthier cooking methods)	Look for ways to make food appetising and appealing, encourage pupils to experiment with familiar and new foods
	Know common food allergens and the organisation's procedures for identification, preparation and service of them, and the key legislation governing allergens	Identify allergens in preparation and cooking of food, ensure it is prepared, cooked and stored in line with legal and organisational procedures	Take responsibility for allergens and dietary requirements in the school catering operation
	Know common dietary requirements and how food is prepared to meet these	Ensure dietary requirements are met when preparing, cooking, regenerating and serving food	
Health, safety and hygiene	Know the food safety practices and procedures to ensure the safe preparation, cooking, holding and service of food in line with legal requirements	Prepare, cook and present food to agreed food safety practices and guidelines, ensuring a clean and hygienic kitchen environment is maintained at all times and food safety procedures are followed and recorded	Put safety at the forefront of all work tasks, embrace a clean-as-you-go approach, be proactive when identifying potential hazards, maintaining records and reporting in a timely manner
	Know what to look for in ingredients and how to handle and store them to maintain quality, in line with food safety legislation	Ensure ingredients are stored, prepared, cooked and presented to deliver a quality product that is safe for the consumer	
	Know how to complete scheduled cleaning and kitchen checks, correct methods for cleaning and equipment breakdown and storage, complete kitchen records e.g. cleaning schedule, temperature checks, report defects and signs of pest infestation and take corrective actions as instructed	Check work areas in line with organisational procedures, work safely and ensure all records, e.g. cleaning schedules, temperature checks, are completed accurately	
	Know how to identify hazards in work area, how they are reported and commonly rectified and where to go if further information or assistance is required	Regularly check work area to make sure it is safe, report hazards, rectify hazards where possible and follow safe systems of working	
Teamwork and culture	Understand own role within the team and why training and development is important to work at to the highest standards	Communicate with different people using a variety of methods in the best way for the situation, and take part in training and development activities to develop own skills	Take pride in own role through an enthusiastic and professional approach to tasks, welcome feedback and use it to plan ways of improving
	Know how to communicate with colleagues and team members from a diverse range of backgrounds and cultures, how to support team members when needed and how the team ensures the catering needs of the school are met	Work effectively with team members and support them to ensure that food is prepared efficiently, to the required standard within designated timescales to quality standards	Respond positively to instruction and work to assist team members to complete tasks on time, listen and respect other peoples' point of view, respond politely and promote a fair, non-discriminatory and equal working environment
	Know how the catering operation supports the whole school operation, know key school staff and other stakeholders	Work with own team and school staff to provide a whole school approach to food as a vital element of school life, celebrating success and addressing challenges and delivering an excellent catering service	Live the values of the school food plan to embrace a whole school approach to food
Safeguarding and confidentiality	Know the types of sensitive data that may be required in the catering operation for pupils in the dining area and how this must be used and stored in adherence to data protection	Receive, store and use confidential data relating to pupils within own area of responsibility	Take a proactive approach to safeguarding, ensuring effective on going communication with relevant parties to ensure the safety and welfare of pupils
	Know what to look for to identify potential safeguarding situations Know the organisation's safeguarding policy and procedures	Look out for potential safeguarding issues and report immediately in line with organisational policies and procedures	