

A professional standard for a head of kitchen

Head of kitchen is a collective name for a range of job titles, for individuals that manage the efficient and effective running of a school catering operation to deliver a quality food service in education. Depending on the organisation, examples of these could include catering manager, chef manager, caterer, head chef or catering supervisor all of which relate to similar job roles in the wider catering industry. Running a team of cooks and kitchen / catering assistants, the manager needs to adhere to legislation and organisational guidelines, policies and procedures as well as client specifications and budgets. Meeting Ofsted inspection requirements is also key to the role requiring these managers to work closely with the school leadership team to ensure a whole school approach. Nutrition, portion control and quality are all essential to achieve an effective food production operation and subsequently happy customers. The role may involve running an operation with prescribed menus, or could include the responsibility for menu design. This standard has been developed as part of the School Food Plan, the details of which the head of kitchen should be familiar with. The head of kitchen must also be aware of the requirements of the food based standards and guidance and other relevant legislation and guidance specific to school catering.

The structure of the standard

The table in this document contains the professional standard that employers have agreed for the role of a head of kitchen 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	Know skills and techniques for preparing high quality, nutritionally sound food in a school environment	Ensure food produced is of high quality, appealing and maximises nutritional content	Take pride in food preparation, cooking and service; where appropriate experiment with new techniques and ingredients and encourage the team to do so too
	Know the organisation's recipe and menu specifications	Ensure the team follow recipe and menu briefs / specifications to produce consistent, quality dishes	
	Know when menus can be altered, adapted or developed to meet school and pupil needs, and for special events (in line with organisational / school requirements)	Adapt standard menus to meet local needs and volumes, and develop menus to cater for specific events when requested	Be creative and engage with other stakeholders to provide ideas for special events
	Know where to find information on new ideas and trends in food and drink service, and ways to develop and cost both menus and dishes to incorporate them	Plan and produce appealing menus and dishes which are positively received by pupils, give parents and carers confidence that school meals are of a high quality, ensuring they meet the food based standards and guidance *Where applicable to the organisation	Use creativity and embrace diversity and the latest trends when planning and producing menus and dishes *Where applicable to the organisation
Service area	Understand the importance of providing and maintaining standards in a school catering operation	Produce clear standards and methods for team members to follow when preparing dishes	Proactively communicate with team to ensure understanding of menus, dishes and recipes
	Know the importance of maintaining different service areas for the provision of food and drinks	Present products and services to the highest standard	Demonstrate and lead high standards in all areas of the school catering operation
	Know how to prepare and display food and beverages to maximise sales and maintain the quality of products during its shelf life in line with the organisation's requirements / policy	Store, prepare, package, transport and display food safely to maintain quality	

Element of the standard	Knowledge (Know it!)	Skills (Show it!)	Behaviours (Live it!)
Service area (continued)	Know the legislative requirements for the storage, sale and transportation of food and beverages	Work within the legal framework for food and beverage preparation, storage, transport and service	Demonstrate safe and legal working practices at all times
	Understand the principles of merchandising and how to present available food and beverages and service information that is appealing to pupils	Merchandise and display available food and beverages and service information effectively to pupils	Be creative and promote a pupil centred display to engage and excite
Customers and service	Know the customers of the school catering operation (e.g. pupils, parents and the school), know how to market the service and why it is important to engage with stakeholders and help develop the school's food policy	Engage with pupils, parents and the school regularly, including when introducing menus and dishes and encourage school staff to eat in the dining area	Use proven and new methods to engage with stakeholders, and see the dining experience through the eyes of a child, for example taster sessions, parents evenings, school council or school nutrition action groups (SNAGs)
	Understand why having food and beverages ready in good time to the required standard is critical to a positive meal experience for pupils	Ensure catering team work together to produce high quality food and beverage on time and of good quality that is appealing and satisfies pupils and encourages meal take up	Look for ways to improve service from pupils', school's and catering operation's view point
	Know why it is important to talk to stakeholders about the school catering operation and the most appropriate methods to use for each e.g. pupil, parent, school, suppliers	Contribute to school catering education through local and national initiatives, e.g. school vegetable garden / growing schemes, providing demonstrations / recipes	Look to find new opportunities in line with the whole school approach, such as vegetable gardens, classroom interactivity or cooking lessons
	Know the requirements of the contract or service level agreement with the school, including meal number targets, and how the catering operation must meet these	Manage contract and / or service level agreements with school, communicating regularly with appropriate stakeholders on performance	Be accountable for meeting and exceeding contractual obligations whilst improving standards and meal take up
Nutrition, allergens and dietary needs	Know how to prepare a menu containing healthy balanced meals in line with the food based standards and guidance, how to ensure the kitchen team meet these and why this is important to pupils	Manage team to prepare, cook, regenerate and serve food to keep the nutritional goodness (e.g. no added salt, healthier cooking methods)	Prepare and serve a mix of familiar and new foods and encourage pupils to experiment, being aware of individuals with allergies
	Know legislative responsibilities for the management of allergens and identification of pupils at risk in the school catering environment	Ensure compliance with allergenic regulations by managing the implementation of, training staff on, regular monitoring and review of an allergen management system	Have a forward thinking approach to managing allergens, seeking suitable alternatives and ensuring legal compliance
	Know how to identify and what to do to adapt menus to meet dietary, religious and other requirements	Adapt menus and recipes to meet the needs of dietary, religious or other needs in line with relevant school requirements, food based standards and organisation's procedures	Create appealing meals which meet pupils' needs without drawing attention to them

Element of the standard	Knowledge (Know it!)	Skills (Show it!)	Behaviours (Live it!)
Health, safety and hygiene	<p>Understand how to manage food safety systems in line with current legislative requirements and identify, prioritise, schedule and implement monitoring, training, maintenance or repair work in ways which minimise disruption to customers</p> <p>Know what to look for in ingredients and resources and how to handle and store them to maintain quality, in line with food safety legislation</p> <p>Know how to, and the importance of, risk assessment, and what the health and safety requirements responsibilities and accountabilities are for the role and working environment</p>	<p>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 management procedures followed / recorded to adhere to legislation. Ensure staff are fully trained and follow the food safety management system</p> <p>Ensure ingredients and resources are stored, prepared, cooked and presented to deliver a quality product that is safe for the consumer</p> <p>Conduct risk assessment, ensure team members follow health and safety procedures, deal with health and safety incidents promptly, recording and reporting all information required</p>	<p>Lead the team with passion, instilling a sense of pride to ensure a consistently high quality and efficient, safe food production operation</p> <p>Take responsible decisions that support high standards of food safety practices</p> <p>Use a considered approach to managing ingredients to maintain their quality and safety</p> <p>Create a culture of compliance and safe working</p>
Teamwork, culture and leadership	<p>Understand the key legislative requirements and initiatives driving operations, standards and quality in school catering, e.g. food based standards and guidelines, school food plan and how these can best integrate to own organisation</p> <p>Understand the principles of team work and managing the engagement and motivation of teams to achieve the objectives of the school catering operation</p> <p>Know the importance of continual professional development and where to source opportunities</p> <p>Understand the organisation's human resource policies and procedures— e.g. managing recruitment, induction, team development, training and succession planning</p> <p>Understand the team's role in the school and how its contribution to the school's food policy contributes to high quality delivery and uptake of school meals</p>	<p>Embed the requirements and ethos of the legislation and guidance into the objectives of the catering team, leading and motivating them to work to a whole school approach</p> <p>Build and maintain a team in an environment that encourages and facilitates effective working to achieve aims and objectives. Provide support, coaching and mentoring as appropriate to maximise understanding and performance of team members</p> <p>Use structure of informal performance reviews to regularly plan self-development in line with personal objectives</p> <p>Assist in the recruitment and induction process and, if applicable in organisation, follow performance management systems. Plan staff training and development.</p> <p>Conduct regular performance reviews and agree development plans to support the development of teams and individuals</p> <p>Communicate and work effectively with school leadership, and engage with the development and ongoing management of the school's food policy</p>	<p>Encourage team members to see the importance of their role within the whole school approach and realise their individual potential</p> <p>Support team members and encourage them to take a pride in their role through demonstrating a consistently positive and professional approach</p> <p>Take ownership of self-development and complete development activities that provide personal results and will support the organisation</p> <p>Continually develop team members to improve knowledge, skills and behaviour in line with their personal and organisational objectives</p> <p>Use a customer centred approach to performance management of staff and address poor performance professionally and promptly</p> <p>Be proactive and innovative when contributing to the school's food policy</p>

Element of the standard	Knowledge (Know it!)	Skills (Show it!)	Behaviours (Live it!)
Teamwork, culture and leadership (continued)	Understand the school's role within the wider catering and hospitality industry, how to keep up to date with latest trends, standards and technology and the potential impact on own organisation	Regularly review the school's operation in light of industry trends and changes, looking for opportunities to develop links with external organisations to improve the school catering operation	Take opportunities to attend trade shows, competitions, visit other catering operations and networking events
Stock, orders, costing and finance	<p>Know the organisation's policies and procedures for sourcing food, beverages, disposables and cleaning supplies</p> <p>Know the importance of working within budget when ordering</p> <p>Know the principles of effective stock control and how they work in own organisation</p> <p>Know the financial procedures for income and expenditure in the organisation</p>	<p>Source food, beverages, disposables and cleaning supplies in a cost effective way from approved suppliers ensuring quality and service from supplier</p> <p>Manage stock from ordering to use / consumption ensuring proper rotation and use and minimising wastage</p> <p>Complete stock control procedures as required by organisation</p> <p>Process and record income as required, whether through invoicing, tills, cashless systems or internal charging. Manage expenditure to ensure cost efficiency and ensure that all relevant documentation is kept</p>	<p>Work in a cost centred way to ensure ingredients and supplies are of the correct quality for the best price</p> <p>Instil a stock and resource aware culture to the kitchen</p> <p>Be creative and use positive negotiations to source a range of ingredients at the best financial advantage</p> <p>Be financially astute and accountable in work activities, visibly discourage waste and act credibly on matters that affect business finance, take responsibility for income and expenditure</p>
Technology	<p>Understand how technology is used by the business to support the delivery of products and services</p> <p>Know the types of sensitive data required for children in the dining area, for example: children's personal details or medication</p>	<p>Use technology provided to provide an efficient food production operation and maintain records</p> <p>Receive, store and use confidential data relating to children within own area of responsibility</p>	<p>Champion the use of new technology to benefit individuals and the organisation</p> <p>Take a proactive approach to safeguarding, ensuring effective on going communication with relevant parties</p>
Safeguarding and confidentiality	Know the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, how to identify and report potential safeguarding concerns	Look out for potential safeguarding issues and report immediately in line with organisational policies and procedures	