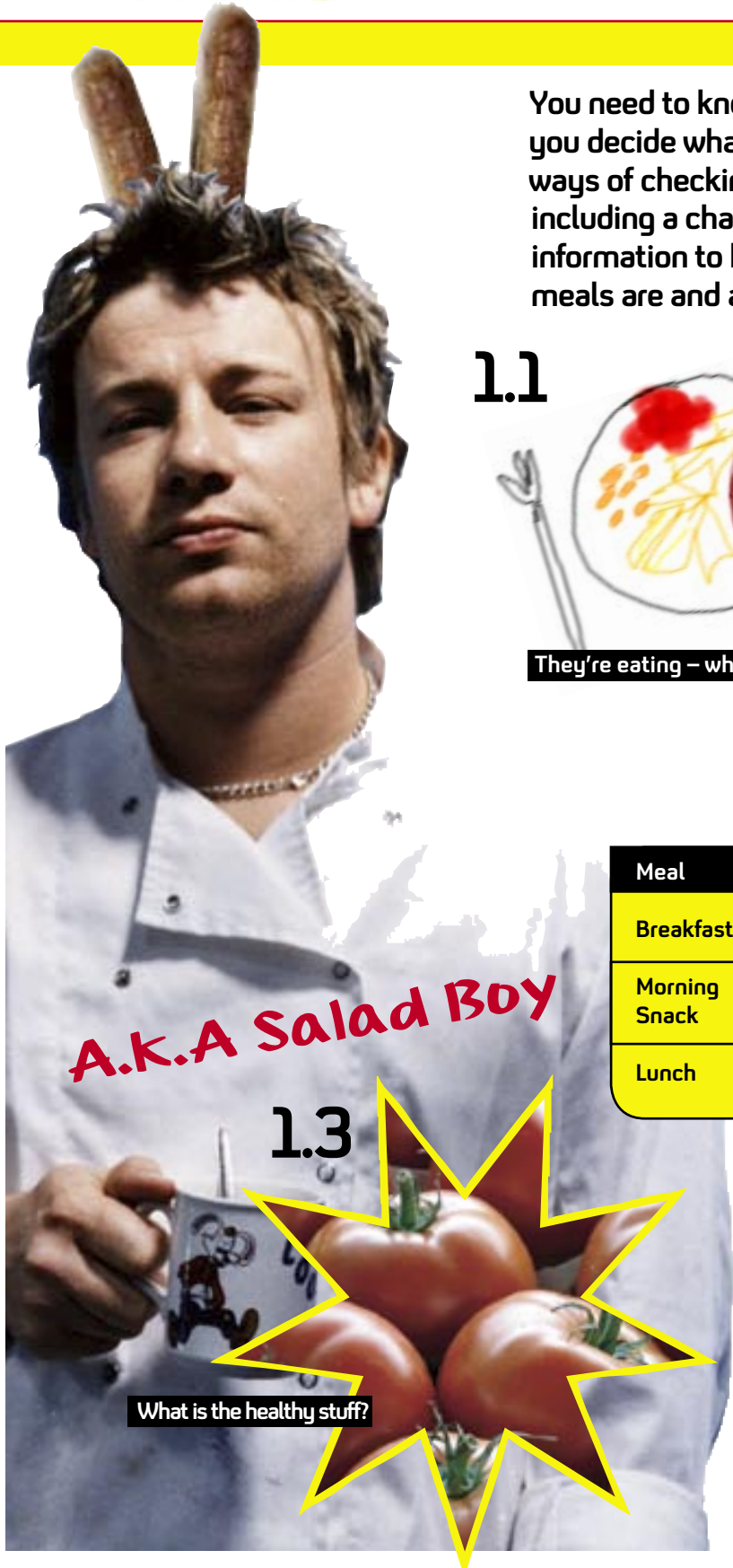


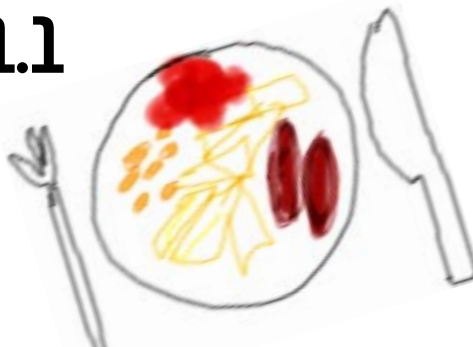
Reality check

You need to know just what your child is eating before you decide what action to take. This section suggests ways of checking what they really eat every day, including a chart they can fill in themselves; there's information to help you assess how good their school meals are and a guide to finding out what's on the menu.

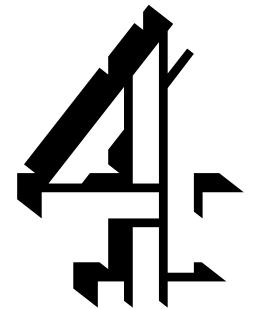


A.K.A Salad Boy

1.1



They're eating - what?



Meal	Monday
Breakfast	Cereal
Morning Snack	CHOCOLATE
Lunch	

1.2

Keep a grub log

1.3

What is the healthy stuff?

1.4



Check out the menu

They're eating – what?

1.1

First off, find out what's being served up to your kids every day at school.

Younger children, up to 11 or 12, are usually served from a set menu with little or no choice. If your school doesn't send home a menu regularly (and it should), ring the school office and ask for one.

At secondary school, students use the school café and choose food for themselves from a range of main dishes and snacks. You can ask them what's on offer but if the answer's a teenage grunt, ring the school and ask for a copy of the menu. If your children don't mind, drop in and see it on display in the canteen. Call in during school hours and you'll see the food being served, which will give you a good idea of the choices on offer and what the students are actually eating. If your children *do* mind, don't set foot in the place or you'll lose their co-operation for good.

Now you can work out whether your school is providing a healthy, balanced meal, or if your child is being offered a load of rock-bottom junk food.

Still not sure if your child's diet has enough of the healthy stuff? Keep a food and drink log for a week and find out the hard facts.

continued... 1.2.1

foodlog
- KEEP ONE



Keep a grub log

1.2

Logging food and drink shows exactly what your child is really eating rather than what you think they're eating, and points up any glaring gaps. Print this **grub log chart**, stick it on the fridge and get them to write down everything that passes their lips for a week.

Once you've completed the record, take a good look:

How much healthy and unhealthy food is on there?

Occasional junk meals or snacks won't hurt them, but 'occasional' means once or twice a week, not every day, or, even worse, several times a day. The balance should lean strongly towards healthy options.

Are they getting their five portions of fruit and vegetables every day?

Do they drink plain water several times a day?

Where could you make simple changes to get them eating more healthily?



The grub log 1

1.2.1



	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Breakfast			
Morning snack/s			
Lunch			
Afternoon snack/s			
Evening meal			
Evening snack/s			

The grub log 2

1.2.2



Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday



What is the healthy stuff?

Use this checklist to help sort the good from the bad.

1.3

bad

Danger foods
High in saturated fat, salt, sugars.
Low in fibre, vitamins and minerals.
Avoid these.

Cheap burgers and sausages made with poor-quality meat including a lot of fat, bulking agents, salt and other additives.

Chicken nuggets or other shapes made from low-quality, minced chicken with a high proportion of fat and other fillers as well as additives. Deep-frying them ratchets up the fat-count even more.

Fish fingers made from cheap minced fish and fillers.

Pizza with poor-quality toppings, white-flour bases.

Chips are laden with fat. Most schools deep-fry their chips, which makes them even fatter than oven-baked.

Other potato shapes, like waffles and smiley faces, are just as bad as chips, and use potato that's been processed and coated.

Meat pies and pasties, sausage rolls are loaded with fat in the pastry, and the contents are low on meat, high on fat, cereals, bulking agents and additives.

Baked beans are better than no veg at all but contain sugar, salt and additives.

Crisps – too salty, too fatty.

Chocolate and sweets contain fat, sugar and precious little else.

Fizzy drinks contain all sorts of additives, some of which are unsuitable for children. Either high in sugar, or laden with artificial sweeteners.

Tinned spaghetti or pasta shapes in tomato sauce are high in sugar and salt, low on fibre.

Shop-bought cakes and biscuits are full of fat and sugar.

good

Good stuff
Low in fat, salt and sugars; high in fibre, vitamins and minerals. Include a range over a week for a healthy diet that's rich in essential nutrients.

Fresh vegetables, preferably organic, seasonal and locally produced.

Salads of fresh seasonal vegetables, like carrot, white or red cabbage, cucumber, red peppers.

Fresh fruit, preferably organic, to eat raw, or in dishes like homemade apple crumble or fruit salad.

Meat and poultry, good quality, preferably organic. Not deep-fried or coated but oven-baked, grilled or casserole.

Fish, not deep-fried or battered. Choose oily fish several times a week. Canned tuna, salmon and sardines are good alternatives to fresh fish.

Sausages and burgers made from high-quality meat without filler.

Homemade dishes such as fish pie, macaroni cheese, bolognese sauce.

Pizzas with wholemeal or stoneground bases and good-quality toppings.

Baked potatoes are an excellent source of fibre. Boiled or mashed also good. Avoid chips, roast or other high-fat cooking methods.

Pasta, especially wholewheat, served with homemade sauce made with fresh vegetables.

Natural low-fat yogurts or fromage frais served with fresh fruit.

Homemade cakes and biscuits are generally lower in fat and sugar than manufactured.

Water is the best drink, and should be available all day.



Check out the menu

1.4

A high-quality, balanced meal helps kids to concentrate and gives them enough energy to stay active and alert right through the school day. Here's what to look for in good school catering.

Check your school's menus against our food lists to see whether the catering relies on unhealthy, processed foods.

- ★ Is the menu varied, with a wide range of healthy options on offer over a week?
- ★ Is water readily available to drink, at meal times and through the day?
- ★ Look at **Jamie Oliver's Feed Me Better Campaign website** (www.feedmebetter.com) and the **Soil Association's Food for Life action pack** at (www.soilassociation.org/foodforlife) which have examples of nutritious school menus you can compare with your school's meals.
- ★ Is there a whole-school policy on school meals?
If so, this should include:
 - sourcing food from approved suppliers
 - buying as much as possible locally
 - using organic and fair-trade products
 - avoiding genetically modified (GM) ingredients, and meat products that contain mechanically retrieved meat
 - keeping salt, sugar and additive levels low.

feed me better

If you're not satisfied with the meals your school is providing, you'll find details in this pack of how to find out who to go to if you want to discuss the problem, advice on the most effective way to raise the issue with the school and ideas on how to campaign for better food at school, as well as suggestions on improving your child's diet at home.

