

Nutrition Red Flags

A quick-reference guide for first-aiders, pastoral staff, lunchtime supervisors and SEND teams.



Physical signs

- ☐ Persistent tiredness or low energy.
- ☐ Pale skin or frequent headaches.
- ☐ Dizziness or faintness, especially before lunch.
- ☐ Noticeable weight loss or lack of growth.
- ☐ Frequent colds, infections or slow recovery from illness.
- ☐ Dry skin, brittle nails or thinning hair.

Behavioural signs

- ☐ Irritability, mood changes or anxiety.
- ☐ Difficulty focusing in lessons.
- ☐ Reluctance to take part in PE or physical activity.
- ☐ Hoarding or rushing food.
- ☐ Seeming very hungry most mornings.

Mealtime patterns

- ☐ Consistently skipping breakfast.
- ☐ Bringing insufficient or unbalanced packed lunches.
- ☐ Relying only on one or two "safe foods".
- ☐ Avoiding textures or food groups (common in neurodiverse pupils).
- ☐ Regular complaints of stomach aches after eating.

Potential imbalanced diet signs

- ☐ Over-reliance on sugary snacks or energy drinks.
- ☐ Low mood or afternoon fatigue.
- ☐ Difficulty staying alert after lunchtime.
- ☐ Constipation or irregular digestion.

When to escalate

- ☐ Concerns appear repeatedly over several days or weeks.
- ☐ Significant or rapid weight loss.
- ☐ Ongoing low energy affecting learning.
- ☐ Meal refusal or severe restriction in food choices.
- ☐ Symptoms suggest underlying medical needs (e.g., diabetes, coeliac disease)

If concerns persist, share observations with your safeguarding lead or a school nurse.
Document patterns using your school's reporting systems (e.g., Medical Tracker).