

## SCHOOL MEAL/FEEDING PROGRAM(S)

School year: 2020–2021

- School Meals (*Kouluruokailu*)

Lead Agency: Finnish National Agency for Education

## NATIONAL LAWS, POLICIES, AND STANDARDS

- National school feeding policy
- Nutrition
- Food safety
- Health
- Agriculture
- Private sector involvement

Line item in the national budget...

- Yes  No  No response

## BUDGET

School meals (free of charge for all students at all education levels) are mandated in school legislation and funded through the general budget for education.

Includes funding from the United States Department of Agriculture  Yes  No  No response

## INFRASTRUCTURE

All schools in Finland have electricity, piped and clean water, and flush toilets, while most have kitchens and dedicated eating spaces/cafeterias. School meals and snacks are prepared on-site (in school kitchens) and off-site (in municipalities or the private sector and then transported to schools).

## SPECIAL NOTES

The school feeding program in Finland is inclusive of the European Union school fruit, vegetables, and milk scheme.

## MEALS/SNACKS/MODALITY

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner
- Snacks
- Take-home rations
- Other

- Grains, cereals
- Roots, tubers
- Legumes, pulses, nuts
- Dairy products
- Eggs
- Meat
- Poultry
- Fish
- Green, leafy vegetables
- Other vegetables
- Fruits
- Oil
- Salt
- Sugar

- Dairy milk
- Yogurt drink
- Fruit juice
- Tea
- Water
- Other

**Prohibited food items:** Soft drinks, juices, sweets and/or other products that contain a high level of added sugars, salt, or unsaturated fat are discouraged.

## FOOD SOURCES

- Purchased (domestic)
- Purchased (foreign)
- In-kind (domestic)
- In-kind (foreign)

## COMPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES

- Handwashing with soap
- Height measurement
- Weight measurement
- Testing for anemia
- Deworming treatment
- Eye testing/eyeglasses
- Hearing testing/treatment
- Dental cleaning/testing
- Menstrual hygiene
- Drinking water
- Water purification

## COMPLEMENTARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

- Food and nutrition
- Agriculture
- School gardens
- Hygiene
- Health
- Reproductive health
- HIV prevention
- Physical education

*The checked items were provided in most or all participating schools.*



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# Finland



## SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS

### CHILDREN RECEIVING FOOD, 2020–2021

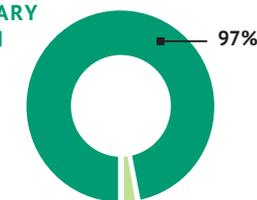
School level	Total	# Enrolled	# Receiving food
Pre-school	222,300	203,000	203,000
Primary school	373,800	373,800	373,800
Secondary school	362,900	343,900	343,900
<b>Total</b>	<b>959,000</b>	<b>920,700</b>	<b>920,700</b>



### COVERAGE: PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN

Total number primary and secondary school-age children: 736,700

Receiving school food: 717,700



Food was also provided to some students in...

- Pre-schools
- Vocational/trade schools
- Other

## NUTRITION

School feeding program(s) included/involved the following:

- Fortified foods
- Bio-fortified foods
- Micronutrient supplements
- Nutritionists involved
- Special training for cooks/caterers in nutrition
- Objective to meet nutritional goals**
- Objective to reduce obesity

### Food items fortified/biofortified:

Not applicable

### Micronutrients:

Not applicable

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Finland places a strong emphasis on school health, with a school health promotion study included as part of the school meal program monitoring. National guidelines are provided for what foods should be made available in schools. Although oil, salt, and sugar are allowed, their use is limited.

## STUDIES CONDUCTED

Many studies have been conducted on school health, food and nutrition education, sustainable food sourcing in schools, and children's eating habits in Finland, authored by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare and the Ministry of the Environment, among others.

## RESEARCH NEEDED

Research on food-related education would be appreciated.

## AGRICULTURE, EMPLOYMENT, AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

### Jobs created by school feeding programs\*

- Cooks and food preparers
- Transporters
- Off-site processors
- Food packagers and handlers
- Monitoring
- Food service management
- Safety and quality inspectors
- Other

*\*If blank, no response was provided.*

### Farmers were involved with the school feeding program(s)...

- Yes  No  No response

### Other private sector (for profit) actors were involved...

- Yes  No  No response

### There was a focus on creating jobs or leadership or income-generating opportunities for...

- Women  Other groups  
 Youth  No response

### There was community engagement (by parents or others) in the school feeding program(s)...

- Yes  No  No response

### Were there links between food banks and the school feeding program(s)?

- Yes  No  There are no food banks in this country.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The entire school community is engaged in school feeding in Finland, and teachers and other school personnel guide and mentor pupils during mealtimes. The students' participation in school meals (assisting the school canteens) is also part of their education. Some schools have school food committees comprised of teaching staff, pupils, school health care professionals, and food service providers.

## CONTACTS: FINLAND

**Agency:** Finnish National Agency for Education  
**Websites:** [www.oph.fi/kouluruokailu](http://www.oph.fi/kouluruokailu);  
[www.educationfinland.fi/schoolmeals](http://www.educationfinland.fi/schoolmeals)

## SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

Among the successes related to school feeding in Finland, food-related education is integrated into school meals, combining the activities of eating and learning together. There is an emphasis on cooperation and the creation of an "ecosystem" around school meals to promote well-being and learning, particularly about a sustainable way of living, cultural competence, and instruction in good manners. The Government has launched a program for free school snacks, and some schools have also begun to serve free breakfast. Nevertheless, there remains a need to increase students' consumption of vegetables and fruits. Consideration should also be given to ensuring that students have adequate time for eating, and that the time at which meals are served is suitable for children.

## EMERGENCIES/COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, some schools operated remotely in 2020–2021, and when students had to stay home, they were given an option to come to school to eat or receive a take-home meal. Meals were sometimes delivered to students' homes, and sometimes they were provided to students or their parents to pick up at school. When meals and snacks were served in schools, accommodations were made to follow social distancing guidelines (e.g., fewer students eating together at the same time). School feeding operations in Finland were maintained throughout the 2020–2021 school year.

## SCHOOL MEALS KOULURUOKAILU

**Lead implementer(s):** The Ministry of Education and Culture, Finnish National Agency for Education, Ministry for Agriculture and Forestry, Finnish Food Authority, and European Union

### OBJECTIVES:

- To meet educational goals
- To meet nutritional and/or health goals

### MODALITIES OF PROVIDING STUDENTS WITH FOOD:

- In-school meals
- In-school snacks
- Take-home rations

### FREQUENCY AND DURATION:

- 5 days per week during the school year

### TARGETING:

Universal

### HOW MANY STUDENTS RECEIVED SCHOOL FOOD IN 2020–2021 SCHOOL YEAR?

School level	# Students	% Girls	% Boys
Pre-school	203,000	–	–
Primary school	373,800	–	–
Secondary school	343,900	–	–
<b>Total</b>	<b>920,700</b>	–	–

*The numbers for secondary students include those in lower secondary, upper secondary, and vocational schools.*

### FOOD AND BEVERAGE ITEMS:

Grains, cereals	Poultry	Salt
Roots, tubers	Fish	Sugar
Legumes, pulses, nuts	Green, leafy vegetables	Dairy milk
Dairy products	Other vegetables	Water
Eggs	Fruits	
Meat	Oil	

\* fortified

### FOOD SOURCES:

Purchased food (domestic and foreign sources)

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

School feeding was first introduced in Finland in the early 1940s. Although school feeding is not a separate line item in the national budget, school meals are guaranteed for all. Decision-making related to menus and food sourcing is highly decentralized, with local governments managing the program. There are also various programs (such as *Ruokatutka*, *Kattava-koululounas*, and *Maistuva koulu*) aimed at supporting the school meal system and providing food-related education.

