

PARENTS'AND CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVES ON THE HOT SCHOOL MEALS SCHEME SURVEY

NPC

SUPPORTING PARENTS
SUPPORTING CHILDREN

NPC Vision

The National Parents Council want to see an Ireland where every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential

NPC Mission

The National Parents Council exists to ensure that all parents are supported and empowered to become effective partners in their children's education. NPC will work to increase the capacity and capability of the education sector, to achieve true partnership and deliver better outcomes for all children and young people.

Values

NPC knows that when parents and schools work together, children do better. Therefore, NPC believes that in order to achieve this parents must feel:

Engaged: Parents must be actively engaged in the education of their children.

Supported: Parents' involvement in children's education must be supported by the attitudes, beliefs and practices of all members of the school and broader education community.

Partners: Parents must be viewed as partners in facilitating children's learning and be supported in this role by the school and broader education community.

Valued: Parents should be viewed as full partners in the decisions that affect their children and their family.

Welcomed: Parents should be welcome in the school, and their support and assistance sought as a valuable resource to support children's education in the school.

Connected: All communication and dialogue with parents must be regular, open, two-way and meaningful.

National Parents Council
Key Activities

SERVICE DELIVERY

NPC's services are developed to empower parents so that they can support their children in all aspects of education.

HELPLINE

The NPC helpline is a national confidential service for parents. The helpline staff listen and give information and support to parents to help them make the best possible decisions for and with their children.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The NPC Training and Development programme is a national programme of training, development and support for parents. The purpose is to empower parents to play an active part in their child's education at every level.

WEBSITE

The NPC's website www.npc.ie aims to provide parents with information regarding education at early years, primary and post primary levels.

ADVOCACY

NPC engages in awareness-raising activities and campaigning and lobbying at a national level on the objectives of its Strategic Plan.

REPRESENTING PARENTS

NPC represents the voice of parents through representation on external bodies and other mediums. NPC consults with parents and brings parents' views to bear on education policy.

BUILDING PARTICIPATION

NPC builds participation strategies and activities to ensure parents and children are an integral part of the work of NPC.

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Introduction

The Hot School Meals Scheme, funded by the Department of Social Protection, provides hot meals to primary school children across Ireland. The scheme is available to all primary schools, with each school responsible for organising the food. Its primary aim is to support regular school attendance and enhance children's learning outcomes.

The National Parents Council (NPC) was invited by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Youth to a meeting on "Evaluating the Impacts" of the Hot School Meals Programme." In preparation for this meeting we surveyed parents and children to gather feedback on the scheme.

This report presents insights on what is working well and what could be improved. Key areas explored include satisfaction with the scheme, its impact on children's school experience, and suggestions for future improvements.

The findings in this report are based on two short surveys conducted by the NPC—one for parents and one for children. These surveys were open from January 13, 2026, to January 14, 2026, and were shared with families through the NPC mailing list. In total, (3411) responses were collected, comprising (2465) responses from parents and (946) responses from children.

The views expressed by these respondents have informed the NPC's submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee, ensuring that the voices of families are represented in shaping the future of the Hot School Meals Scheme.



Survey Structure

Two separate surveys were designed to gather feedback from families on the Hot School Meals Scheme—one for parents and one for children.

The parent survey included a mix of question types, such as multiple-choice, rating scales, and open-text responses. This structure allowed parents to provide both quantitative feedback and detailed comments on their experiences and suggestions for improvement.

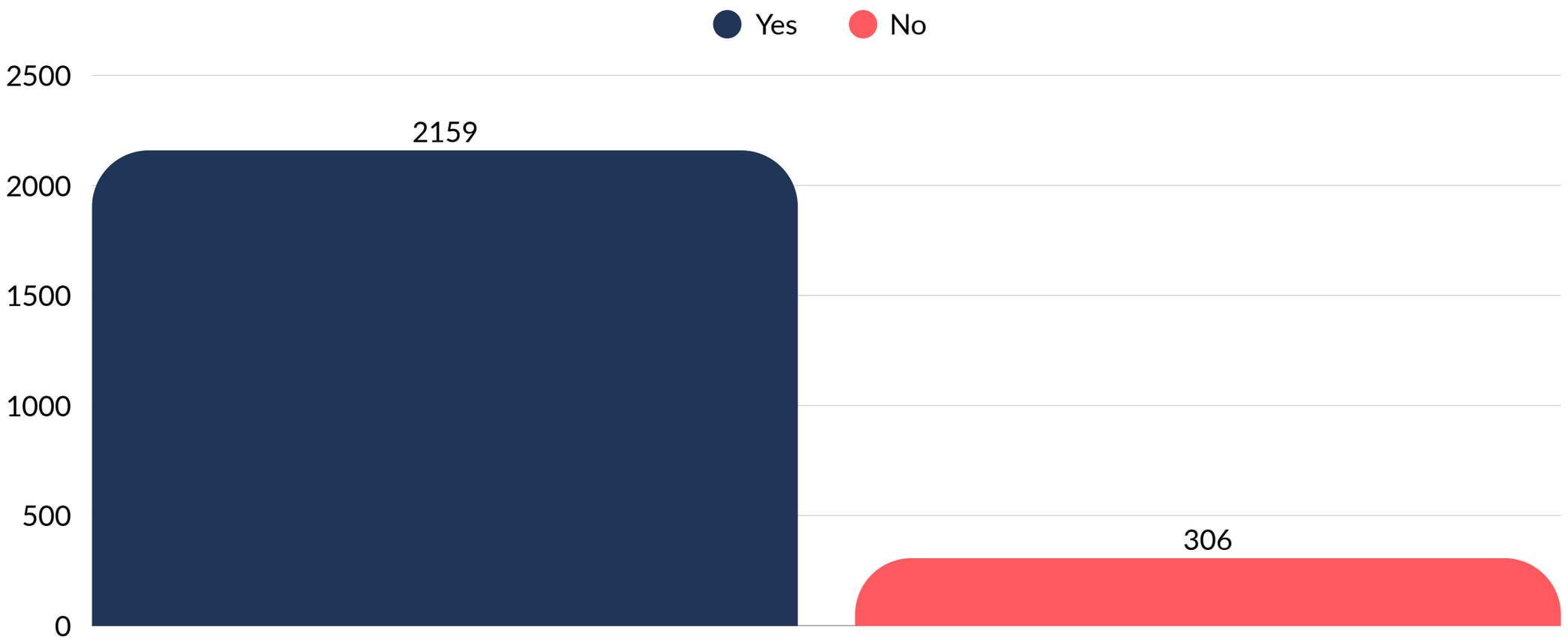
The children's survey was designed to be child-friendly and engaging. It featured colourful visuals, background music, and simple, interactive questions. Open-text options were also included to allow children to share their thoughts in their own words.

The findings from both surveys, including key themes and perspectives from parents and children, will be presented in the following sections.



Parent Survey Findings

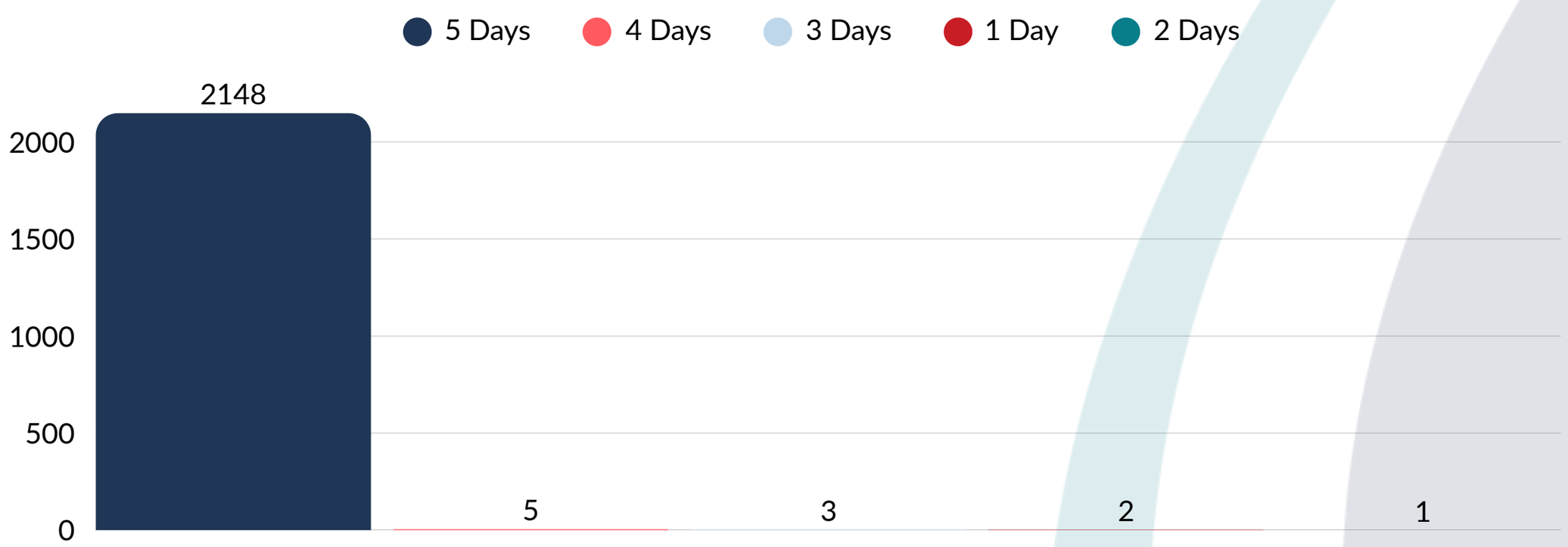
Q 1 When parents were asked if their child's school has the Hot School Meals Scheme, most parents said they did have a scheme, with minority saying they did not (see Figure 1).



(Figure 1)

Is there hot school meals scheme in your child's school?

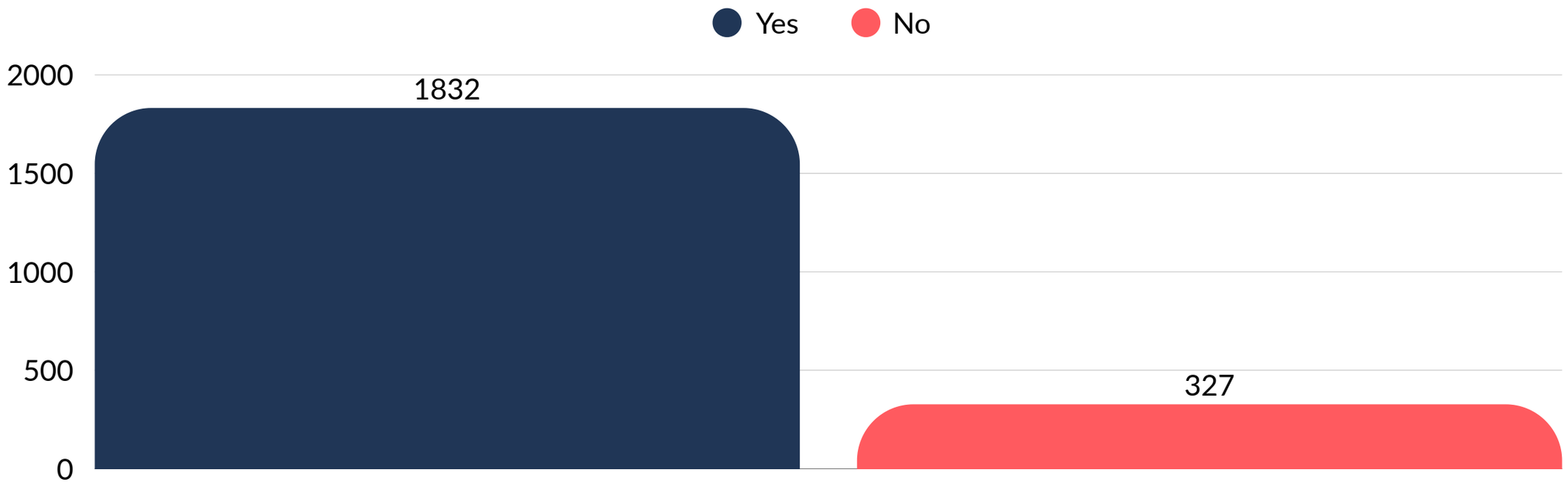
Q 2 Parents were asked how many days per week the meal is provided. Most parents said the meals are available every school day. A smaller group said the meals are provided on four days, fewer said three days, and only a very small number said one or two days (see Figure 2).



(Figure 2)

How many days per week is this provided?

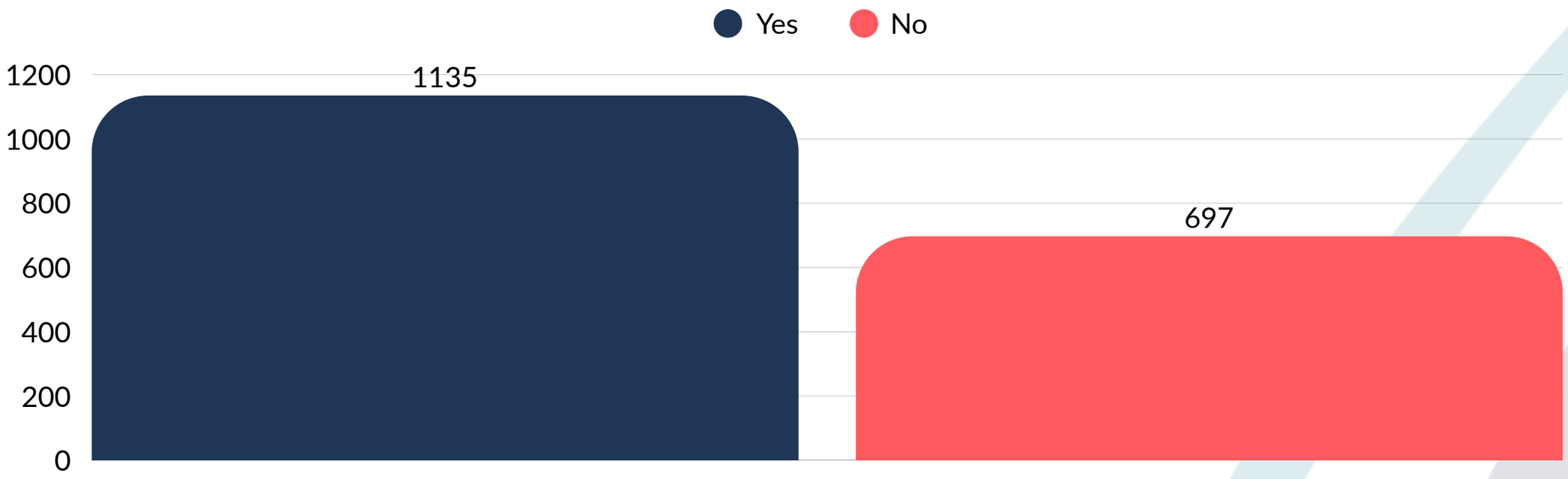
Q 3 When parents were asked if their child uses the Hot School Meals Scheme, 85% said yes and 15% said no (see Figure 3).



(Figure 3)

Does your child use the service?

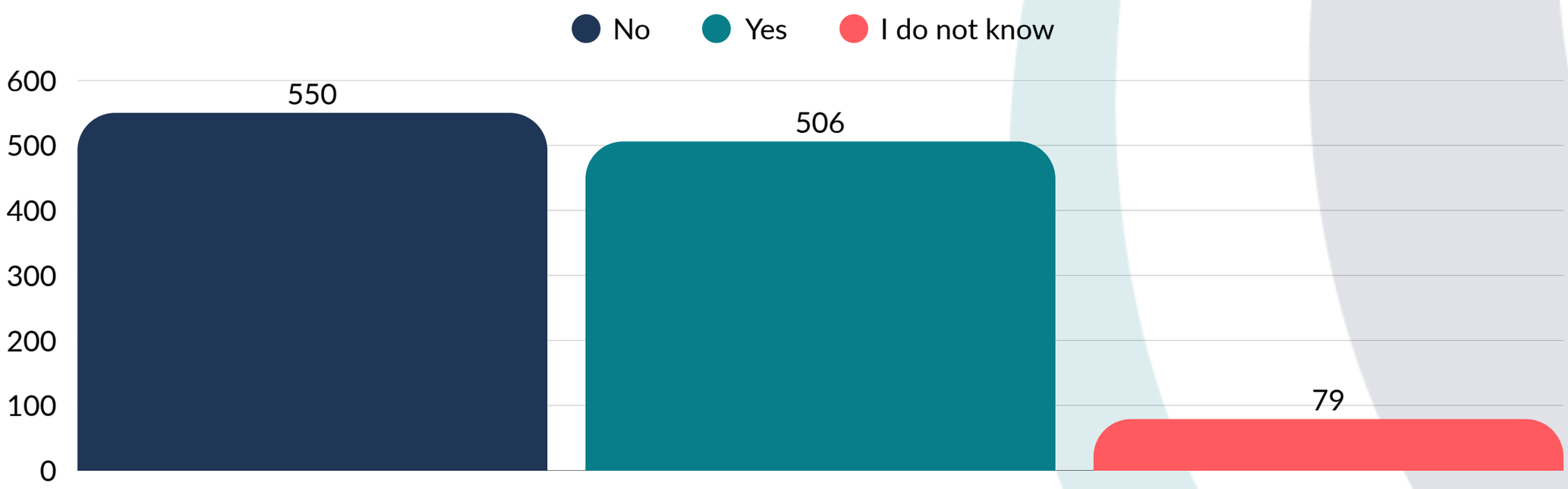
Q 4 Parents who answered that their child uses the Hot School Meals Scheme were asked if their child brings home food they did not eat. 62% said yes, while 38% said no (see Figure 4).



(Figure 4)

Does your child bring home food from the hot school meal which they have not eaten?

Q 5 Parents who said their child brings home uneaten food were asked if they think this is more than half of the meal. About half of these parents said yes, while a similar number said no. A smaller group said they were not sure (see Figure 5).

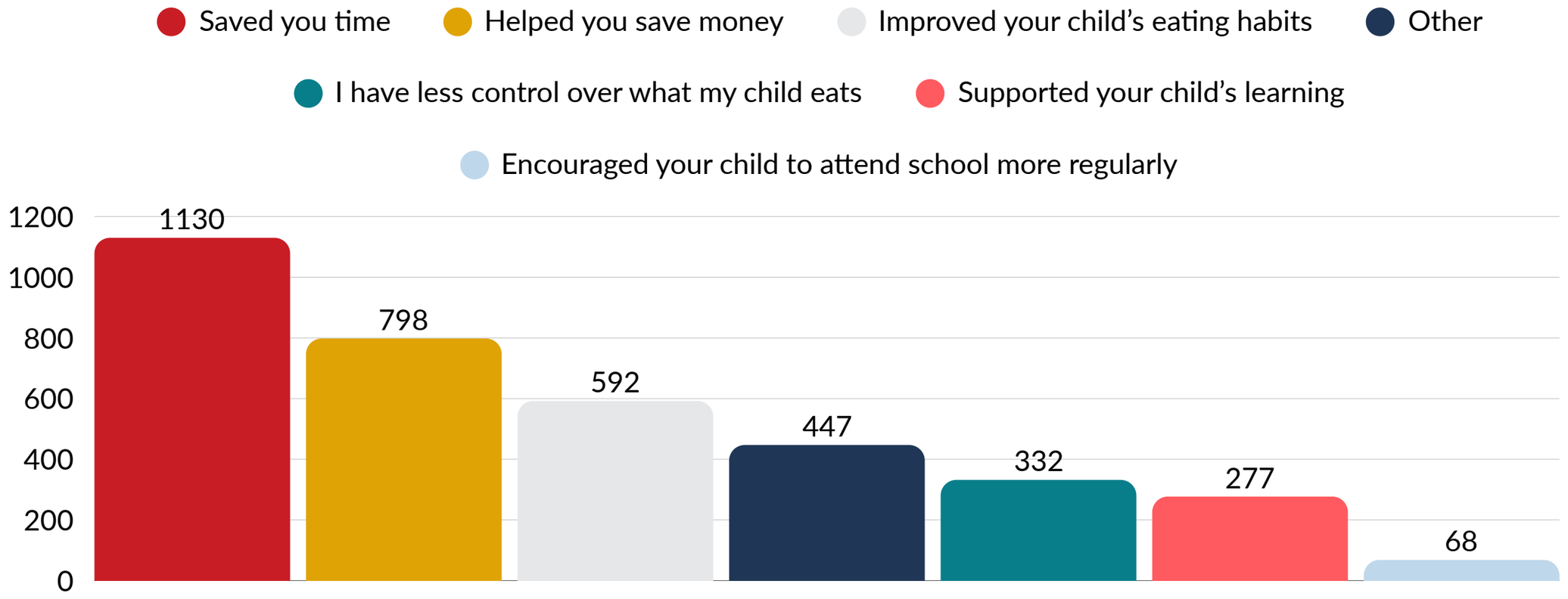


(Figure 5)

Do you think this is more than 50% of the meal they were given?

Q 6

We asked parents how has the Hot School Meals Scheme affected them and their children. Parents highlighted the various benefits of the scheme. Most parents said it saved them time, followed by helping them save money. Many said it improved their child's eating habits, while others mentioned benefits like social interaction or convenience. Some parents said they have less control over what their child eats, and a smaller group said it supported their child's learning. Very few said it encouraged their child to attend school more regularly (see Figure 6).



(Figure 6)

How has the Hot School Meals Scheme affected you and your child?

Parents who chose "other" (447) had mixed feelings about the school meals scheme. Some found it helpful at first because it saved time and money, and a few said their children enjoyed trying new foods and eating with friends. For some families, having a hot meal during the day was a big benefit, especially in winter, and it encouraged picky eaters or children with special needs to try different meals. A small number of parents felt it gave children more independence and made mornings less stressful.

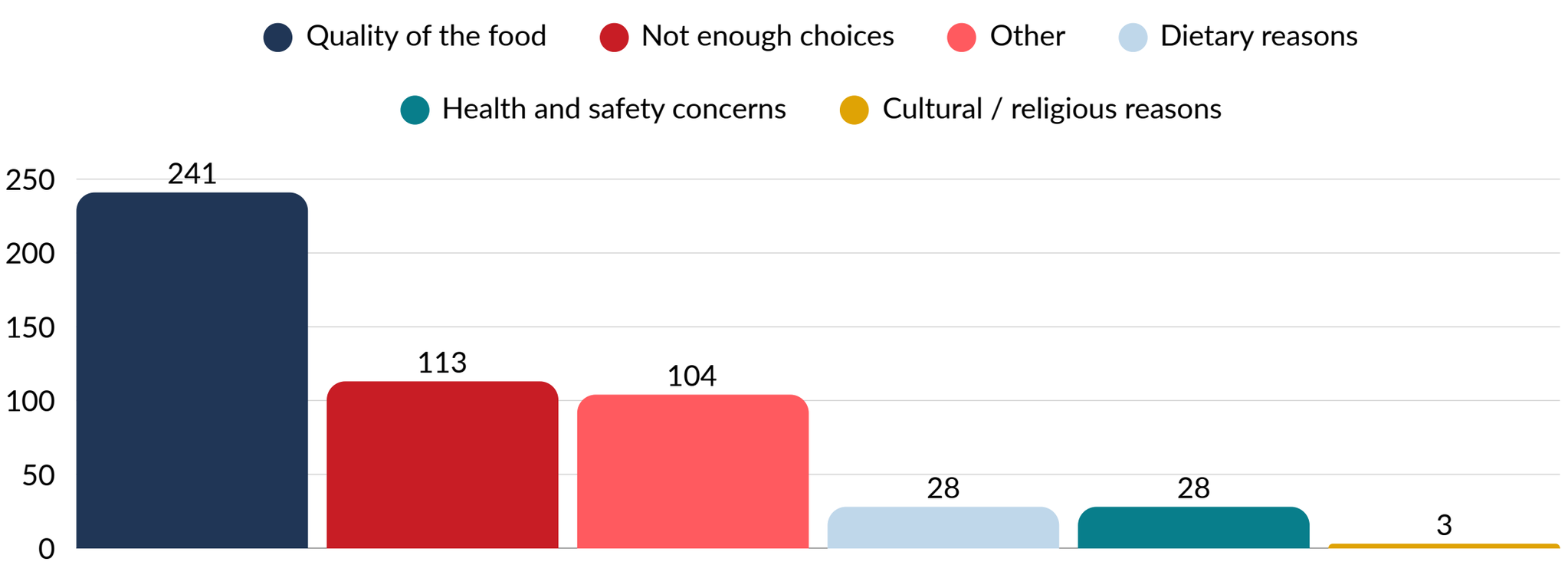
However, many parents were unhappy with the quality and choice of food. They said meals were often bland, repetitive, and not healthy enough. Portions were too small for older children, and there were very few options for vegetarians, children with allergies, or those with sensory issues. Some parents felt the food was too processed and not nutritious, and many children refused to eat it because it tasted bad or looked unappetising. Parents also mentioned that the lack of menu changes and flexibility made things worse.

The scheme often created food waste and extra work for parents who had to manage the waste. Many still had to pack lunches because their children did not eat the hot meals or because they wanted more control over what their child ate. Some said it made planning family dinners harder and added stress instead of reducing it. Overall, from the parents who selected "other" felt the programme needs big improvements in food quality, variety, and flexibility, such as offering cold options or making it easier to opt out.

*This is a summary of the parents' voices; please refer to the appendix for full answers.

Q 7

Parents who said their child does not use the hot meal service were asked why. Most parents said the main reason was the quality of the food. Others said there were not enough choices. Some mentioned dietary reasons or health and safety concerns. A few said cultural or religious reasons were a factor. Many parents also gave other reasons, such as their child being a picky eater or preferring food from home (see Figure 7).



(Figure 7)

What are the reasons your child does not use the service?

Parents who chose “Other”(104) gave a wide range of reasons why their child does not use the hot meal service. Many said the food quality is poor, with complaints about taste, texture, and meals being cold or soggy. Some parents said there are not enough simple or plain options, and that everything is mixed together in one container, which does not suit picky eaters or children with sensory issues.

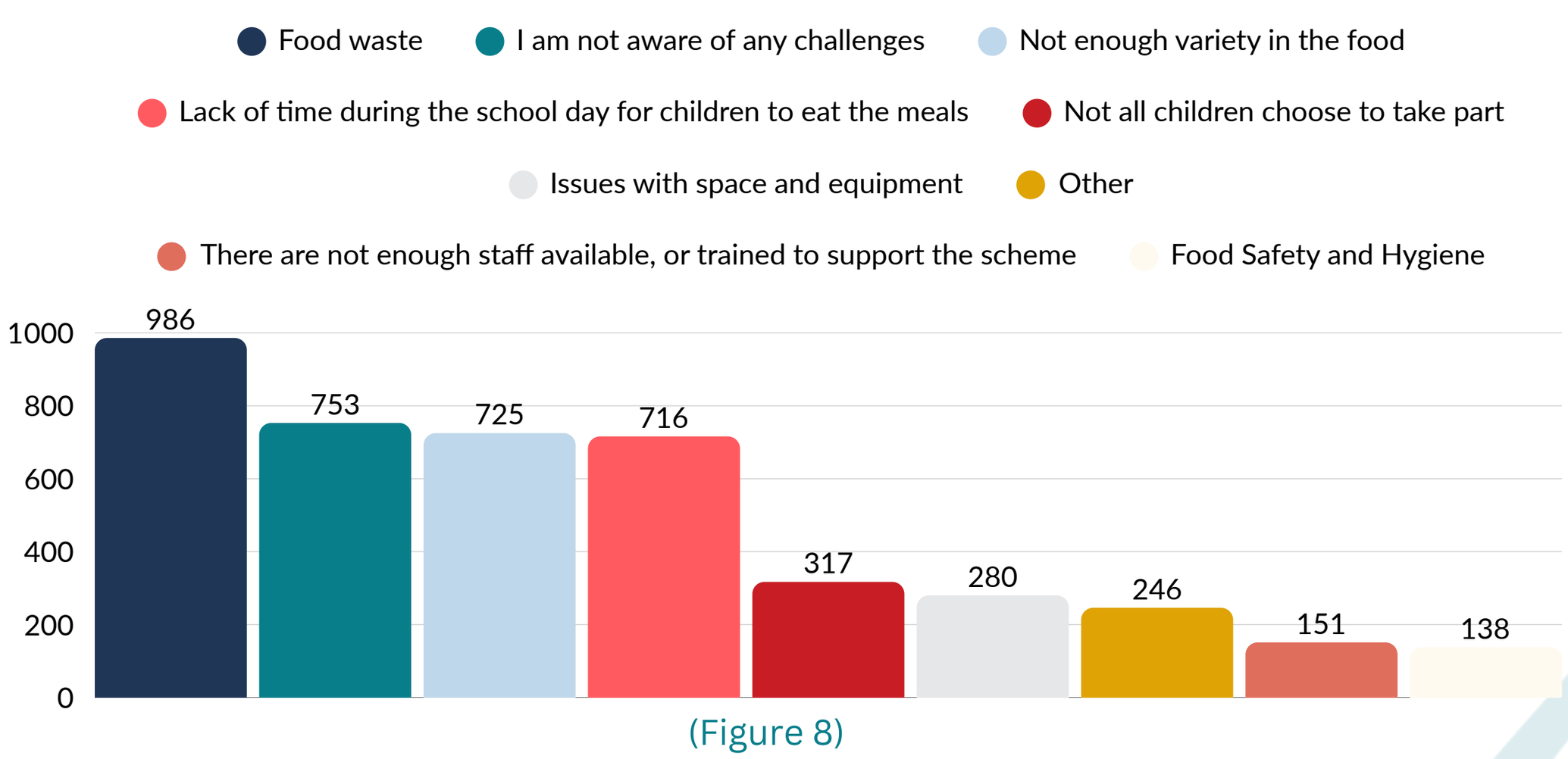
Others mentioned that the meals are too processed, lack nutritional value, and sometimes include additives. Several parents raised concerns about portion sizes, lack of variety, and the absence of healthy alternatives like sandwiches, wraps, or fruit. There were also worries about food waste, environmental impact, and the use of imported ingredients instead of local produce. A few parents said their child simply prefers home-packed lunches or that the scheme does not cater for special dietary needs. Overall, the main themes were poor quality, limited choice, and a need for healthier, more flexible options.

*This is a summary of the parents' voices; please refer to the appendix for full answers.



Q 8

Parents were asked if they are aware of any challenges in running the scheme. The most commonly mentioned challenge was food waste. This was balanced by parents who said they were not aware of any challenges. Other frequently reported issues included not enough variety in the food and a lack of time during the school day for children to eat the meals. Smaller numbers of parents mentioned that not all children choose to take part, issues with space and equipment, and other concerns. Fewer parents reported that there were not enough staff available or trained to support the scheme, and the smallest group mentioned food safety and hygiene (see Figure 8).



(Figure 8)

Are you aware of any challenges related to running the hot school meal scheme?

Parents who chose “Other” (246) said the main problems are about food quality and choice. They reported meals being soggy, bland, or overcooked, which they believe is because they are prepared off-site and reheated. Many children dislike the taste, and there are very few options for vegetarians, children with allergies, halal food or picky eaters. Parents suggested adding simple alternatives like sandwiches, wraps, soup, and fresh fruit instead of complicated hot meals. They also want clear ingredient lists and healthier, less processed food.

They also raised concerns about portion sizes and eating time. All children get the same size meal, from junior infants to sixth class, which did not make sense to them. It was reported that older children are still hungry, while younger ones waste food. Parents said lunch breaks are too short—sometimes only 10 minutes—so children rush or skip eating to play. This leads to poor eating habits and lots of food being thrown away. Some parents also said they do not know how much their child actually eats because leftovers in their school are not sent home.

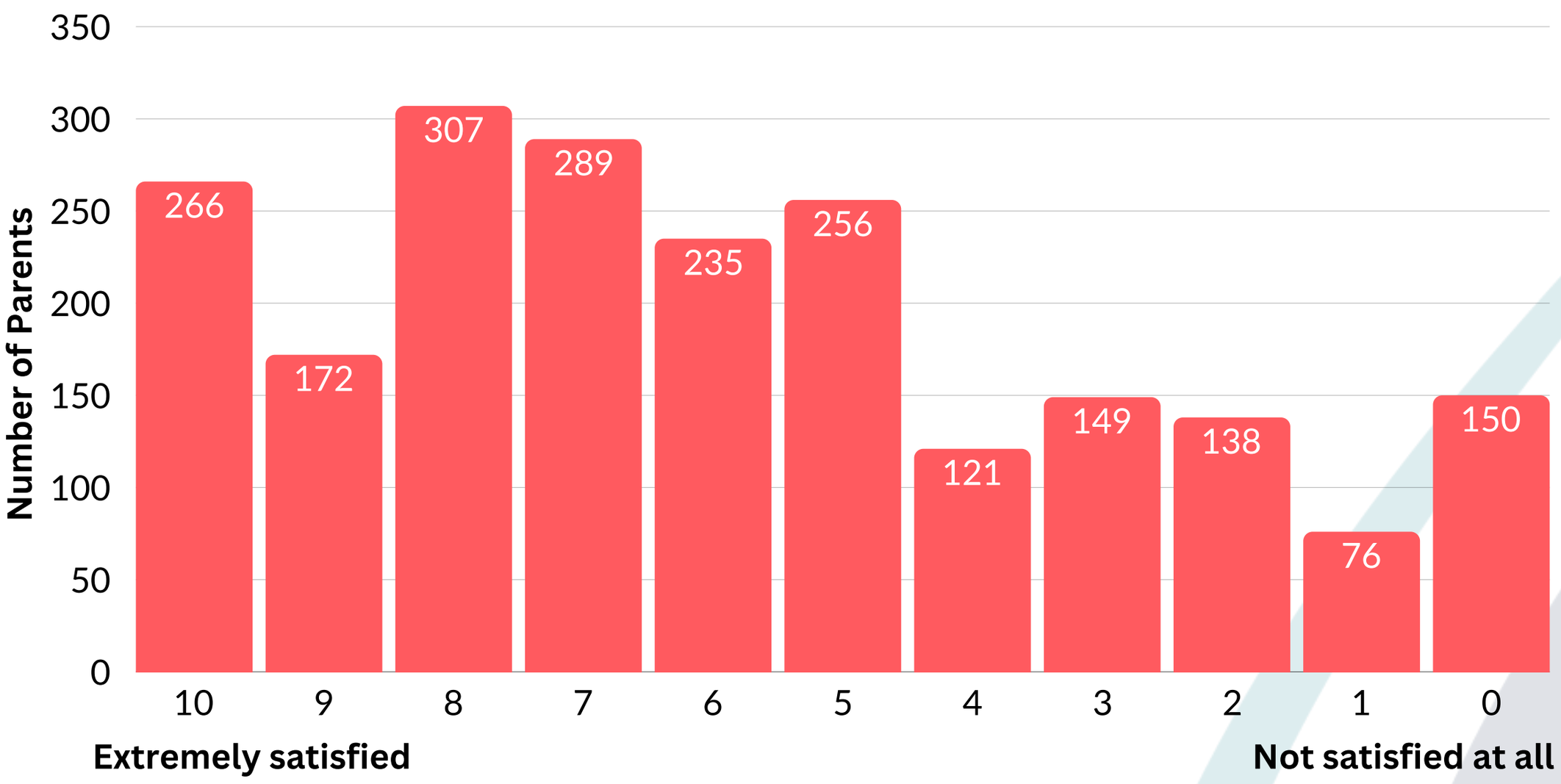


Finally, parents worry about waste and cost. They describe huge food waste every day, plus lots of single-use packaging that harms the environment. Many feel the scheme is expensive and badly managed, with money better spent on other school needs. Some think the idea of free meals is good for families who need it, but not for all schools. Parents want better planning, more variety, healthier options, and maybe canteen-style facilities in the future instead of reheated meals in boxes.

*This is a summary of the parents' voices; please refer to the appendix for full answers.

Q 9

When parents were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the hot meal service, most gave a high score between 7 and 10. A smaller number rated it in the middle range of 4 to 6, while fewer parents gave a low score between 0 and 3 (see Figure 9).



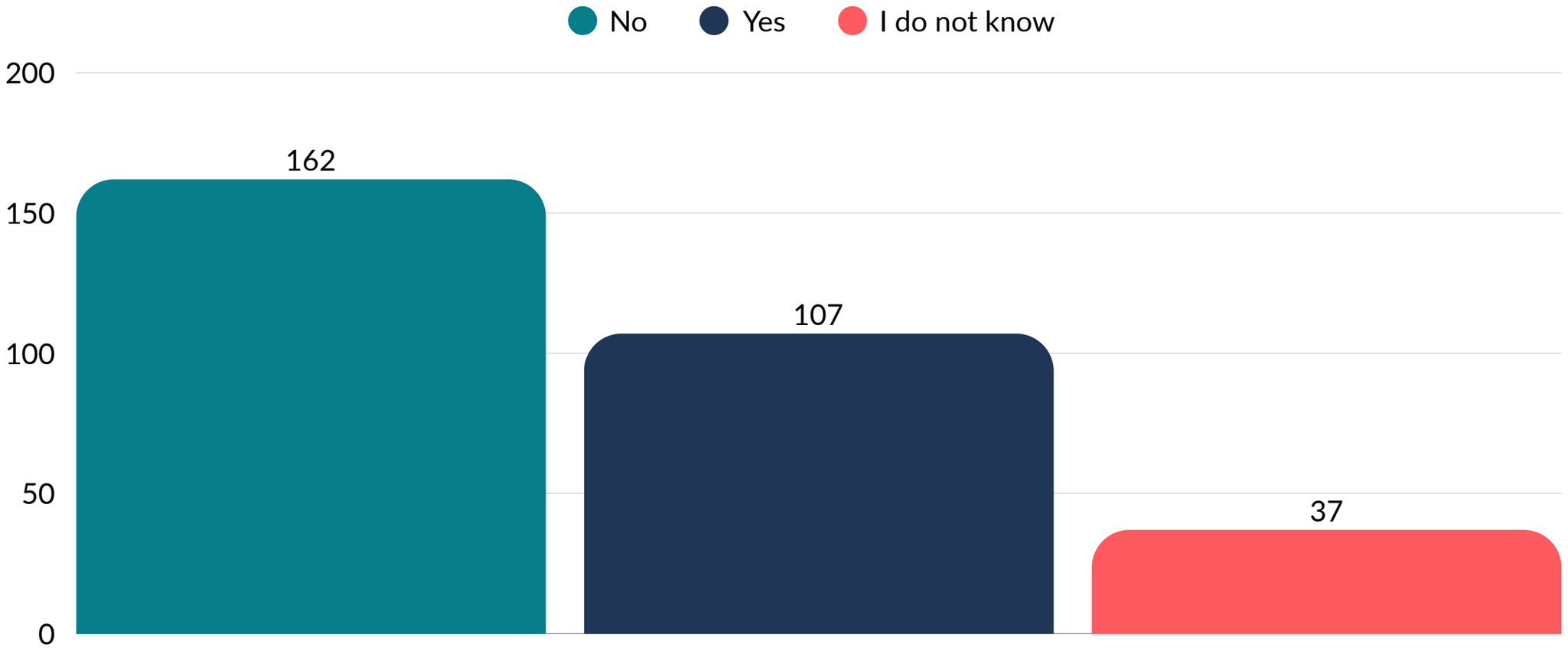
(Figure 9)

Please rank your overall satisfaction with the hot meal service at the school, where 10 means extremely satisfied and 0 means not satisfied at all



We also asked parents whose children's schools do not have a hot school meal scheme for their views. Their responses are outlined below:

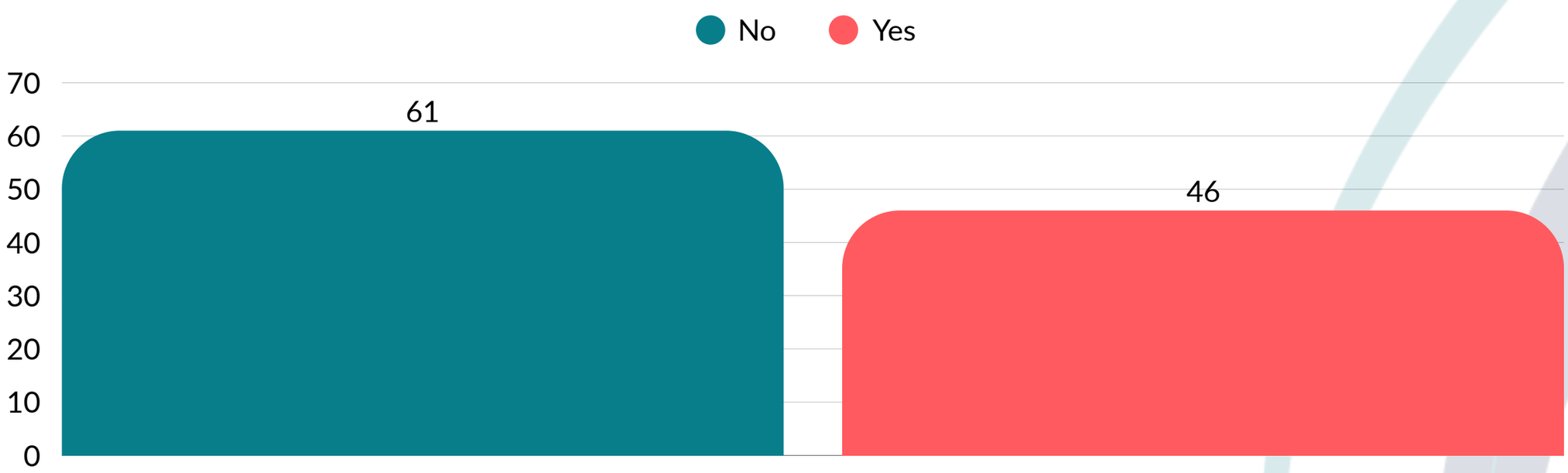
Q 10 Parents who said their child's school does not have the Hot School Meals Scheme were asked if the school had shared any plans to introduce it soon, most said no. A smaller group said yes, and some said they do not know (see Figure 10).



(Figure 10)

Has your child's school shared with you any plans to introduce this scheme in the near future?

Q 11 Parents who said their child's school shared plans to introduce the Hot School Meals Scheme were asked if they are happy with these plans. More parents said they are not happy with the plans, while a smaller number said they are happy (see Figure 11).



(Figure 11)

Are you happy with the plans shared with you?

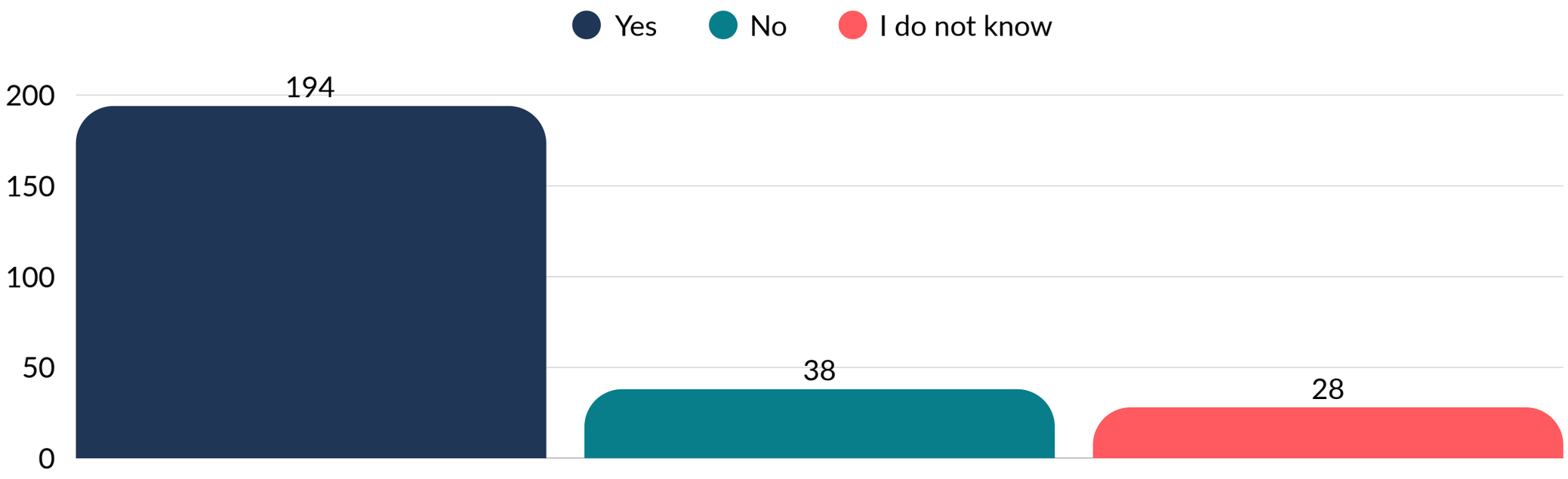
Parents who were not happy with the plans said they are frustrated because they have not been given clear information. Many said they do not know when the scheme will start or what kind of food will be served. Some schools have delays because of problems like no kitchen or electricity upgrades. Parents also said they want more details about how the food will be prepared and how children with special needs will be supported.

Other parents are worried about the food itself. They think the meals might not be healthy and could include too many processed foods. Many mentioned food waste and packaging waste as big problems. Some parents feel the scheme is not needed in every school and that the money could be spent on other things like teachers or classroom resources. Others are concerned about the environment, family mealtimes, and children eating too much. Overall, parents want clear updates, better planning, and good-quality food that suits all children.

*This is a summary of the parents' voices; please refer to the appendix for full answers.

Q 12

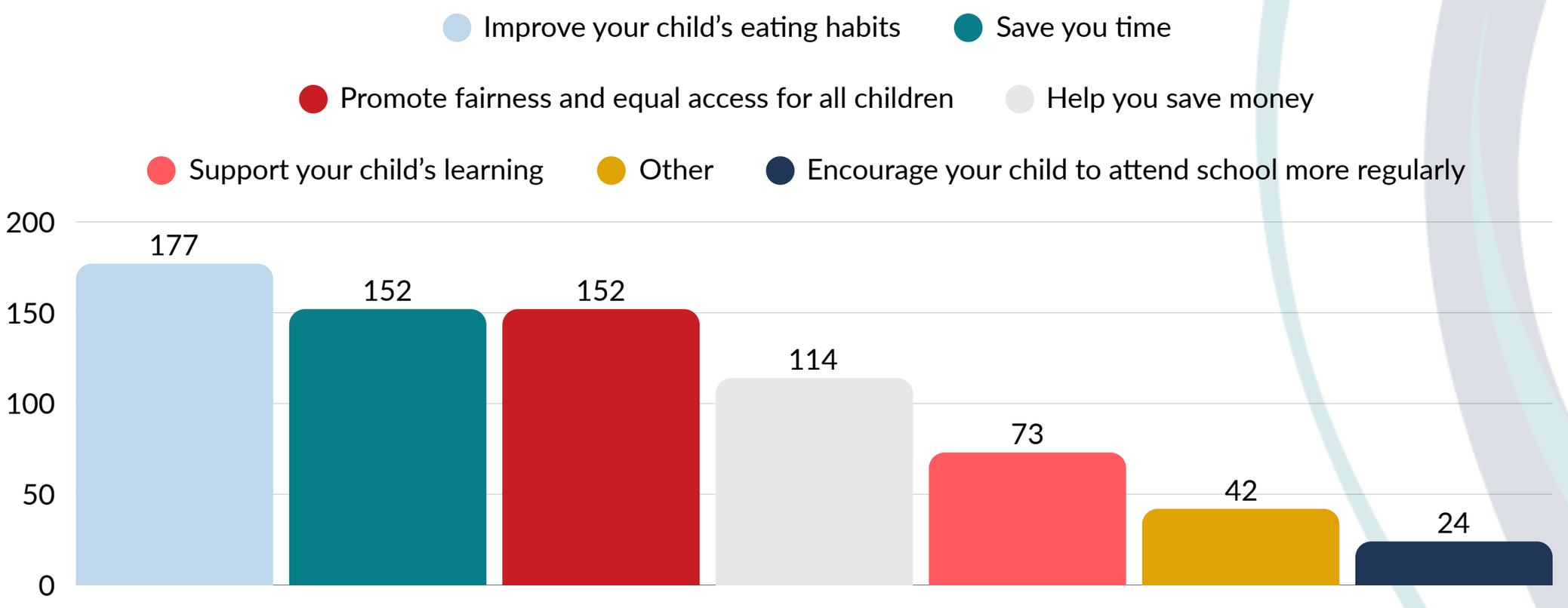
The majority of the parents said they would like to have a hot school meal scheme in their schools with smaller numbers saying either they did not want one or they were unsure (see Figure 12).



(Figure 12)
Would you like the Hot School Meals Scheme to be available in your child's school?

Q 13

Parents were asked how the scheme would help them and their child. They could choose more than one option. Most parents said it would improve their child's eating habits and save them time. Many also felt it would promote fairness and equal access for all children and help them save money. Some parents said it would support their child's learning, and a smaller number said it would encourage their child to attend school more regularly. A few parents gave other reasons (see Figure 13).



(Figure 13)
Which of the following would the Hot School Meals Scheme help you and your child with?

Some parents gave other reasons why the Hot School Meals Scheme would help them and their child. Many said it would make mornings easier and save time. Others felt it would encourage children to try new foods, eat healthier, and enjoy the social benefits of eating together. Several parents mentioned that a hot meal would be comforting in cold weather and could help picky eaters or children with special dietary needs. Some parents said the scheme would support learning and wellbeing, while others stressed the importance of good nutrition and quality food. A few parents raised concerns about space, equipment, and the need for meals to be healthy and not overly processed. Overall, parents see benefits in convenience, nutrition, and social interaction, but want the scheme to be well planned and provide high-quality food.

*This is a summary of the parents' voices; please refer to the appendix for full answers.



General Comments from Parents

Out of the 2465 parents who gave us their views 1312 of them gave us further insights in an open-text box. Many welcomed the idea, saying it helps with the cost of living, saves time in the mornings, and ensures children have something substantial to eat during the school day. Some parents also noted positive social effects, such as children enjoying eating together and trying new foods. However, a significant number of parents expressed dissatisfaction, with some calling the scheme a waste of money and resources.

Quality of Food

The most frequent concern was the quality of the meals. Parents reported food that was bland, soggy, over-processed, or poorly cooked. Examples included uncooked pasta, and watery mashed potatoes. Some parents said they would not eat the food themselves and questioned its nutritional value. While a few parents praised their school's provider for offering varied and nutritious meals, this highlighted inconsistency between schools and suppliers. Many called for tighter national standards and regular audits to ensure quality.

Nutrition Issues

Parents were worried about the nutritional content of the meals. Common complaints included too much salt and additives, not enough fresh fruit and vegetables, and an over-reliance on processed foods. Several parents stressed that if the scheme is funded by the state, it should set an example by providing genuinely healthy meals.

Variation and Choice

Many parents said the menu lacks variety and does not cater for different needs. Requests included simpler, plainer options such as sandwiches, wraps, soup, and fruit. Some suggested sauces should be served separately to make meals more appealing. Parents of children with allergies or dietary restrictions reported very limited options and raised concerns about safety for coeliac diets. There were repeated calls for more vegetarian choices and for Halal options to be available.

Portions, Time to Eat, and Waste

Portion sizes were a major issue, with the same amount of food given to junior infants and sixth-class pupils. This led to waste and complaints that older children were still hungry. Food waste was referenced with large amounts of uneaten food thrown away daily. Packaging waste was also highlighted, with parents asking for compostable or reusable containers. Limited time to eat was another problem, with some children having only 5–10 minutes for lunch, which discouraged proper eating habits.

Practical Challenges

Parents reported meals are often delivered hours before lunchtime, leaving food cold or soggy. They reported schools lack canteen facilities, so children eat at their desks, which parents feel is not ideal. Some parents suggested that future school buildings should include kitchens and dining spaces to allow fresh cooking and proper mealtime routines.

Fairness and Cost

Parents were divided on whether the scheme should be universal. Some argued it is unnecessary for most children and that funds would be better spent on teachers, special needs assistants, or school facilities. Others supported universal access to avoid stigma and ensure fairness. There were also concerns about the cost of the scheme and whether it represents good value for taxpayers.

Suggestions for Improvement

Parents proposed several changes: offer both hot and cold options, improve food quality and freshness, use local suppliers, and provide age-appropriate portions. More vegetarian and allergy-friendly choices are needed, along with better communication about ingredients. Reducing food and packaging waste was seen as essential. Many parents want children and parents involved in menu planning and suggested regular reviews to keep menus varied and appealing.

Overall

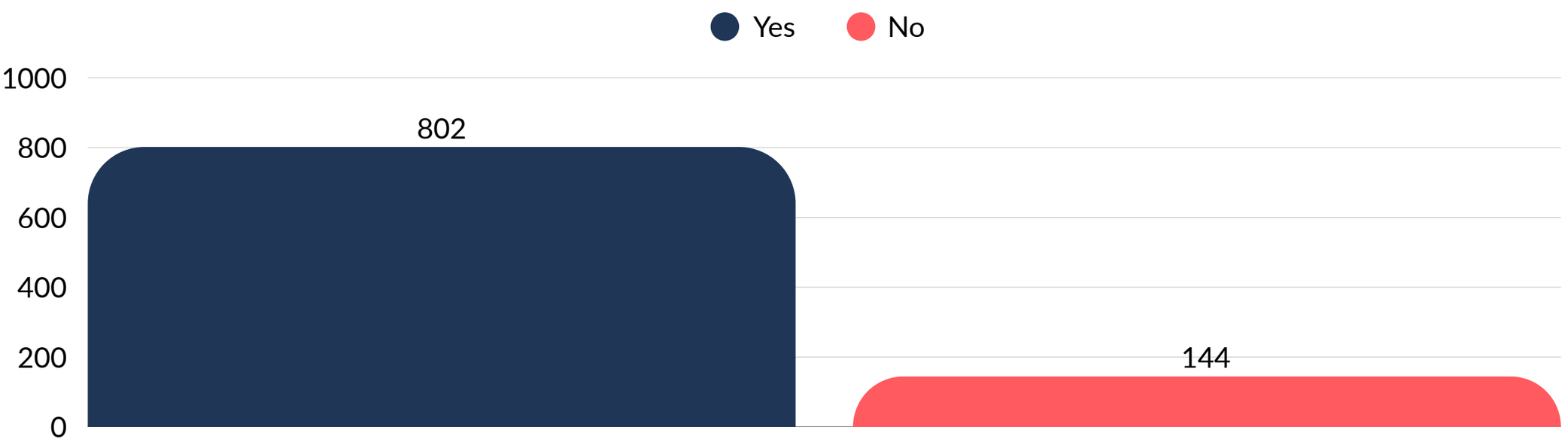
Parents support the principle of providing meals in schools, but most agree the current system needs major improvements. The focus should be on healthy, fresh, and simple food, less waste, and better planning. If these changes are made, the scheme could become a valuable part of school life and help children develop better eating habits for the future.

*This is a summary of the parents' voices; please refer to the appendix for full answers.



Children Survey Findings

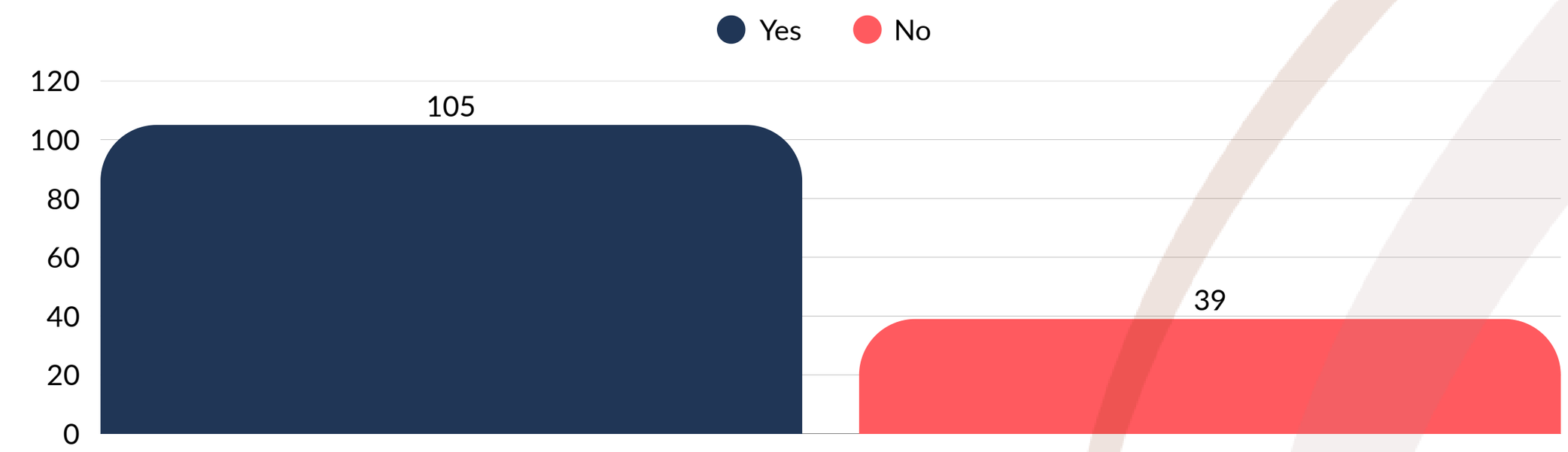
Q 1 When children were asked if they get a hot lunch at school, most said yes, while a smaller number said no (see Figure 14).



(Figure 14)

Do you get a hot lunch at school?

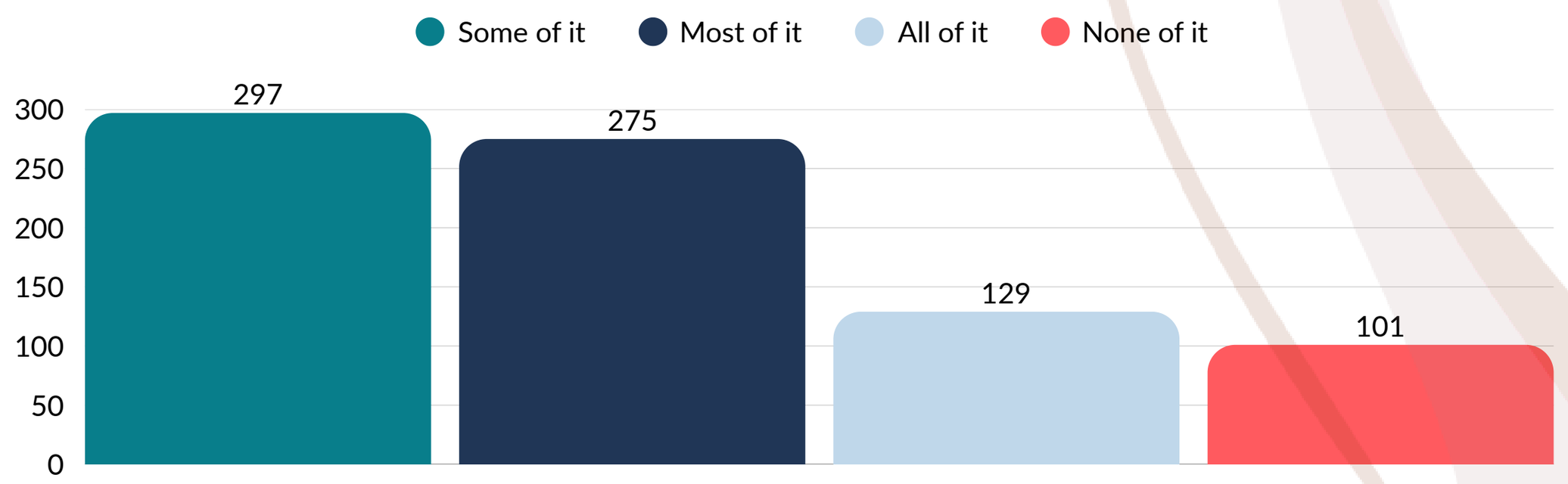
Q 2 Children who said they do not get a hot meal at school were asked if they would like to have one. Most said yes, while a smaller number said no (see Figure 15).



(Figure 15)

Would you like to have a hot meal at school?

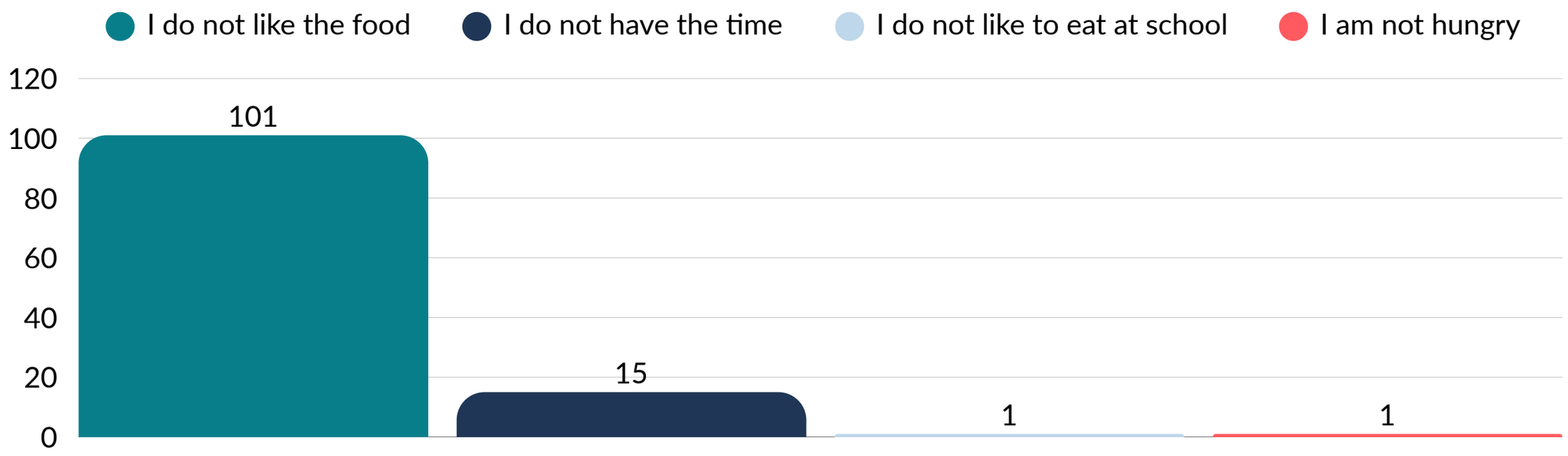
Q 3 Children who said they get a hot meal at school were asked if they eat all of it. Most said they eat some or most of their meal. A smaller group said they eat all of it, while the fewest said they eat none of it (see Figure 16).



(Figure 16)

Do you eat all of your hot meal?

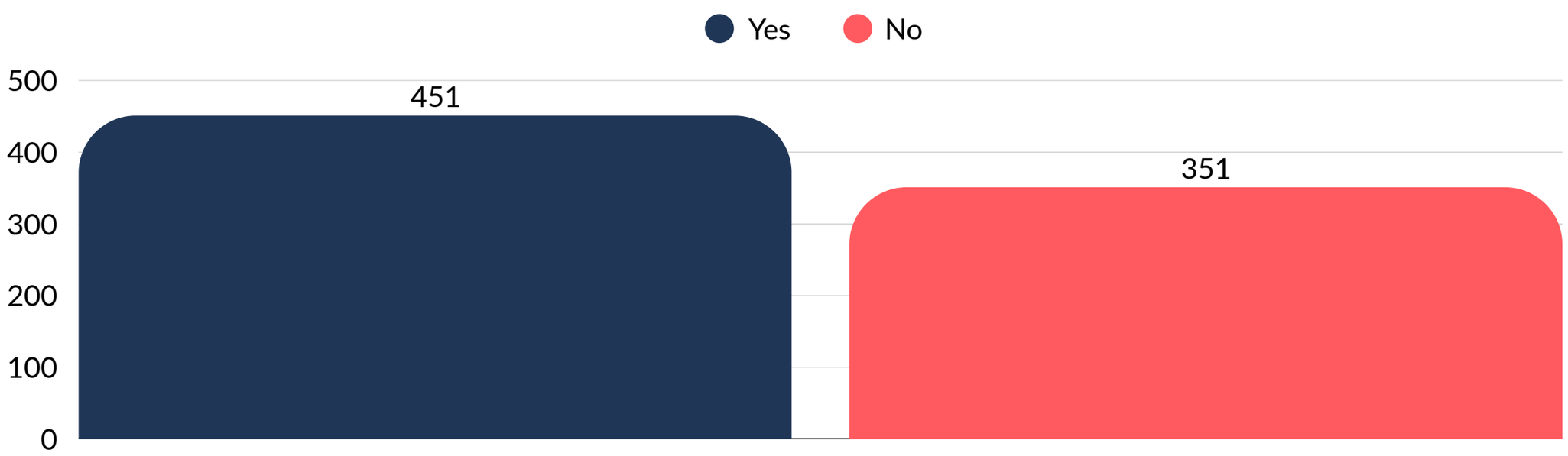
Q 4 Children who said they do not eat their hot meal were asked why. Most said it was because they do not like the food. A smaller number said they do not have enough time to eat, and very few said they are not hungry or do not like eating at school (see Figure 17).



(Figure 17)

Why you do not eat your hot meal?

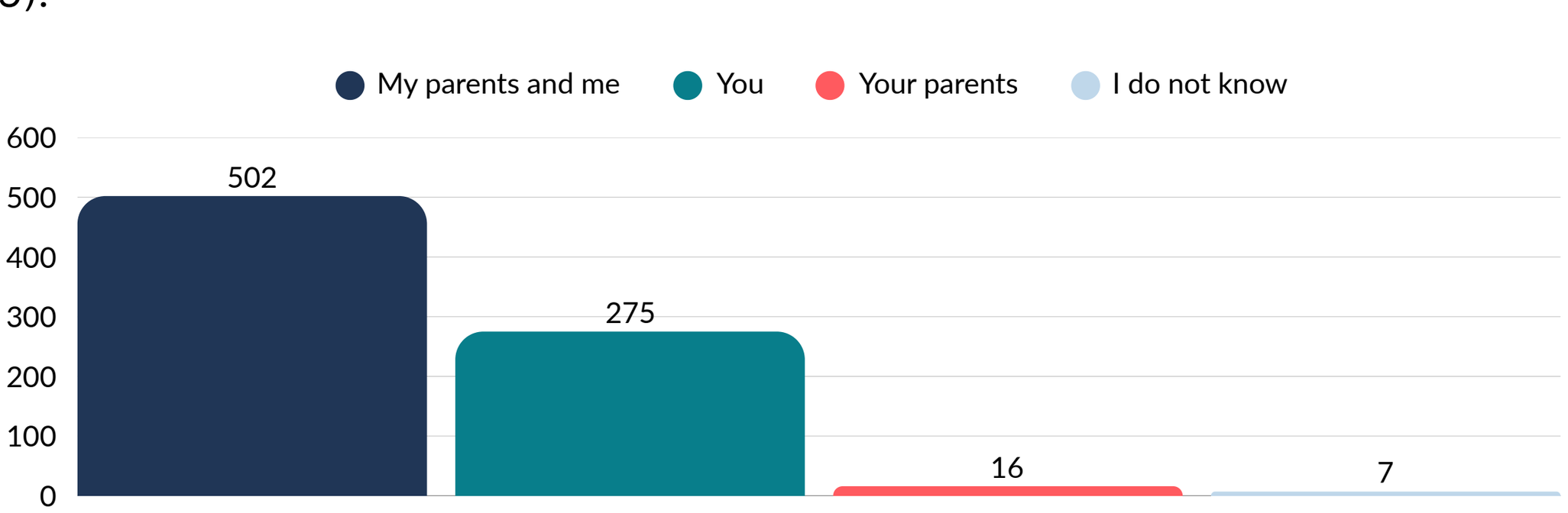
Q 5 All children whose schools provide hot meals were asked if they have enough time to eat their meal. Most said yes, while a smaller but significant number said no (see Figure 18).



(Figure 18)

Do you have enough time to eat your hot meal?

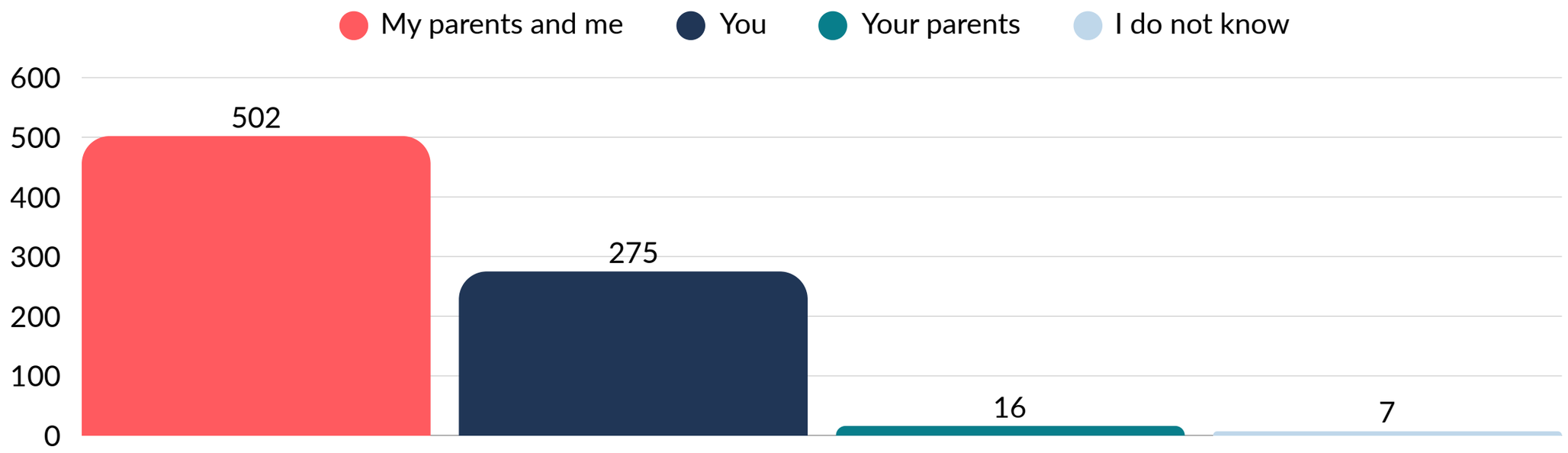
Q 6 All children whose schools provide hot meals were asked if they think there is enough choice. Most said no, while a smaller number said yes (see Figure 19).



(Figure 19)

Do you think there is enough choice?

Q 7 All children whose schools provide hot meals were asked who chooses their meal. Most said they choose together with their parents. A smaller group said they choose the meal themselves, and very few said their parents choose or that they do not know (see Figure 20).



(Figure 20)

Who chooses your meal?

General Comments from Children

When we asked children if there was anything else they would like to add, over 500 shared their views. The vast majority are unhappy with the hot meals. They say the food often tastes bad, is soggy, greasy, bland, or overcooked, and sometimes arrives cold. Many dislike sauces, mixed vegetables, and spicy flavours, preferring plain food and simpler options. One child summed it up by saying, “I like some of the dinners or bits of some of them, but not all the bits all the time. I would like more kiddy food and less mammy dinners.”

More than half feel there is not enough choice and want more variety, including sandwiches, wraps, rolls, soup, salads, fruit, and snacks. They also want the ability to remove certain ingredients or have meals served separately rather than mixed together. A significant number said the menu rarely changes and becomes boring, with comments like, “Change of menu, sick of same stuff all time.”

Portion size is another major concern, especially for older children who receive the same amount as younger ones, leaving them hungry. One child said, “My hot lunch does not fill me as the portion is not big enough. I get the same as a junior infant and I am in 3rd class.” Many also said they do not have enough time to eat their lunch properly.

While most comments were negative, a small number of children appreciate the hot meals and thanked the providers, saying they enjoy having a warm lunch at school. One child said, “I love a hot meal at lunchtime. I wish I had more time to eat. Thanks for it.” However, the overall message is clear: children want tastier food, more variety, healthier options, bigger portions, and the choice of cold lunches, especially in warmer weather.

Conclusion

This report provides a detailed overview of parents' and children's perspectives on the Hot School Meals Scheme, reflecting both appreciation for its benefits and concerns about its current implementation. When we asked parents how satisfied they are with the scheme 49% rated it between 7 and 10 on a 10-point scale, indicating a generally high level of satisfaction. Families value the scheme for saving time and money, and improving their child's eating habits, but they also highlight significant issues around food quality, variety, and practical challenges.

Parents emphasise the importance of nutritious, fresh, and appealing meals, alongside flexibility to cater for dietary needs and age differences. They also stress the need to reduce food and packaging waste, improve communication, and involve families in menu planning. Children echo these concerns, calling for tastier food, more choice, bigger portions, and enough time to eat comfortably. Both groups underline that the scheme should enhance wellbeing and social interaction rather than create stress or waste.

The findings point to the need for a programme that is well-planned, inclusive, and responsive—one that prioritises health, sustainability, and practicality while maintaining fairness. By addressing these concerns through clear communication, regular reviews, and collaboration with parents and children, policymakers can ensure the scheme becomes a positive, lasting part of school life. Ultimately, a child-centred approach could make the Hot School Meals Scheme a valuable tool for supporting nutrition, equality, and learning.

Appendix Survey for Children

Q8. Is there anything else which you would like to add:

1. Options to switch, eg wedges instead of mash etc
2. Food is not nice - nothing on the menu that I would eat
3. The information on the quality of food that would be provided and all the nutritional value!
4. No
5. I would like plain things and I don’t like when the food touches off all the other food this means I can’t eat it
6. I don’t like most of the food we get
7. Sandwiches, soup. Noodles
8. Isn't enough variety, have hot meals 3 out of 5 days because of lack of choice
9. I don’t get enough time to eat a hot lunch and sometimes I didn't receive it so had to get a sandwich from another classroom.
10. Ask us the meals we prefer so there is a choice we like each day
11. Food is awful and really bad choices - all meals taste of cardboard.
12. It would keep us warm but the food smell might be a lot
13. The food was nice in the beginning but, has started not to taste so nice. Wrong orders are delivered and the food tastes bad. For example soggy or tasteless.
14. Food isn’t nice, sandwich or wrap would be nice to have.
15. A lot of meals on menu I don’t eat, weird flavours
16. I had hot lunch for a while but it tasted too bad. They even managed to make pizza taste bad
17. "More choice.
Nicer options"
18. I do not like most of the options of food and it would be good if we could choose to leave some things out.
19. I would love chicken curry with no vegetables in it. Sometimes vegetables in things make me feel yucky and I wont eat it even though I love chicken curry
20. I would like more time to eat lunch and for the lunches to be good for me and not processed
21. They are only ok. I am unhappy with the potato cubes and I like the plain pasta. I only ever eat sausages and goujons
22. I want the option of sandwiches wraps and hot rolls
23. Sometimes I have activities at lunch. I would like food to be kept for me as when my activity is over - all the food is gone.
24. The meals are mostly disgusting
25. I would like more choices and some snacks
26. Id like a meal that tastes good. I dont want anyone to make me eat food I dont like.

27. There is a lot of spicy, heavily seasoned food, or there is no healthy food option available.
28. Would prefer if vegetables were blended up in sauces instead of pieces of them
29. I would prefer sandwich at lunchtime. The food is hard or soggy.
30. I don’t have time to eat
31. My secondary school has food village. The prices are expensive and the portions are for playschool kids
32. I definitely don't have enough time
33. I dont like a lot of the meals and are super greasy and processed and i generally dont like them. After awhile they taste bad and unappealing.
34. I would like to just have a roll or sandwich some days
35. I would be fun and good for us.
36. My lunch is fine, I don't need any more food at school.
37. A bit small because I am a growing boy
38. I miss the chicken baguette that we used to have on a Friday. Please can we have it back.
39. Food has no taste . New menu is awful
40. No thanks 🙏
41. I would like a sandwich at lunch time. I don't want to eat a dinner. There isn't enough choice and the food isn't nice
42. the school/or provider chooses the meals, not the children or parents.
43. I think there are lots of choices but not the right ones. It is hard to pick something that my and my parents agree on. My parents think a lot of the food is snack food
44. I would like more "separate" meals like meat with potatoes and vegetables like peas or carrots
45. I don’t like most of the food available
46. My food is sometimes wet, like the bread on the hot rolls. There are burnt pieces. Sometimes it is wet from drips in the container. I do not like it, and when I did eat it I was still hungry still. My mam now sends my own lunch because I would be hungry in school
47. I stopped getting the lunches now because they are not good quality
48. Thank you 😍
49. More choice & cold choices too please!
50. I don't like the taste of the food
51. Better plain options and if i order something i dont get that i get something else because orders are wrong
52. No
53. I dont like some of the meals
54. More selection of food, healthy foods , no processed foods
55. More variety
56. The food is not fresh
57. More variety of food, healthy foods and no processed foods
58. more choises and change of menu every term, or at least fee new options added
59. More choice, nicer ingredients

60. I would like fish fingers or burgers
61. I don't really like some parts of the meals (potato cubes, curry) so sometimes I'm eating different types of pasta a lot. I'd like to have a sandwich or something different sometimes for lunch
62. If there was toasted sandwich options and no sauce option.
63. More choices
64. Pizza
65. I would like some chopped fruit likes grapes, pears, oranges and apples. I would really like Ice cream on Friday with jelly! I really like fish and there is never any.
66. Proper portions and improvements to ingredients
67. I would like some chicken goujons and a pizza roll
68. I would like nicer food
69. I like the snacks but I don’t like the hot food at all. It’s food that I don’t eat
70. I would like to bring home the left over food instead of wasting it.
71. I would like sausage rolls
72. I love meatballs but I like my pasta to be separate. I don’t like when my food touch
73. I would like pepper to add to the meal.
74. I am a bit bored of the food now.
75. Mummy says they are not good.
76. Not
77. I am happy with my hot lunches (age5)
78. I would like more fish on the menu and to have extra sauces like ketchup, mayonnaise.
79. No
80. The meals are a bit greasy
81. No
82. Id like cold lunch
83. The food comes in a cardboard box, pasta is hard
84. "Change of menue sick of same stuff all time
Some of it not nice at all"
85. More plain food options would be great
86. Bigger portions for older kids
87. Curry is watery. Too much condensation on the inside of the box that the food comes in.food has no taste sometimes
88. "Small quantity
No variety
too much pasta rice etc
Wrap too floppy and gooey
Overall nice enough "
89. Fruit and vegetables to be a option with the meals or by itself, like a fruit melody, granola pot, yoghurts.
90. I have autism and the food is not plain and it is full of vegetables and sauce which I don't like
91. "Chicken burger and fries"

92. I would like healthy noodles that actually taste like noodles and no peas
93. "Sandwiches
Fresh crispy roll
Soup
No cubes
Extra choices of veg rather than the same all the time it's always sweetcorn and peas
The curry to just be the sauce, rice and chicken. There is vegetables in everything"
94. Its good
95. Chicken wrap
96. We want options of having certain foods separately.
97. It’s pretty good in my opinion
98. The food was better last year.
99. I really liked the roast lunches and the spice box
100. i like some of the dinners or bits of some of them, but not all the bits all the time. I'd like more kiddy food and less mammy dinners.
101. I have had them in the past but did not like them because they were soggy not very tasty.
102. It would be great if there were more tasty options. Also the food is soggy by the time it arrives, depending on what it is.
103. They look nice and they smell good, but I can't have one.
104. To have options to remove certain ingredients from meals, like onions.
105. Add a burger and chip option on Fridays
106. I don’t think they taste good
107. I would like to have more flavourful options, some options are very dry and bland.
108. Chicken teriyaki with rice
109. I don’t like Fridays menu at all
110. We no longer order hot lunch at school as the food was always cold, soggy and didn't taste very nice.
111. I would like more macaroni and cheese
112. I think they do the food really well
113. The pizza is very gressy, chicken gouions are nice but other than the pizza and the gouions i wouldn't eat anything
114. Burger
115. I’d like rolls or baps with warm chicken, ham & cheese toasted sandwiches, healthy pizza etc.
116. I would like them not to add extra stuff that doesn't belong in dishes eg hot ham amd cheese pizza wrap that has potatoes and spices potatoes dont belong on a pizza wrap its weird
117. Not hot when you we get our meals.
118. I would like bigger portions.
119. I would like a sandwich or cold wrap option
120. I don't like the food that we get because the quality is not good. They don't offer food that I like to eat. And the chicken curry rice is hard.

121. Option of cold lunches in warmer weather should be given
122. More options of individual portions. (pasta, rife) only vegetables
123. it didn't taste good sometimes it was like slimey
124. They are not nice at all
125. I would like soup and a bread roll and salads
126. "The food is often burnt or not cooked enough (Especially the chicken)"
127. Chicken nuggets and chips and pizza choice of a Friday
128. No
129. Pasta is a bit hard and there's not much choice
130. Sone of the food at the start was nice. It is really awful now. No one eats it. It is really unhealthy and tastes bad.
131. I got the rong food today .
132. "It’s goes soggy it doesn’t seem fresh- it feels like it’s frozen and heated up . Prefer bread rolls and more lunch than dinner - snacks are ok too but need to be changed as get bored eating the same things "
133. The food is very unhealthy and it made me sick.
134. I don't like a lot of the choices so I mainly choose the same things
135. They never asked us if we wanted it or not and that’s not fair.
136. More vegan options please including treat foods. Bigger portions for the bigger children.
137. Properly cooked food
138. Chicken nuggets,burger,
139. We dont get a choice school chooses our lunch for us. I dont eat some of them as I dont like the meals on certain days. The chicken is dry and very chewy and the pasta sauce is not nice .
140. "Whole meal/ brown pasta
Non lumpy mash
Potatoe Wedges without the paprika "
141. Would like chicken goujon baguette back on the menu as well as the sausage baguette and bolognese. Lots of my friends dont like hot lunches.
142. It’s okay but mostly when I get my lunch it leaks through the bottom but is great:)
143. Nicer food
144. The food is not nice anymore
145. "It would be good to have the veg on the side as sometimes there are too much and they contaminate the rest of the food. The veg is nice but not when it is on the mash all day.
It would be good to have salad as a choice or a fruit salad. "
146. Plenty of choice but none of it tastes very nice
147. My favourite hot lunch is pasta bolognese
148. Would like a fruit bowl as an option.
149. "No hair in food
Pasta that is cooked not hard and chewy
No black thingys in Mac and cheese
Baked beans are too dry
Less bananas and more apples and oranges in fruit selection"

150. Satisfied
151. Toasties
152. I don't always get what I ordered. Some food is soggy or uncooked.
153. "•The sandwiches from last year were better.
•There isn't any salt.
•It would be nice if there were sandwiches with
butter and jam.
•The potatoes aren't cooked properly.
•The meals can be better."
154. "The sandwiches from last year were better.
•There isn't any salt.
•It would be nice if there were sandwiches with
butter and jam.
•The potatoes aren't cooked properly."
155. Sushi please :)
156. More options for ceoliacs and the reassurance of no cross contamination
157. I'd like soup to be an option every day and I would like to be able to order the little break snacks
158. Sushi please
159. "I dont like the taste and smell of the cardboard
Cold option would be nice like a roll "
160. N/A
161. Food was greasy, tasteless and chicken options overcooked and dry. Chicken casseroles looked like vomit on a plate .. food started out nice and it changed and was not tasty anymore .. bored of limited choices
162. Beans and mash not baked potatoes, pasta with garlic butter,
163. I'm in third grade, and I want the pizza to be bigger. My little brother Ji is five years old, and it's just the right size for him, but too small for me to eat.Many thanks.
164. i would like a hot dog
165. Noodle dishes
166. I'm really sad they took away the sausage rolls
167. Thank you very much
168. "pizza, burgers, hot dogs, and calamari please"
169. I think there needs to be healthier choices for children for their hot school meals and a better variety for during the week. The school meal should be nutritious and not use ultra processed foods such as chicken nuggets or serve sausages etc, it should use fresh real chicken not processed chicken.
170. More veggie sides would be nice like cucumber and tomato
171. The food is not good
172. Maybe a choice of sandwiches please
173. I would like more vegetarian dishes. Some dishes are very small and not edible (for example mini pizzas).
174. Sandwich
175. it was very repetive

176. "Mini break - would like pancakes. Are still abit hungry after this break. Big break- happy with. Would like pizza rolls "
177. More vegetarian options
178. I really like the hot lunches
179. Quality of the meals. Other child says they don't get enough time for meal.
180. The food doesn't taste very nice, sauces can be dry/clumpy or the food can be soggy (pizza). It is too hot and in some dishes there are ingredients that aren't listed eg green bits (maybe spring onions) in the cheddar roll & chicken melt which I don't like and wasn't expecting.
181. Maybe a bit more options for the meals but overall they are great 👍
182. She says teacher chooses which hot lunch she has
183. I'm happy with my lunch. It's fun when we have breakfast club at school.
184. Sometimes it is not nice and I can't eat it
185. I don't like the hot food. I like sandwiches and smoothies more
186. The food doesn’t taste good. The pasta and rice isn’t properly cooked, it’s still hard. Everything else is really soggy. The potatoes don’t taste like real potatoes. The potato cubes and baked potatoes are raw. The wraps are hard. None of the food is nice so I stopped eating it. I wish there was a choice to get a fresh sandwich instead.
187. The current company, Carambola, providing the hot lunches the food is bad, with some of my friends finding hair and plastic in their food, and so I don’t want it any more and had gone back to bringing lunch from home.
188. No I just don't like them
189. I would like pizza, ham and cheese wraps, meatballs with gravy and mash
190. The food tastes too cold/luke warm. No option to take certain sauces or veg off the dish. Taste is not nice.
191. I love the meals and I am really enjoying them. I love when there is something new on the menu.Please keep adding new meals so I don’t get sick of the same dishes. Please and thanks 😀
192. I do not like the cheese especially
193. Pizza!!!!
194. Need more choices, it’s mainly pasta. Pizza and goujons are my favorite at home but taste awful in school
195. The food quality is really bad
196. Sometimes the meat tastes funny.
197. The chicken is too big
198. More food in the box, its a bit small. Food cooked better. Sometimes its mushy sometimes not cooked enough. More options to pick from like sandwich or wraps. Fruit given.
199. I like the pasta best. I wish there was some more options that are yummier so that I don't have to have the same thing sometimes.
200. I wish I had more time to eat my food at school and I wish the food was tasty and the vegetables more fresh and less mushy.
201. I don't like the smell in the classroom of the hot lunches

202. "Not enough choice
Would prefer an option of sandwiches, fruit , yoghurt "
203. I love it.
204. There's a LOT of foid waste....ive seen n it in the staff canteen as left over meals are keft there. Would prefer money to be put towards something else in the school.
205. It's a good idea and I like it
206. I would like a cold option for summer time.
207. You should spend the money on the homeless instead.
208. I want lasagne also I want cookies
209. "Sandwiches "
210. Food not nice
211. Sometime we have enough time. Junior infants takes longer.
212. Quality could be better, eg sometimes pasta is too soggy and rice is sometimes hard and undercooked.
213. Love them thanks
214. I would like more choice. My choices are not good because I have allergies to milk and egg. I can't have what my friends have especially now there is butter in some of the things I got before
215. You need taco fries
216. I don’t eat it -it’s disgusting
217. Such a bad selection of hot foid , as an adult there is very little i would choose from this menu , what’s wrong with a simple hot chicken roll hot sausage sandwich ? Simple hot & plain
218. Burgers and chips
219. Don't like cardboard cutlery.
220. Roast chicken option
221. Some foods are too dry for some children with option to add ketchup or gravy.
222. "I would like a cold food option eg bread roll, fruit salad, sandwiches
Hot food sometimes frozen inside "
223. More peas, fish cakes or salmon bites
224. It does not taste nice, soggy, overcooked or undercooked, pasta hard,rolls not cooked
225. I am not mad about the meals they used to be nicer
226. Food from last year was a much better standard of food, there should be a choice of sandwiches too.
227. I like eating hot lunches and seeing what hot lunches my friends have too.
228. They are not nice since the recipes changed. The chicken tenders are mushy, the curry used to be soo good but now its not nice and I'd like more choices
229. Sometimes the food is horrible and boring
230. Sometimes tasty, sometimes not. I'd like.more.choices
231. I would like to have a choice of sausages on a roll and also pasta bolengse
232. Pretty tasty 😋

233. I love the pasta bake
234. "there is lots of choices but the food is not always good
the plain pasta is hard on the edges and is not warm when i open it
the melted cheese on the roll is hard and not warm and i cannot eat it
i like the options and the chicken curry is my favourite "
235. No they are yummy
236. The choices aren't too good and i don't like the taste.
237. I would like some real tasty fish
238. The cold snack menu back
239. I would like nicer hot meals pls
240. Don't like the food
241. "i order the lunch every day but do not eat at all anymore
i liked plain pasta but i cannot always eat it because it is gone hard by the time lunch time comes
i like bread and rolls but these are not on the menu
i would like the option of a sandwich or roll with butter and an optional filling like cheese or ham"
242. I don't like fish fingers and I would like to have real fish pieces and more options for vegetarians.
243. I love them
244. I like having hot lunches!
245. I am a coeliac and I have very little choice for my lunches. The choice do not change very often and I am having a had time with my hot lunches. I don't like the taste of some of my choices either
246. Hot lunches just started at our school and I prefer it!
247. Different pasta sauce and different pizza. The mash tastes like water and it's not cooked proper 😕
248. I love a hot meal at lunchtime. I wish I had more time to eat. Thanks for it.
249. Lunches are not tasty and often cold
250. Soup
251. I would like the option of no vegetables
252. I love the hot meals so much. Thank you so much to the government for doing it.
253. our class can't wait to have it
254. Would like a treat item on Friday pizza or burgers chicken nuggets
255. Thank you so much to the government.
256. I would like some fruit and pancakes added to the menu .
257. I don't really like it. I rather mammy's dinner
258. Not really
259. I like my hot school meals
260. Poo
261. "Please bring back option of a sandwich.
Please bring back option of selecting break time snack."
262. The hot meals are being provided next week. The answers are on the best of our knowledge

263. If I was to get a lunch could I choose the size like small medium and large as junior infants would not eat the same as 6th class.
264. Hot dogs with ketchup/mustard/mayo
265. No sauces for some of the foods
266. Please have plain chicken and rice as an option. Please have a cold lunch/sandwich as an option.
267. It fills me up better. I like having a dinner at school.
268. Portions are very small and the taste of the food is very salty. Pasta and vegetables are overcooked. sauces are burnt and mashed potato is burned and lumpy. Fish is slimy and the curry and the Korma both taste the same. The soup is salty and burnt.
269. I do not like the hot meals
270. I'd like a cheesy pasta option please!
271. More cottage bake please
272. I don't like the way it goes soggy. Perhaps a cold sandwich would be better. Thanks
273. I don't like the potato wedges.
274. Meal is too hot at start, but we get time after play to finish our lunch. Pizza and plain pasta we can eat straight way.
275. "Steak Salmon"
276. Add pizza,sub sandwich (with hot chicken filet)
277. "pizza slice that was there before.
hot bacon sandwich "
278. Sushi & Japanese food
279. Once I ordered potato cubes but I got mash. I did eat it though. The wooden cutlery is awful. The spoons are almost flat which is no good for soup.
280. All good
281. Lasagna
282. The food is horrible it's cold by the time we get it .
283. Would like to see more sandwiches
284. Id like cold food, like sandwiches, fruit, crackers.
285. I think you should have a more vegetarian option and tastier food
286. Please bring back taco tater WITH cheese, and chicken BROCCOLI pasta. I don't under why you keep removing good stuff from the meals. It's all plain
287. Cold options like rolls and sausage rolls
288. I would like more options
289. Cold food options
290. Some food which is freshly made would be nice.
291. Lack of plain foods, all covered in sauces, too spicy, soggy food.
292. Options to have gravy or not. Just plain cheddar rolls with no pasta sauce
293. New menu to include healthier ingrediy
294. I dont like the food. Its doesn't taste or look very nice to eat.
295. Would like to see a chicken burger on the menu

296. I was looking forward to trying different types of food but l am now in 6th class and think time is running out for me to get hot meals in school. My friends in other schools in my area have hot meals & my school is the only school that don’t which l don’t think is fair.
297. Would like chicken nuggets or chicken breaded or battered
298. "Chicken roll"
299. "I would like quiche in the choice. I like the meatballs with the sauce."
300. Some days i don't like what we get
301. There should be treats on Fridays like pizza
302. Would like if there was a hot &/or cold sandwich option available every day of the week.
303. I have sensory processing disorder and the menu is not adaptable to my needs.
304. I would like to have broccoli and more fresh vegetables
305. "More options for vegetarians
More time to finish our food
Food is not always hot"
306. I want more vegetarian options. Sometimes the food is a bit too spicy (the vegetarian curry and burrito).
307. I would prefer sandwich instead of hot lunch.
308. Nachos 💕💕vegetarian
309. No
310. Add lassana and fish
311. I would like the food to taste nicer and be warm
312. They need to taste better
313. Make the chicken gougons crispier
314. "Please could some free snacks be included.
Please could there be more chicken Goujons in the box."
315. I would like to have a little bit more time to eat my hot lunch. I think it is tasty. I love my school.
316. Bring back taco tatter
317. "It’s soggy and smells bad.Sometimes the pasta isn’t cooked enough.In Pesto Pasta there’s only pesto on the chicken.My favourite is Taco Tator (with cheese)."
318. Plain chicken with rice
319. Change the sauce on the meatballs please 🙏
320. I would like soup, more choices and things we like
321. Bring back the chicken fillet roll!!!
322. Healthier options, too much pasta options, more vegetables
323. Fish fingers, soup & bread roll, pasta with bolognes sauce but no meat
324. We liked the food before the changes, a sandwich option would also be good
325. I miss the chicken fillet roll. Bring it back on Fridays
326. No
327. "I like the potato cubes they are really nice. I would like them to be on their own because the chicken is yuk.
I like pasta and tomato sauce but not really the meat balls"

328. Improve the gravy
329. Thank you for making the hot lunches for me.
330. The school have hot lunches but dont provide dairy or soya free meals so I can't eat them. Im allergic to dairy and soya
331. Sometimes the photo on the app of the food is VERY different to what comes.
332. No option to remove sauce etc from meals
333. I have autism and don't eat certain food and would like if ye had some food that children with different tastes eats.
334. No
335. More choices than what is on offer. I don’t really like the choices available
336. My meals are carambola and please make them tastier they are disgusting and please give more choice
337. A pickn mix style option would be nice
338. No
339. No
340. I feel like there should be some new options.
341. The meal that I get currently is cold. If I can get hot food, it would be great.
342. I don’t like the food. I am not a picky eater but I find all the options very unappetising
343. Egg fried rice
344. "Please add loads of options for Halal.
Add cheese which is suitable for vegetarian so aI’m not left out. Thank you"
345. I prefer my own lunch.
346. The hot lunches are super and I really like them
347. They are really good
348. Could spice bag be added
349. Sometimes I do not have enough time to eat my hot lunch. More options on some days would be nice.
350. They are gross. I don’t like them.
351. Better with hot lunches
352. I had hot lunches in my previous school and really enjoyed them.
353. Used to get lunch but stopped because it did not taste nice and I wasn't eating it.
354. Add sausage baguette back please, have option for sandwiches and rolls together with hot meal
355. No
356. Some of them just aren't pleasant to eat or kind of gross
357. I would like to have soup and bread
358. Once found a dead fly in fish cake. Food is just alright.
359. No
360. We would like to: more vegan options, salads, fruits.
361. The food Is soggy the cardboard box is disgusting to eat my food out of it smells disgusting and it is disgusting

362. The food quality isn’t great. I have gotten bits of plastic and tin foil in my meals. And raw chicken.
363. I used to eat the hot lunches but they're not nice anymore, so I stopped eating them
364. I’ve gotten bits of plastic in my food.
365. "The lunch bag ...wants pizza sub back
Recipies were xhanged and not as nice"
366. I don’t think it should be the same choice every day.
367. I hate having 2 dinners eveeyday
368. 5 stars💛🌟✨🌟✨🌟
369. No
370. They're very tasty.
371. "Would prefer sandwich/roll/wrap options over the hot meals as they're very processed, poor quality, tiny portion size for older children and a huge amount of waste in schools (30 meals at least dumped if children are absent and the majority of kids bring the meals home untouched).
The standard of the hot meals has fallen significantly since it first came about. Barely any vegetables. The stir fry falafel is just sweet chilli sauce with colourless falafel and rice. I won't give my child something I wouldn't eat. Veggie pizza is soggy.
I can't figure out how to remove him from the hot food programme so have the calendar switched off so he doesn't get a hot meal every day.
I feel the money would be better served in investing in more SNAs in schools."
372. I dont like reheated food. A sandwich or roll and fruit is much better.
373. In my opinion the food doesn't taste great and the lasagne is just fusili pasta some meat and a bit of melted cheese and a bit of sauce. Maybe a bit more pasta, rice or rolls.
374. Different sandwiches and different fruit like grapes or strawberries in the extra option part
375. No
376. No I love it
377. "I used to have the hot school lunch back in 5th class. The quality of the food was horrendous, I am on the autism spectrum and it should be more inclusive as I could barley eat a mouthful due to squishy potato's and soggy food and for children with sensory needs like me this is
Terrible because we would love to have the hot lunches but unfortunately can't due to the fact that the food does not fit sensory needs.
Thank you for reading"
378. It would be good to have an option of a sandwich.
379. Unfair as my friends in other school get hot lunches but we don’t. I don’t like sandwiches and really would like proper lunches in school
380. A hot chicken roll should be on the menu
381. They taste really bad and look really bad. Homemade soup would be far nicer everyday.
382. Sandwich and fruit options would be nice

383. I find the meals are very poor quality and greasy. I would love if they did NOT exist. And parents had the option to withdraw. I don't think they are healthy. I would question where the ingredients are sourced from and the amount of processed ingredients in each meal !!
384. "The above answers are from the child that doesn't like the food However another of my children likes the food but only the plain pasta. She feels that although there is plenty of choices they are not good choices. The oldest child thinks the food is sweating in the box for too long which is effecting the taste. He thinks the food is dry/cold and also thinks there aren't many nice options available. "
385. Instead of a hot lunch I would like some snacks, sandwiches and rolls.
386. More choice and options to add or take away certain foods
387. Fruit
388. Don't like the vegetables, they are a bit soggy.
389. The food was nicer when we first got them
390. Add more options
391. I would like more meal choices
392. More variety please
393. The mash is too gooey and crunchy, pasta isn't great. Meals come with gravy even if I didn't pick it.
394. We cancelled the hot meals for our 2 primary school children. They both eat a varied diet at home, neither are fussy eaters and they have a good awareness of food in general. Despite the great choices on offer, they did not like the hot meals, they did not enjoy the taste and they found it to be quite processed and soggy. As a parent I was very disappointed to read the ingredients in the meals, they were certainly not meals to serve to children on a daily basis.
395. My school gets the hot meals, but I opted out as I don't like the choices. I'd prefer sandwiches, fruit and yoghurts.
396. Package difficult to open for young children. Teacher doesn't have time to help
397. I think your food is good and I like the food
398. I try to pick good food but theres always something included that I don't want and it's wasted. There's no option to choose what you want and what you don't want as part of the same meal and do you always end up not eating something and so theres always food wasted. The teachers always have about 10 meal boxes from each class room and the staff room table is filled with lunches cause kids aren't in or decided they didnt want them and it feeds all the teachers aswell and I see them carrying them home also
399. I don't allow my children to get hot lunches in school as I am a teacher working in a school where the hot lunch scheme is in operation. The awful quality of food, the highly processed nature of many of the options and the disgusting level of waste associated with the largely uneaten meals, the packaging, the forks etc. is a national scandal. This scheme is a massive waste of tax payers money. Why isn't the money invested into SLT/ OT/ special schools/ reducing class sizes/ more SNAs/ increased places in special classes? The hot lunch scheme is not fit for purpose.

400. One time my lunch was cold. But everything else is really good!
401. I have to get used to the hot meals as the food is different to home.
402. Different size portions for junior infants to 6th class students. How is right they both get the same portion right now
403. I think they really need to look into the food waste. Maybe if there was more variety but also we are only new to the hot lunches I'm not sure what the standard of food is like.
404. Cheese and pasta, sausage and rice, other vegetable added like mushroom
405. I need more time to eat. There should be 30 minutes to eat an then break time
406. It would be good if you gave an option, on some meals. example: pri pri chicken loaded wedges - just the wedges & no pri pri chicken. My daughter was dying for the wedges but wouldn't order them because of the chicken on top. Or potatoes & sausage, if you could just opt for the sausage .
407. The potatoes are too watery.
408. Would like cold options like sandwiches
409. "I like more food, different choices.
Not under cook meals.
I like fresh food .
Thank you "
410. "More Italian job"
411. I'd like the food not to be as bland as it is and more choices to menu added, like pizza, lasagna.
412. "New hot food offer is superb in terms of choice & quality. Perhaps extending the offer to include a drink (water) would be excellent. Especially like the idea that the fork & plate are reusable."
413. I like when I get ham sandwiches. I wish I could get these every day. I also like ham and cheese sandwiches. I like the fruit but I'd like different fruits and vegetables to try. I would like smoothies, different pastas, baked ham.
414. Organic food
415. brutaly discusting
416. Some of the food is too spicy.
417. Would like more options.
418. Taco tater please
419. I like to bring my own lunch to school. I tried the hot lunches but did not like them.
420. Would like if there was option of chips nuggets fish fingers
421. I dontike soggy food and carroys should taste likr carrots and not cardboard
422. Should have an option to take out the extras. A lot of children don’t like the added vegetables
423. "Variety They taste like cardboard
I don’t like wasting the food "
424. Burger and fries

425. I dont like the food and prufur my old lunchs. I allso don't like the smell and mess in my class
426. "Food isnt tasty. Very soggy bread and pasta."
427. The service is good.
428. Hot lunches only in our school since the start of 2026 but so far it has been brilliant
429. Great food
430. Addition of a fish option and potenially more vegetables with some chicken choices
431. The food tastes disgusting and it is poor quality.
432. The portions are too small.
433. "As a parent we are really happy with the lunches . Both of our children have tried a lot of the options and have enjoyed most of them. It has expanded their food choices and I feel they are less tired coming home from school."
434. I don't know if I would be allowed to eat the food? I can't eat dairy or eggs and my teacher doesn't give us much time to eat my lunch so don't think I 'd be able to eat a hot lunch
435. "The mash potatoes are too mushy, the potato cubes are hard. When reheat the plain pasta is is hard, can’t get the potatoes without gravy. The veg pizza goes soggy when heated.
I like the ciabatta but they took that off the menu- it was like the pizza so don’t know why. "
436. Better choices
437. Sausage sausage back
438. "Cheese sandwich. Toasted cheese sandwich.
Hamburgers on a Friday
Not everything with a tomato base as I don't like the tomato gravy used.
Ketchup for certain meals
Onion chopped small and finely
More vegetables
Fruit
Lasagne
Chicken a la king"
439. "I would like to have an option for no vegetables in some of the meals Even a burger or spaghetti with no onions in it. I bring home most of the food still in the box. "
440. Portions are getting smaller
441. "I do not like the food
I do not like the choices available
A lot of food is wasted
Most of my friends / children in my class do not eat the school lunches "
442. I just want nuggets on their own or sausages. The roll with sausages used to be nice, now it's not. There is beans or peas with meals and I don't like them. I would love the pizza we made in healthy eating class which was a wrap with heinz sauce, cheese and pepperoni.
443. I would like the meals to be more tasty.

444. Maybe there could be less spicy meals and more meals Irish kids actually eat. The only thing I order is chicken goujons and don't eat the potatoes because they're hard. Maybe the option of a sandwich/wrap/ soup would be good too.
445. Give me more food. It's not enough to fill my tummy. And also my teacher to give us more time. Me and my friends have to rush and eat. We get less than 8-10 minutes to eat lunch.
446. "I will to see halal chicken, beef in the menu
Thank you "
447. I only like the cheddar roll
448. I love it thank you
449. Perhaps an option for larger portions for the older kids.
450. More chicken nuggets on Mondays!!!
451. I feel strongly regarding the nutritional value of these lunch. We try promote healthy eating but some of these meals a laden with sugar fats salts and additives ‘E’ numbers. that are not healthy for a developing child on a daily basis. More wholesome food should be offered with the addition of high fiber omega fat options. Children will generally follow the crowd experimenting with new foods whilst with peers so maybe there should be more focus on more nourishing option thank you very much
452. We cancelled the hot meals due to our 3 children not eating them. It would great to see cold options such as salad or sandwiches.
453. Why can’t I take home my leftover food for later it’s wasted food
454. No
455. Different varieties of foods
456. I would love good tasty gluten free option
457. Pizza
458. I don't like all the meals. I would like to have the option of sandwiches, wraps and yogurts if I don't want a hot lunch that day
459. Chicken wrap with sweet chilli sauce
460. "Big and better pizza"
461. I don’t order the meals anymore. I bring my own lunch
462. "Bigger hot lunch's"
463. "The chicken goujons don't taste like they are fully cooked."
464. I think some of the Hot Meals are chopped(bad) and weird and I wish in my school they would bring back the hot rolls and also I’m a SIGMA ALPHA
465. Bring back the Friday treat!!!
466. More vegetarian vegan options (including sandwiches) I am vegetarian but I don’t like cheese. It’s hard for me to tell what’s vegetarian too, we can’t filter the menu.
467. "Choice of days to have hot lunch and days to skip.
Sausage Rolls"
468. The portions are too small for me (I'm a 12 years old boy). The menus are very repetitive and bland. All the options are yellow....
469. No
470. "Lasagne
Carrots are not good. They are super sweet. "

471. The portions are too small, even though I don't finish mine sometimes.... The menu is very boring and I would like to have more healthy options available. The food is all the same colour and we should be eating the rainbow.
472. Pls add sandwiches or cold food and snacks like prattle hummus cucumber eggs
473. "The food is warm, but I am tired of the same flavor, there is variety but is the same menu.
No need to add more but change it up.
Chicken goujons are sometimes dry. Pasta is good, some salt or sauces added in the side would be helpful for some meals "
474. More options to choose from
475. I like hot meal that has a good flavour and tasty
476. The food looks yucky sometimes and I don’t like eating yucky food.
477. "Sausage and pasta bake I liked
Sandwich
Not hungry at lunch time for it but bring it home and usually someone eats it"
478. "There is variety but menu is always been pretty much the same since we started. Sometimes I don’t finish due to time as I choose to play, other times is because flavor is ok but not great. It gets a bit boring, it’s bland
I am not a picky eater, I guess is just that over time get tired of same flavours.
But I am still grateful for the service, maybe add some seasoning, if things are together example gravy and chicken, by the time we get it if the chicken was supposed to be crunchy then it goes soggy, maybe having the gravy separate would taste better, little changes can make a difference"
479. More choice on the menu
480. "More gluten free options like sausages and meat balls"
481. "Carbonara on more days."
482. I only eat the chicken curry when available
483. I would like to see a greater commitment from the school to make this happen. All other schools in the area offer this facility for the children
484. My child uses it as an extra option. They choose on a Sunday the school meals and the days they don’t like the school lunch they ask their parents to make lunch. Our school lunches are mainly healthy, are well balanced and plenty choice but I feel this money spent on school meals could be spent on other educational needs. I’ve a son struggling to see speech and language therapist for his language needs but he has loads of food options at lunch. However the teachers are struggling with his literacy.
485. The meals are undercooked.
486. Portion size small
487. The food is yucky!
488. I like vegetables
489. "Meals are not nutritional enough
Variety is not good most kids will not eat "

490. I occasionally order a hot meal. I dont like ordering them as I feel they are not good quality ingredients. I prefer my child to have a healthy cooked meal at home, that I have have made and that I know what has gone into it. I feel it is unnecessary to give children hot meals in school. I feel hot meals have been forced on my child. Extra meals are offered and given even when not ordered. I find this very frustrating as I pack my child a healthy lunch and I want to know what she is eating in school. Also meals have been ordered on the app that I didn't order
491. Cold, not nice meals
492. The pizza was very small
493. I tried it but don't like it. The chicken goujons are bendy and chewy. The chicken curry doesn't taste nice. I prefer to bring my own lunch to school
494. I would like the menu to be changed up and more variety. I get a bit fed up with eating the same few meals I like on repeat.
495. I love it
496. I would like a wider variety of meals. I would also like some meals to have a bit more flavour or spice added.
497. My mum gives me a lunch that consists of a yogurt, fruit, veg sticks, sandwich/wrap/leftover dinner like homemade chicken goujons, homemade meatballs and spaghetti, ham pasta which I eat cold. I also get a snack like rice cakes or crackers to dip in hummus or cream cheese.
498. It would be better if the portions were bigger. I get hungry soon after I eat the hot lunch. My 7 year old brother gets the same amount of food as me, I am 12.
499. There isn’t enough flavour in the food and the chicken is wet and gooey
500. I dont eat it. The food is not good. I do try but it is not nice. Wish it was.
501. I would like more sandwiches on offer
502. The food is not nice it is sloppy and soggy
503. I wish there was more fish
504. There is the same amount of food for juner infants as for 6 th class. And the older children are hungry after they eat
505. "The level of packaging is wasteful, we take it home and recycle the boxes. "
506. Pizza please!
507. Burger
508. I don't like the food offered, it is not nice and sometimes very greasy.
509. the pasta is hard, the box has always water in it and makes the food not nice and they don't make soups with sauges in them like i get at home
510. We would like a say in what we get to eat.
511. We need hot emal
512. I would like to have more time to eat lunch and still get yard time
513. I didnt like the lunches, too many vegetables or sauces.
514. The chicken goujon baguette was my favourite but it’s gone. The food doesn’t taste good. I want to stop having hot lunches. I would prefer a sandwich.

515. I would like a choice every day, not just one option. I would like to be able to choose which days to have and which days not to. Sometimes I would elements of some meals so if I could get it split up e.g pasta with sauce was on the menu I would like to be able to get the pasta without the sauce.
516. "I would like the menu to change more often."
517. To have pizza in the menu please
518. Thank You
519. When they came to get us to choose them as a provider the food was really nice but when they started supplying the food it was horrible and the choice you get is not nice either. I rather take my moms sandwiches it tastes a lot better.
520. Please add sandwiches or rolls for our lunch options
521. The food is extremely high in salt and absolutely not good enough nutritionally to be giving to children. The type of food being provided can be made without it being loaded with salt and additives. We have cancelled the “free lunches” for our children because I wouldn’t give the food their provided with to an animal, let alone a growing child.
522. More variety!
523. Hot drinks(hot chocolate or milk?or fruit juice would be nice too.
524. I would like the hot meals in school scoil phadraig naofa rochestown please.
525. There should be bigger choice of vegetables, choice does a child wants his lunch with gravy or other sauce or plain
526. Food should be cooked properly, sometimes it's overcooked and sometimes undercooked
527. Tomato sauce sachets and small butter packs . Adults wouldn't not be offered these
528. It doesn’t really taste good
529. Mac n cheese and chicken wings.
530. Small portions, not cooked consistently some days the same food tastes terrible such as pasta mushy and other days over cooked. Some days only 1 meat ball. Other days soup is burnt and rolls are tasteless. Favourite meal is always the ciabatta with chicken, cheese or ham. But very rare to get that option.
531. need more Halal choice in menu and a small bit bigger portion size
532. More plain food with no sauces. More plain chicken wraps just with ketchup. Small little burger just meat and bun with ketchup. I would love it
533. I love the vegetable pizza
534. I think it’s a pain to make lunches and it would be so good to have a hot lunch at school.
535. Because we always have cold lunches and id love a hot lunch. Friends from other schools near us are taking about how good it is and I’d love to have it
536. Because we never get warm food so it would be nice to try it.
537. I would prefer food made by mum dad.

538. My hot lunch doesn’t fill me as the potion isn’t big enough. I get the same as a junior infant and I am in 3rd class
539. We get cold lunches now. I like somethings but some are not nice. I still need to make a lunch too.
540. Hot food and drinks would be great
541. No
542. the potato cubes back on and the pizza on Friday
543. Pizza , chicken nuggets, chicken strips . Mash
544. Choice of a cold lunch would be great
545. A good choice
546. I don't like gravy,no option to remove the gravy. The pasta can be very greasy and overcooked. The rice is not very tasty. Food is sometimes soggy and just not tasting nice.
547. I like pasta with sauces on the side, not mixed in.
548. More choices
549. Is there a choice in food menu?
550. I prefer bread roll instead
551. The pizza can be soggy so they may need to find a way to get this to the kids to prevent this eg maybe wrapping with tin foil , also sausage rolls would be a good choice to add otherwise excellent provider very lucky as I have heard bad reviews on the other providers lunch bag seems to be the best
552. More gluten free options
553. Love to have good quality, fresh and healthy food. It will promote our growth, well being and study better.
554. I think every school should get one because they are a good thing to have for the kids that need it.
555. I think there should be a chicken burger on the list. And chips.
556. My brother and I really liked getting it at the beginning, but now we don't like it because it's always the same things and we're fed up with them, and there's never enough meat or chicken and it just starts to become disgusting.
557. If they offer chips I’d like mayo too. But mainly it’s important for my friends who need it.
558. I don't like taste of the food.
559. I preferred some of the older meals that have now changed. I don't like the wholemeal bread on the pizza option. The white base with the veg on top was much nicer

Appendix Survey for Parents

Q6. If other, please give us more details:

1. .
2. Foods are not something my child would eat- it’s all dinners which they would not have during lunch break
3. It’s a great idea but unfortunately the food is cold a lot of time and my kids are not picky eaters. I would say there is alot of waste
4. Quality of the food was very poor
5. Not enough plain options and it would be great to have an option of a sandwich instead of hot food. Also as everything is in the same container he will not eat the food when it’s all on top of each other.
6. Sensory issues (request for sibgle food items - not mixed) and no accommodation by supplier for same.
7. "I have more than 1 child so fee reasons,
1. All meals are very sauce orientated not many options for plain eaters or sauce on side option
2. Sandwich chiabata once a month all have a tomatoe based sauce 5options all with tomatoe sauce.
Quality is reduced, first few weeks was good but now much lower meat content and over cooked "
8. My child has it at the start and said that the smell of the food sometimes made her feel sick and there have been a number of times that we were down for hot lunches and for some reason she didn’t get one only the snacks so I found it to be not dependable. My child also felt very rushed at lunch times to eat the hot meal which made her stress out about lunch time in school so took her off the hot lunches and kept the snacks.
9. My child doesn't enjoy the food
10. We talk alot about locally sourced food and my daughter saw a label from china and decided she didnt want to participate. I was against it from the start. Like all of our supermarket food the ingredients are getting cheaper and poorer quality
11. not responsive to sensory challenges.
12. The quality of the food is poor. Allot of waste as kids don't like food
13. "Meals are served in plastic tubs that are NOT BPA free
The quality is terrible, spuds aren't edible, grease on meat is awful
There are very few traditional Irish meals offered
There are a lot of unhealthy options"
14. Child had hot meals successfully for 1 school year. We cancelled when meals were coming home uneaten. Good meal options but my child preferences changed and we returned to.home made cold lunches.
15. No Nutritional value with what is currently being provided. My children will not eat the food as it is of bad quality.

16. They don’t like them, so while they were availing of the scheme they were bringing back full lunches every day
17. Quality of food is not good, portions are not accurate for the child. Items have been found in some portions that should not be there.
18. The food is horrible and comes out too hot for younger kids to eat and the reheating process causes the food to be soggy. The whole scheme is misconceived. A healthy roll with salad and meat would be better because at least the kids would eat it and the meat would be of a reasonable standard.
19. My child has a very restrictive diet due to sensory issues
20. "School only allows cold food options as no facilities (oven, staff etc).
The cold options do not suit my fussy eaters.
The food just ends up being thrown away so I stopped doing it."
21. My child prefers plain food and chooses to not eat school hot meals
22. My child has tried every option available on the menu but doesn't like the food. He's not generally fussy and has a varied appetite but the presentation of the food and the quality of some of the components puts him off.
23. Child is vegetarian and they find all the vegetarian food either bland or too spicey / peppery / not palitable.
24. The amount of food waste as a result of this scheme is almost criminal. This money could be spent in a far more meaningful way. Two of my children are in class sizes that have 30+ children in them yet there school is spending &375,000 a year on hot school lunches that are not eaten.
25. Food choice is difficult for children. Many meals are too spicy or heavily seasoned, not healthy for kids, and often unbalanced nutritionally.
26. The hot meals are not hot or even warm when delivered. Most kids dont like cold chicken and pasta etc. I've tasted them myself too, extremely bland, no flavour and limited options for autistic children because there's a stereotype that they eat plain rice and/or pasta
27. selective eater
28. The food presented before the contract was awarded is very different to the standard of food being delivered now, it’s just a mess in a box. I canceled over a year ago not to be wasting the funding. Very little still avail of it we have asked to change suppliers as we have heard from other schools how good the food in there school is.
29. They are high in simple carbs, not enough protein and mostly is red meats. It's not providing variety and she's coming home hungry and yet putting on a lot of weight since she's started.
30. Not enough variety and very few healthy choices
31. My children eat about 20% of the food, too much ends up in the bin. They say the food is not nice and that's why they don't eat it. The quality is not good, and food taste is bland. I feel making a school lunch for them is a healthier option.
32. "I have written to the board of management in my child’s school in relation to the poor choice and quality of the food. "

33. Food was under cooked and not enough choices for bland eaters. Always came with sauces
34. The méat is sub-standard and the quality of the food is not good
35. Meals are too high in salt, no whole grain options, all pasta bread rice is white rather than whole grain, cheese is very processed, no index as to nutritional index values.
36. The food quality has gone down it is very poor I have voiced concerns to the school and company and it just continued to get worse not better
37. The food is awful and I know my daughter would not eat it. I think it would be much better if there was a sandwich option.
38. One child is to fussy the other just dosent like the meals I think rolls and sandwiches should be added back
39. The food is of such poor quality as a single parent I would rather pay for and make lunch for my child daily. It is extremely frustrating. Also there are additives like msg in this food - how can you call that 'fresh food'. We fed sone to our animals and they refused it. One has to wonder if this is planned obsolescence- it costs less if it's so bad that people dont use it?!
40. my son is autistic and has sensory issues around food and smells
41. My children enjoyed the hot lunches at first, but the second year of the scheme refused to eat them. I was disappointed by the providers and school response. Rather than looking at what changed with food quality and why whole classes were refusing the food, there was an air of oh well.... I felt teachers didn't understand why the scheme is important for kids and some parents financially. I felt there was a snobbery inherent in some of the responses.
42. She really doesn't like them.
43. "Fresh Today Wicklow
The food quality is bad, mouldy bread, old veg. Not alot of choice, no fruit or yogurts, sandwichs. "
44. Meals provided are very poor quality and taste. Menu not changed over 3 years. Not many options for vegetarians.
45. Does not want to eat the hot lunches
46. The portions are not appropriate for all ages
47. My child is autistic and has a very limited diet with specific brands being accepted.
48. He doesn’t like it.
49. Both children find dinners bland and my kids actually say they taste like the microwave, quality not the best, also the box’s leak and destroy their books and bags
50. The food has gone very bad this year. Last year there was always something in the menu for them. I would not give the sausages to the dog and the mashed potato is disgusting. The potato cubes are not cooked enough and even the chicken satay is not even chicken, Tesco’s own brand would even be better
51. Does not like food being offered

52. They tried many time but the quality of the food was very poor. Some stuff like chicken gougons was also coming soggy in plastic condensation covered containers.
53. Child is generally a bit fussy, but quality of the food is not very good
54. Too many Ultra processed food ingredients. Not meeting standards. Fried food available daily. Processed meats available daily. Red meat available daily. Chicken from Brazil in a supposably green school. No Irish chicken on menu. Chicken has salt and water added to it. Fish option (fish cakes) described by supplier (early day foods Dundalk) as less healthy option. Lack of Irish vegetables. Only Irish vegetable is a potato. All the rest is frozen from Europe according to their suppliers list. No fruit option. Portion sizes, giving a 4 year old girl and a 13yr old boy the same portion size? Children are receiving two portions if requested in the younger class rooms. The amount of waste generated and environmental costs. The impression a cardboard box lunch gives to young children. Meals are low in fibre.
55. While Harry was eating this food he had several adverse reactions. His teacher notified me that he was having issues in school feeling lethargic, tired, unable to play in the yard. It was strange as we did not see these symptoms at home. We took him for several tests (bloods and allergies) but nothing showed up. When I removed the school lunches from his diet he returned to normal. At home we eat freshly prepared food with minimal processing. I was unable to get engagement from the lunch providers around their ingredients or processing. For example do they prepare whole vegetables onsite or purchase in prepped veg preserved in something like citric acid.
56. She doesn't like it.
57. "When the hot food started in our school, my child liked most of the meals. But over time, the taste seemed to be a bit off for him. He also brought home some potato cubes that was on the menu, and they were not very nice at all, so I know he's not being overly fussy. Also, the school have brought in a policy whereby the children have to bring home the waste food and containers. And I just think that is ridiculous.
I also was in touch with the supplier to our school and asked about cold food options, i.e sandwiches, and I was told that schools have to choose all hot or all cold. I think this is also ridiculous. There'd be much less waste if they could choose a sandwich."
58. After a few weeks it was clear that the variety and quality of food offered was not to the standard that my children had been receiving from home lunches- therefore I reverted back to making the lunch for them.
59. "She does not like it, and inpromise you she is a really good eater. Like she does not like eggs and tomatoes but that is all. And tomatoes like ragu is grand"
60. Quality is poor. Favourites removed or certain items such as rolls swapped out for soft bread rolls. Very bland. No sauces such as ketchup or mayo.

61. He doesn’t eat a lot of different foods and is luck enough to be well fed. As a result he doesn’t get the meals. He has a sandwich.
62. Most dishes are pasta based and my child does not like pasta. Potato and veg meals are just not 'tasty' in her words. A lunch type option would be good, as in a Sandwich for children who get their dinner at home every day.
63. When I asked about the ingredients in the meals and were the food was sourced from, they refused to tell me.
64. Both of my children have stopped eating the hot lunch. They are healthy eaters but one of my boys does not like anything 'saucy' the options are limited when he doesn't like the 'wet dishes'. It would be great to be able to select sandwiches/wraps/rolls etc instead of it having to be a dinner option
65. Not enough choice for vegetarians and protein considerations for vegetarians
66. Would be much better if there was sandwiches for portions.
67. She does not like any of the food given
68. The quality of the food has gotten worse since implementing. Temperature, excess water etc not appealing
69. The inconsistency of the meals and the inability to assess whether my child was eating their lunch
70. Also not enough time to eat e.g the soup is ok but its too hot to drink and by the time its cooled break is over. Most of the food is very poor quality and just gets brought home and put in the bin.
71. My child has an eating disorder and it is not suitable to use the hot meals.
72. My daughter went from bringing in healthy lunch, fruit, cheese, crackers etc to only ordering a soup for the bread roll so we've returned to supplying her lunch from home.
73. Providers are not using Irsh products and not supporting our farmers.
74. No hot food options provided only cold. Sandwiches and wraps would nice but not plain enough for my kids eg no ham sandwiches. Quality of the food was poor to start which has lead to general dislike/distrust of the food from my kids who refuse to eat it
75. To much curry,and the rest of the meals,are not tasty at all.
76. Full ingredients list is not provided. Just basic ingredients. I would like to know exactly what my child is eating if they are to be getting it every day. My concern is that they are practically eating out everyday. Nothing is organic either which I prioritise when making lunches at home.
77. Quality of food isn’t very good. Was ok at first but deteriorated a lot
78. the food served up was terrible quality and the list of ingredients was full off crap that I wouldn't give my kids at home. The kids when we used it last yr both brought it home and we were putting it straight into the brown bin. Hot lunches is great if done nutritionally and not with over processed food. I don't understand why they couldn't do soups and sandwiches or brown bread and a piece of fruit. there is so many healthy options instead of the stuff that was served up

79. My daughter is autistic and does not eat any of the items on the menu. Additionally, she finds it difficult to be in the same room as other children eating hot school meals due to smells from other foods.
80. The reheated food is not very appetising. If there was an option for sandwich/soup etc we would take it.
81. "
1. too many additives in the food.
2. creates a tension Flashpoint between mum and kid if mum don't order pizza or sausages /chicken nugget style food, that he's other kids eating.
3. of the healthier options, they would often be having something similar for their dinner which means their daily meals someday would lack variety.
4. no healthy sandwiches/roll options, just buns with loads of melted cheese....whats wrong with 2 slices of wholemeal bread ham salad or chicken salad in it??!
5. as a teacher who works in various different schools I've noticed the enormous amount of hot food waste every lunch time."
82. We eat organic food and preferably local veg. This is not an option. We are vegan and the choice was perhaps 2 items only including white rice or white pasta. Zero whole meal options.
83. They got it for a while, but feedback was getting more negative every week until we had to start back to packed lunch. For example, no whole meal pasta option could be provided. Hair in food a number of times was the last straw for the kids. Was told sauces were watery and unpleasant. Portion size same for junior and senior makes no sense.
84. The food is absolutely salt-free and most of the dishes are not to the taste of the children. Last year there were 2 types of sandwiches that were very tasty and desired by the children
85. Prefer own lunch
86. Very poor choice - not appealing to my child. Not healthy enough
87. The company providing the service does not treat personal information with appropriate confidentiality login details are not safeguarded (e.g. user names and passwords are printed out and shared openly).
88. All food is processed hot meals left in polystyrene boxes sweating till lunch. Child does not like. There is no cold food option in our school which is silly . quality of food is extremely bad.
89. Children did not like them so cancelled it but after nearly a year still arrives to school. The scheme is a big waste of money
90. The quality of food has deteriorated greatly in the last year.
91. The scheme wasn’t available until part way through my son’s third year in school and he finds it a big change and doesn’t want to try the foods.
92. Our child doesn’t like the food. Reheated. Packaged. Imported from South America. Supplier had represented that food was all locally sourced. Subsequently evaded queries.
93. Food is reheated, dried up and bland.
94. Does not like the taste of the food & not hot enough where the complaints I got! Also no option to take certain veg off or sauce etc

95. No change of portion size for the different ages, ingredient quality very low, very carbohydrate based, poor quality food, menu only changing every 6 months, friends of my children reported finding hair and plastic in the food. The company is Carambola.
96. My boy is a little fussy when it comes to eating. He doesn't like the type of food that is provided so we have opted out of the is program as it was costing the state but the food was only going to waste.
97. The quality or ingredients and meals not healthy enough
98. Sensory processing
99. He doesn't like the quality of the food we availed of it for a term but finds the food unpleasant perhaps because they arrive in cardboard boxes
100. My children just got tired of the meals and choose only one option on the Friday.
101. She did use the service up to a few months ago, but she really disliked the food quality and we found there was far too much waste so I cancelled her hot meals.
102. Means we good in the beginning now they don’t taste as good
103. He only eats very plain food. The only school lunch he ever ate over all of the years was plain bread roll with butter. There is no option for simple food like this. There is however a good selection available for the kids who would eat varied lunches.
104. Doesnt like some of the flavours like the gravy, mash, likes pizza but only pepperoni.
105. Food quality is not good. We have given it a go since early last year & it’s just getting worse. I think it’s very hard to provide quality food cooked off the premises the night before then reheating it for kids. Then the food waste I was dumping all the food each day.
106. He didn't like any of the meals. Not a fussy eater. Eats a hot breakfast and own lunch
107. Child with ASD very selective with food taste/smells
108. Doesn’t like the food in the cardboard box, feels it sweats and goes soggy
109. Plenty of choices but not enough when you don’t eat bread or pasta etc
110. She does not like any of the options and food is heated up in batchs, its not freshly cooked on site.
111. "No enough time provided by teacher/school for my son to eat."
112. Child has ASD would like the foods but maybe changed ie no sauce or gravy etc
113. Unfortunately had to cancel the service. The amount of food coming home was way too much. He much preferred the rolls for lunch
114. when my child used the service she has repeatedly said the food is not nice at all and she has tried most dishes.
115. My daughter has some food intolerances and there is no choice fir her on the menu. I have spoken to the provider and they're unable and unwilling to provide alternatives. Food is shockingly poor quality.

116. My child has autism and only eats chicken nuggets and sausages or pizza sub and they are not an option would be nice if your meals could cater for children with special needs
117. They prefer sandwiches
118. The food is very cold. If the food can be served hot, our child will be more than happy to eat.
119. Prefer own lunch from home
120. My child does not want a hot meal/dinner at this time of the day and the food was going to waste.My child also noted he did not have enough time to eat it and he didn't like the food when it arrived.
121. We were delighted to have this first introduced but very quickly found the food standard poor, reheated food, a lot of poor quality food, reverted back to packed lunches. There also seemed to be a lot of waste. Applause the idea but practice was very poor.
122. Stopped taking it because quality and taste was poor.
123. Poor choices, and options aren't as pictured. Processed chicken used etc.
124. My child does not like the food.
125. Food is bland since 25/26 school year. Kids won't eat new menu
126. The quality of the food is absolute rubbish! Tastes disgusting and looks awful.
127. My child has said the chicken is soggy and the grilled chicken is like rubber.
128. Don't like the options provided and not enough time to eat
129. After being super excited about getting the meals, my son didn't really like them. I have to point out he is a great little eater and will try almost anything.
130. Nutritional value is to a low standard.
131. We cancelled the hot meals for our 2 primary school children. They both eat a varied diet at home, neither are fussy eaters and they have a good awareness of nutrional food in general. Despite the great choices on offer, they did not like the hot meals, they did not enjoy the taste and they found it to be quite processed and soggy. As a parent I was very disappointed to read the ingredients in the meals, they were certainly not nutritional meals to serve to children on a daily basis. One of my kids has irritable bowel syndrome, eating the hot meals definitely flared his symptoms.
132. Child is a fussy eater and only wanting plain rice or pasta so I stopped her receiving them. I think a option of a sandwich or wrap or salad/fruit bowl would be good
133. We eat real food organic
134. My son is 7 he is very fussy only eats very plain foods eg. Fish fingers nuggets chips plain rolls won't try new things at all
135. Food not made locally. Comes from outside the country , Quality not good
136. I have very fussy eaters in my house. Also, they don't want a dinner in the middle ofnthe day. Sandwiches etc are what they want for lunch.

137. The quality of the food is extremely poor and my children do not enjoy it at all.
138. Picky eater
139. Very picky eaters
140. L
141. Since the it's introduction in the school, the children say that there are fewer choices and smaller portions as time went on. They have opted out and prefer lunches from home instead
142. Nutrition and Health: overburdened with starches, sugars; not nearly enough protein, complex carbohydrates, micro and phytonutrients, vitamins, minerals.
143. It is not flexible enough for children with additional needs - sauce / gravy over food / soggy food / food mixed in together - this unfortunately doesn't work with Autism. There are no options to order chicken alone - it's all or nothing so we had to cancel.
144. Recipes keep changing and children do not like the meals provided
145. Extremely picky eater
146. She likes some of the snacks
147. I am all for promoting healthy choices but it would be better to put the veg separately on the plate so there is a chance the kids might eat the potatoes and meat
148. He has allergies to legumes and the majority of the meals have peas.
149. Company claim that they are working with the Department guidelines. I would argue that they. It is about mass producing poor quality food for children.
150. Everything soggy and condensation all over it, just not appealing- my kid hates it so I just pack a lunch
151. The food is awful, non compliant with standards set, presentation is awful, was having a negative effort on my child's overall diet as he was developing a preference for unhealthy processed foods, and his behaviour deteriorated in the afternoons when on the school lunches - think he was still hungry as there was no fruit or veg or balance of foods
152. My children had been availing of the service but the amount of waste that was coming home I cancelled it and send in a homemade lunch which is eaten everyday.
153. My son has additional needs and can be fussy with food. There was water in the containers from the hot food producing steam and my son wouldn't eat the food when he saw the liquid, and he said the food was wet and mushy
154. The variety is poor. No fresh options i.e. fruit slices nor sandwich options for the fuzzy eaters.
155. No option to amend as in having sauces seperate or removing certain components. Food is cold, dry and tasteless
156. The food is not good quality, most of the meat is not Irish. My child gets a hot dinner in the evening at home & prefers to have sandwiches/yogurt/fruit for lunch in school

157. My daughter doesn't get long enough breaks to relax into eating a full meal, she only grazes at the school hot meals and we thought it wasteful to be throwing away food every day.
158. We did use the service for 1 year but I found that one child was putting on weight and yet was an active child involved in sport. The food provided is basically carbohydrates (rice/pasta) with a few flecks of protein (chicken). It is not balanced. I believe this system will lead to some levels of childhood obesity. It is also very dinner based, not lunch, which in turn limited the options at home for actual dinner. The quality is terrible. Mashed potatoes as an example didn't even taste right. The second child brought it home mostly as it just did not taste right, and therefore ended up hungry. That child only used the service for half a year. Neither child is fussy and very much enjoy the variety of food that we provide at home and indeed love tasting new dinners.
159. Chicken is generally very tough and hard to eat. Food arrives slimy at times and not appealing to eat
160. The way the food is reheated leaves it very dry and at times burnt so my son will not eat it. The options are very limited and not food my son will eat. If the chicken was not dry and tough/burnt he would eat that. Some other options he would eat only come with gravy. Lots of children would prefer plainer options. The meat is poor quality. The veg is also poor quality and dry or overcooked. I turned off the meals as they are so poor.
161. My child says the food tasts disgusting.
162. Food is not always fresh, sometimes spicy especially for vegetarian options and also for vegetarian options variety is very limited, and my child was complaining about the food so we won't use the service anymore
163. My child is autistic and he doesn't like his food touching
164. The additives and preservatives added to the meals together with the plastic covering is concerning
165. "Options are not appealing to majority of kids and if parents don't opt out this equals huge waste.
The two most popular options on the menu were taken off last year = two roll options???"
166. My child is Autistic and doesn't get choices to have things.without sauces ect
167. No Fish Fingers on offer and other schools get them. No Irish stew on it it is all foods whith (small) spices that some children don't like and the pasta is always so hard. Our children are asked to bring the lunches home if not eating them and I'm quite shocked at some of them. I would'nt serve it to children.
168. Very bland tasting and my children got tired of them after a few months.
169. "The lunch menu is not changed very often and some foods Just aren’t child friendly.
Something simple like soup and rolls would be ideal or hot chicken rolls. "

170. "Only one choice in the menu does not contain sugars or Es (the plain pasta)
Food is delivered in single-use containers "
171. He can be a picky eater sometimes
172. My child has Arfid and cannot avail of the offered foods
173. She did at the start, but got bored of them after a while. They were coming home uneaten, so I cancelled the order
174. We are not using the service because the food quality is poor, and there’s no variety in the recipes. Ordering for the whole week doesn’t work for children, as they might not want the food when it arrives. A canteen-style system, where children can see and choose their meals, would make more sense.
175. Appalling quality food, my sons are used to good quality food so won't eat the food. They say it looks and smells awful.and is damp , soggy and half cold. Most of there friends are apparently made get the meals but they dont eat it.
176. I stopped availing of the food scheme as I find the meals are more like dinners rather than lunches, I would avail of if there were lunches provided instead such as wraps,sandwiches, more cold pasta options. I opted out as I found my children weren't liking the fact that they had to choose a dinner in school as they get a dinner at home,maybe some lighter option with the food.
177. They used it initially but found that it wasnt as nice as fresh homemade dinners and preferred a packed lunch instead.
178. Fussy eater
179. "Food quality has declined and regularly things likw potato cubes etc v soggy. So v off putting. Main reason we opted out. My child had been enjoying the food until the end of the previous school year."
180. "My son loved the hot meals when they started, in fact he used to be 1st in line when another pupil was absent to get their food, but in the last few months the quality has gone downhill.
He won't eat any of the meals now and has tried nearly all the options. I'm very disappointed as I now have to send a full lunch with him again. I think very few of the kids in his class are eating the meals now because of the same reason."
181. Although not usually a fussy eater, my 6 year old said she didn’t like the dishes. She often came home with a large amount of food leftover, which sometimes spilled/leaked into her lunch bag ad her school bag. I felt there were not enough options that were healthy and appealing to her, and some options I had to immediately disregard (anything very saucy such as curry) because of the mess it would make. I would have liked to see more healthy options, sandwiches also and ideally this would be prepared on school property and rubbish managed by school.

Q8. If other, please give us more details:

1. gjk
2. Na
3. .
4. n/a
5. Cost
6. M
7. Teachers telling kids they can’t take food home. Portion sizes are small. If we can’t see what the child is eating then how do we control what we send as snacks. Cutlery even though provided, teachers telling children to bring their own
8. N/A
9. "There should also be a choice of sandwiches even just cheese and ham.
Could cut down on waste"
10. It would be great if kids had more time to eat at break and wasn’t so rushed. A few microwaves in classes etc for soup or toaster or self service cottage pie
11. Na
12. n/a
13. My children do not really like the meals. They are often served with watery sauce covering every inch, or with gravy over everything - I cannot understand why those can't be at least to the side rather than all over everything.
14. N/A
15. N/a
16. N/a
17. Alot of kids take the spare meals so hard to know how much they are eating
18. Nothing
19. N/a
20. No
21. Waste is a huge issue
22. The food quality is poor accorading to my child who is a good eater.
23. None
24. N/A
25. The children do not like a lot of the meal options. As they are prepared offsite and then reheated at the school they are overcooked and generally un-appealing to eat.
26. N/A
27. Healthier
28. N/a
29. The quality is terrible
30. Variety, time constraints

31. "Same portions sizes given to junior infants and 6th.
Not enough choice with what's being offered from the big companies offering it. It seems to be running much better in small Schools.
My kids have brought home food that is moldy. "
32. Extremely limited offerings for plain eaters
33. NA
34. None
35. N
36. "Also no ability to bring food home
Ultra processing"
37. NA
38. Budget to source better quality food
39. Complete waste of money.
40. Not aware
41. I think the smell of the meals.can be very off putting for some children
42. children receiving food that wasn't heated on premises meaning it's then soggy/ less appetising by the time they're eating.
43. N/A
44. Na
45. Na
46. NA
47. We live in a very well off area. It is not needed. These kids are not hungry to eat any old food so there is huge waste.
48. na
49. NA
50. Alot of waste , we meet with providers but they don't count partial tastes meals as waste , only a full meal. We feel for the funding for this service , the school and children aren't getting value for money. They also stated they couldn't provided plain or separated food options for kids with sensory issues as the Dept didn't approve. We felt in our school a child eating anything in a communal setting was a good stepping stone for kids with food issues. We haven't received response to our meeting 3 months ago.
51. I am not aware of any challenges
52. N/A
53. At the end of term, because there was a shorter school day, no hot meals were available, but the choice offered was all sweets, popcorn and UPFs. Not healthy choices.
54. No
55. Portion sizes are tiny and it’s believed by parents that it’s a money saving issue. A junior infant child is getting the same portion as a 6th class child.
56. Saves me time and money but meals provided are not healthy and menu is not great. Children only eat 1 or 2 of meals out of 12-15
57. Not enough time. No canteen. Food travelling badly

58. There is not sufficient time in the day for children to eat and have breaks. If a child is slow to eat or easily distracted they tend not to eat much. Also, the time to eat v time to go to the yard means that food cannot be brought out and many children do not get time to finish eating or digest food. This was an issue even before free school lunches came into existence.
59. Na
60. Quality of the food (Glanmore foods) is abysmal. Lack of variety for vegetarian children. The way that the food is heated up makes it either soggy or leaves parts of pasta hard.
61. "My kids dont want a hot meal. It would be better to have the option of a cold lunch.
It's more work on teachers.
The quality isn't great.
Huge packaging waste/recycling"
62. Some teachers used to put pressie on kids to eat the food and not waste it so the children refuse to accept ANY food due to pressure and stress.
63. "The service is provided by Gourmet Kids, their booking system is quite convoluted and not user friendly particularly where meals can only be chosen on certain days
Also v limited flexibility with cancelling meals in advance if a child is going to be absent "
64. Poor selection of foods, each day does not have an option that is friendly for a picky eater. Food has to be sent from home as well as hot food option. There is also a very poor selection of gluten free options
65. N/a
66. Many children have opted out of the scheme due to the quality of the food. It is not healthy food being served.
67. Reheating of food in boxes or bags that could be leeching certain plastics on to the food.
68. NA
69. "There are a number of vegetarian children and they find that there are not enough yummy choices.
Vegetarians don’t normally eat a dish that has meat in it, without the meat. I E, once the meat has touched the food, they won’t eat it.
Would love pasta pesto without chicken. "
70. The variety of different options is large and caters for fussy eaters. I would just like that the nutritional composition of the meal to be a bit more balanced with plenty of vegetables (and varying the vegetables - not only carrots) as advised for their age. We want the kids not to waste food but at the same time to slowly change to a balanced diet. Furthermore kids should have enough time to eat their meals. 10 minutes is very short. All international guidelines recomend af least 20min.
71. Same portion size for junior infants and 6th class. No fish option
72. There are queries about portion sizes being large enough for older children

73. Too much money from the dept has been allocated to this scheme. Too much food waste is happening as the food is not good. Our local school has issues now paying for other equipment including IT items that has suffered because of funding of the schools. I completely agree with food for children and it should be great to have this for families but I feel it was rushed with little research and no communication to the schools on how it was going to operate.
74. N/A
75. I would like the option of cold lunches ie sandwiches
76. I have heard that some children do not like the food but luckily mine eats it without complaint 4 days a week. I allow him uptown on Fridays to get lunch uptown.
77. Other - too many involved in oversight - I personally wanted to query something was sent from 2 department Ed & SW to food safety authority to HSE each saying others responsibility
78. Can you please allow kids to bring home the food from hot meal which they haven't eaten. Because some kids eat slow and its very painful to throw the food in the bin.
79. The variety is very poor. Also for children who don’t eat much meat options are very limited leading to repetition in choices. This isn’t offering a varied diet. Food waste is massive- the food looks unappetising so kids don’t eat it. It often doesn’t taste good either.
80. .
81. "no financial assistance with procuring equipment i.e. oven and resources to heat up and deliver.
This is what your school tells us is the reason why they can't operate the hot food programme."
82. Na
83. Bad quality food
84. Hard to make healthy food that children will eat.
85. The tender is focused on providing the cheapest option and not on the quality of food and ingredients.
86. Hot Meal programme does not adequately provide balanced and nutritional meals to the children. One pot of chicken curry as an example (no fruit, dairy or fibre) is insufficient for primary school children. Same portion size for an infant child or 6th class pupil. All parents I know are still sending in a full lunch. I whole heartedly feel these programmes need to be allocated to disadvantaged schools and provide balanced meals where children are not able to get them
87. I have far less control over what ingredients my child is eating and the waste, both food and packaging, is really sad and shameful
88. Meals too elaborate, fussy kids won't eat a lot of options and then are left with unhealthy choices like chicken tenders etc.
89. Some of the meals offered don't appear to be very healthy

90. There isn’t enough choice so my child only has the pizza and chicken tenders. There’s never enough time to eat the meal. Some of the quality isn’t great, my child loves macaroni and cheese normally but doesn’t like the school meal version, it seems to be made with cheese powder rather than real cheese. The ciabatta options are soggy. The veg is often limp and overcooked.
91. One of my children is autistic and does not want a hot meal every day but no option to select no meal on a certain day
92. "I like the flexibility that allows my child to
Choose no meal days so she gets some days where she can bring a lunch from home. It’s a great scheme working parents get v little for free so I appreciate this scheme v much thank you "
93. -
94. -
95. It can't be easy to provide healthy hot meals for large numbers in schools where there are no kitchen facilities, but this should be looked at for the future, with all new builds for primary and secondary. It is done in other countries eg France, so Ireland should look at this as a model.
96. Very low amounts of vegetables. A few strips of carrots but not much else. Very carb heavy meals.
97. "Taste:my daughter really dislikes any of the potato based dishes even though she loves potatoes. She and friends report that the potatoes are ‘awful’.
Provenance of the food; I don’t like the fact Irish products aren’t being used where possible. I no longer order chicken dishes as the chicken is imported and the provider wasn’t able to tell me where it was coming from.
Menu fatigue.
Nutritional value of the meals & the implementation of the guidelines. I don’t believe the schools should be responsible for this "
98. Same portion size for my 6 foot tall 12 year of as for a junior infant
99. As previously mentioned, the food offerings may need to have more variety or even a small selection of good food, like carrot sticks, hummous, cucumber, cheese strings, fresh berries (not saggy chemically treated apples in bags!), chorizo or salami, bananas for potassium, and introduce new food choices. So a mostly snack like selection (mini buffet!). Even cream crackers work well, as does tuna, eggs, chicken, salmon.
100. "Concerns regarding nutritional, salt and fat content
Also providing meals to a demographic where not needed. "
101. Many children just pick plain pasta. It is not giving good food education. The Japanese and French models would be much better.
102. Lack of information on the ingredients and how healthy the food content is. Lack of information about how much our child actually eats of the chosen meal
103. For me it should more variety of The Hot School Meals and sometimes no more choice.

104. "My child is overall very happy with the food provided by the provider. The only complaint she has is the quantity- she is in 6th class and feels portion could be bigger. She doesnt understand how a junior infant get the same portion as a 6th classer.
From a parent point of view i feel she would like a bit more variaety in the sense that she has tasted all meals available and would lile new options. When september menu came out, she was excited to try the new options. No new options are available since september."
105. More variety needed and healthier options
106. I believe that having a whole generation of children growing up thinking that food that arrives in a box is a good thing will have long term implications. This was a genuine opportunity to properly educate our children about food and nutrition the way it is done in Japan but it seems once again to be about convenience and profit instead of education and nutrition.
107. Waste produced through packaging, I’m not convinced about the nutritional quality of ingredients
108. Food quality i feel if a school cannot cook and serve onsite then a cold lunch should be offered from an outsourced facility but transportation of hot food is one of the main issues and control over what's being used
109. Given schools have no cooking facilities, the meals are very similar to on flight meals. I think it would be better to offer healthier sandwiches as the cooked meals are very processed and there are only a few popular options which mean the children are constantly eating the same thing. Some of the options appear to be trying to do too much.
110. Some of our favourite items were removed as they were deemed to not meet standards. This was disappointing as they were absolutely fine as part of a balanced diet consumed once a week (sausage in a roll).
111. The packaging goes in the bin along with any food not eaten.
112. Gluten and dairy free options are poor. There could be more variety in meal choices. The menu can be quite monotonous for the children. Sometimes, the meals are not hot enough.
113. Mandated yard time means even if it was delicious, the younger kids, eg Junior Infants will always choose yard time over food time. How about protected lunch (EATING) time.
114. The food provided needs to be not processed
115. Not enough options for coeliac
116. Standard and quality of food is poor.
117. "Other, food eg chicken sourced from Thailand, processed in EU, labelled as EU chicken
Not supporting local organic food growers
Waste of state funding"
118. The wrapping in not recycleable so a lot of packaging and adding to landfill. If take away companies can make there packaging recyclable would be great to see this.

119. We aren't a deis school, and free food is zero incentive to go to school for 99% of our students. It's a huge cost for very little benefit
120. Food has changed eg sausages are like rubber hot dogs now. Both my kids used to love them. A Few of the dishes have changed and they won't eat them now when they used to.
121. There were issues with rodents in the school kitchen which meant meals were suspended for 3 months. The system has changed and it is now a hot drop system.
122. I believe the concept of the hot meals scheme is excellent and should be retained. I support it wholeheartedly. However, the quality of some of the food is very poor and needs to be improved. This leads to half eaten or abandoned meals on a regular basis. It needs more government investment so the suppliers can work to improve their offering.
123. First time I saw the cook wear a hair net was on the day the health inspectors called. Im haccp trained. No way the cook is following protocol
124. The nutritional value is terrible. Providing ready meals is not a good example to set children on how to eat for life. Cold sandwiches would be better. It doesn't save time as we still have to make snacks to keep them going through the day.
125. The quality of the food is not good. The environmental impact is worse. Not prioritising Irish produced/grown food is just wrong. Having carrots come from Poland and chicken from south America is just insane for food miles.
126. In our school today food is cooked 2 hours away and driven here. I would rather less choice and actual edible food.
127. Menu never really changes. A lot of pasta based options. Introducing more variety and change up the menu would be fantastic
128. Hard to get sight of what my kid is and isn't eating. Particularly difficult for young kids i.e. junior infants who aren't as capable of communicating.
129. I think if the government could be proactive and look at building school canteen, rather than outsourcing. There would be a wealth of educational advantage for kids growing up in Ireland.
130. Keeping the food warm is a challange
131. My kids are delighted with all meals. They always come back from school talking about the mealsnthey received.
132. Poor nutritional value of a lot of the meals available, and options that favour low cost and highly processed ingredients over fresh and wholemeal ones. Vegan and vegetarian options are available, but these are much higher in sugar and 'empty' calories content than most other options, which means my child doesn't eat them although I'm vegetarian myself.
133. Portion sizes are reduced from when it first started. Still have to send in full lunch for my child. Same portions for junior infants and 6th class.
134. My child doesn't like most of the options. So there is admittedly a lot of options, but they would say that they're not great.
135. Massive waste. Cols lunches would be far more beneficial and children could safely bring leftovers home for a snack later

136. The service was suspended at our school for more than 3 months because rodents were spotted in the grounds.
137. I think there's a lot of packaging waste. Children should at least bring their own cutlery in.
138. Timing of delivery sometimes doesn’t allow for consumption of “extras” at little break.
139. Not enough variety for plain eaters - cold lunch option would be great.
140. Our children are vegetarian and there are very limited options for them. As a result we only use the scheme 2-3 days a week. Eating a hot meal with others is a great social bonding exercise and we would like to use it every day. There is also not enough time allocated to eating in the class schedule.
141. Food is often soggy and off putting for the children. Sandwich options were added then removed again.
142. The quality and delivery of the food means that my two children reject 90% of the choices.
143. Need to be more choices over time , kids will get fed up eating same thing every week
144. Challenges in providing nutritious meals for children
145. Waste - everyday children come home with tinfoil containers for the bin
146. The organisation which is part of the issue imo
147. The food provided the majority of times is soggy, and my children don't like to eat it when it is like that
148. I am concerned about encouraging the practice of eating out of takeaway boxes and the use of disposable cutlery. I think children accessing food and eating food in this way on a daily basis normalises the concept of eating takeaway food and disposable food as opposed to ingredient lead, nutritious, home-made food.
149. We were never given the option not to take part.
150. Nutritional information, any additives
151. "Before, with cold meals, it was possible to find something they would like to eat.
Currently, with hot food, despite encouraging kids to try them and changing the menus, they refuse to eat the hot meals.
They used to but over time the choices changed and quality changed so that they don't even bother to open the boxes, they just bring it to home and toss it to compost bin.
I tired the food myself, and it was not great. I think the ship has sail, and the hot meals got so bad reputation for the kids, they would not even bother trying the food if it was amazing."
152. I think the level of variety really depends on the provider our school uses rafters and offer a range of sensory friendly and plain options as well as a range of other meals. This has not been the case for my brothers child who has limited options and sometimes no sensory friendly options. Examining provider options is worth considering.

153. I feel it’s added time and pressure on the teachers and staff as they need to sort out which child for each item of food and it eats into a lot of the day
154. So much paperwork beside the scenes for schools to apply for the schemes.
155. Portion size is far too big for junior Infants.
156. The food options lack explanation of what is in the meal for example the chicken curry has peas which isn't stated on the option forms. My child has sensory issues when it comes to food and it is very hard to know if they will like a meal that doesn't tell you what other ingredients are in it.
157. Overall organisation
158. Option for sauce separate etc for autistic children with restricted eating
159. Although it has improved, there are not many gluten free options for coeliac children.
160. The overall food waste was terrible plus never in compostable containers.
161. Food quality is poor
162. Not every child, nor every parent, want their child to eat the hot meals during school and would prefer the option to have cold meals lile sandwiches for their childs lunch.
163. Our school is waiting 3yrs on planning for a classroom extension. Parents asked last year about a kitchen. Told it wasn't an option. Procurement seems to be a problem, school said only one provider was willing to deliver. Concerns above were all brought to school yet school says they are happy with food and supplier.
164. Food quality is reasonably good, however due to sensory issues my daughter frequently does not eat it. It is brought home and sometimes gets eaten by someone else. Plastic waste is also an issue - meals are supplied in plastic containers with lids.
165. Not a lot of options for children with additional needs/food specific difficulties. (I.e food isn’t separated which can cause major issues around around eating)
166. I am sure all of the challenges apply somewhere but I have disengaged with the scheme. I feel there is little governance and worry about the long term health impacts of introducing so much processed foods into children's diets so frequently.
167. Allergies, preferences, logistics around serving
168. Food waste is a huge problem. My child should be enjoying a hot meal in the cold winter months but because he has been eating them all year round he is now completely sick of them. Variety is not there. Options rarely change. The option to opt out for the day or week is not on the app. I dont want to opt out entirely in case he wants to try the food again after a break from it. Would love if i could order a sandwich, or roll some days.
169. Certain meals are repeatedly selected, standards could be improved for certain meals

170. The food choices are very repetitive. My child does not like some of the food which means there are days during the week where she chooses not to participate in it.
171. It is great especially for kids who need a hot meal. But as my son said, it is a bit like eating airplane food each day.
172. Children reported not getting enough food some days
173. Regarding lack of variety: Our 11-year-old was complaining that that the provider for his school pulled out pizza roll from the menu because it was deemed unhealthy. It was meant to be a Friday treat. This is better than "plain pasta" with no sauce, no vegetable, no meat, that they actually provide on the menu (our 5-year-old opts for this and we agreed, so long as she eats). Regarding food waste: This is not an issue for our 11-year-old as he is older and can eat more and faster than our 5-year-old. She seems to have a hard time finishing her completely but I'm not sure whether she's small and the portion is too big for her or she doesn't have enough time to finish it. Otherwise, they both seem to enjoy the meal moderately.
174. "My child does not want the school meals but she has curry 2 days weekly at the request of her parents. She is rare among her class to be still using meal system.
Their complaints range from poor taste, items provided not being what was requested - chicken curry having BBq chicken, hot rolls all have cheese no option without cheese, lasagna being pasta twirls with mince and cheese strewn accros top, all treat items being removed - Friday choice of potato cubes where other suppliers give chips, fish finger etc. Children are more aware of food today and know when it tasty and appetizing, their needs to be a balance between healthy food choices and children actually eating the food and not just the supplier being paid for food without the need to supply good quality and choices. "
175. I don't like the fact our school asked our children to bring home the food they didn't eat and containers
176. I think there is a huge issue with food waste. Also, at our school there is no canteen so the children eat at their school desks, usually making a mess and eating hurriedly so that they go and play. They leave a LOT of food uneaten.
177. Mix up in orders- some children weren't receiving the food they ordered
178. My eldest eats everything but there is not enough variety. My youngest doesnt like the choices and when he does he decide to eat, he doesn’t have enough time
179. Portions might be just very slightly too big for the time allowed for eating
180. Lack of good vegetarian options - any vegetarian offerings are bland and poorly thought through.
181. Children could bring in their own cutlery and save on waste, could suppliers use containers that can be cleaned and reused so much waste being produced, we need to be more sustainable.
182. There seems to be a lot of ultraprocessed ingredients in a lot of the options

183. Portion size is same irrespective of age
184. I feel that there is definitely a need for this service as there are children who may not get another meal. There are also a number of families living in hotels.
185. While I am happy hot lunches are being provided, I do think that it could be simpler e.g. soup and a roll every day would suffice. Also the meals are cooked the day before and reheated so not sure how safe this is. Also how natural and organic are the ingredients?
186. I feel the supplier needs to add more food optiona or cold food options. Soup variations salads. Or change supplier.
187. food is provided, yet there is no canteen in the school where kids can sit and eat. They eat at there desk. The food isnt served on plate and is not a full meal.
188. Quality of the food. Availability of child friendly, palatable foods.
189. "Waste generated from disposable cutlery and packaging. While this is biodegradable, it is a lot of single-use packaging that did not exist before hot school meals was introduced.
Our child's meal comes in cardboard boxes each day that are then put inside a lunchbox and disposable wooden spoons/forks also provided. "
190. No option to have items removed e.g. onions. Selection of food is good so there are other options
191. I beleive there are many children who do not eat any of the hot lunch, but a lunch is still provided for them - many parents seem to be unaware that they can cancel the hot lunch for their child - this seems not to be well-advertised. So waste seems to be a huge issue.
192. My child often mentions that he did not have time to finish his meal.
193. More vegetarian options would be great as often there is just one and if the child doesn't like that option, theres nothing else.
194. Prob takes times to hand out all the food.
195. Quality of food has decreased massively since the new school year has started.
196. It would be great to get a notification or email reminder when to resubmit the menu weekly.
197. Packaging and waste has to have huge cost
198. All kids getting the same size regardless of age.
199. Not enough options an example is the hot rolls available come in two options (chicken and cheese and ham and cheese) one of my children does not like cheese but likes ham, there is not option for just ham. She cannot remove the cheese as it's melted all over the roll. I think it would be a great option for some fresh fruit to be introduced also.
200. The menu stays the same every week. I believe at least in meal should change in the menu from week to week.
201. I would like to be told where the chicken is sourced from as this is unclear. I would like to be assured that we will not be getting beef from outside Ireland that is not bord bia approved.

202. The lack of time to finish the meals is an issue. The portions are big, and 10-15 minutes for lunch is not enough time to be able to eat and digest properly, even for an adult. I am aware this is an issue with the general schools schedules and the time given by the Department of Education for breaks, which has to be split between lunchtime and yard time but just to say that because of this, children frequently do not have time to finish their meals leading to increased food waste.
203. Not all children are ABLE to take part.
204. Quality - inconsistency
205. Food quality can be poor
206. Most days the potatoes are undercooked, this is in all form (potato cubes an boiled potatoes)
207. Vendor can only supply hot food. Even if sensory needs a roll isn't allowed.
208. There are other healthy affordable meals that could be included.
209. My child likes chicken but she doesn't eat anything spicy or sour. And all the chicken meals on the hot lunch menu are either spicy or sour.
210. Issues with quality at times
211. There was nothing wrong with the way it was, nobody ever asked for this.
212. The same size portion is served to junior infants as to 6th class.
213. I believe a brainstorm could be done with the children to get ideas to improve the menu, making them part of it can be beneficial. Little hints like having the gravy in a separate container can make a huge difference in the texture of food when served, specially if the food had traveled in a take away box prior to been given to the kids
214. Prefer funding for teaching assistants !
215. "The ideal scheme should include a canteen at the school where food would be cooked fresh and healthy recipes.
The catering containers are currently plastic and that has unknown health effects in our children. "
216. The quality of the food is now terrible, chicken from Brazil, lack of vegetables, fried unhealthy foods. Terrible to be pushing this out to people with little or no choice
217. Some parents not happy with source and quality
218. Provide kids with a sandwich option also.
219. Fruit wasn't given to all the children in my school for long time when I contacted the provider about the issue the argument was that they didn't have boxes to transport the fruit.
220. To much of the budget spent on admin and supply, not enough on food.
221. We don’t see what gets left behind, if our children are getting enough. Some of the food choices are inedible, and that’s coming from a non-picky eater (mushy pasta, bland flavours, in appetising menu). While available 5 days week, we do not use the service multiple days of the week due to these issues. I think it’s a great idea, especially for working families pressed for time, but it has been disappointing in implementation

222. Single use packaging is wasteful. It is showing children that it is acceptable to eat out of single use containers.
223. the principal signed a 5yr contract and unfortunately we are unable to look elsewhere
224. Food more often than not looks very unappetising and my son won't eat it. Options aren't always balanced and healthy.
225. Although the menu has variety and is attractive to my children, the food doesn’t good or look appetizing. When the kids bring leftovers home the food appears low quality with very little meat included, and quite a large layer of fat. The mash is green in colour and I would not wish to eat it myself. Some of the sauces have too much onion and not enough vegetables. Overall the quality of the food has decreased over time and is poor in general, despite sounding good on the menu.
226. The food is not as healthy or nutritious as companies claim them to be.
227. Food quality is very poor in my daughters' school. Most kids don't like the hot meals
228. Nearly impassible to have thr food served fresh and not soggy . Rally not appealing to eat
229. Not enough time to eat their food regardless of it being a hot meal or not. This means children are trying to eat too fast and developing poor eating habits and poor digestion
230. The quality of the food is very poor
231. Really concerned on the environmental impact- the kids all receive pots that they dump at the end of each day
232. Food quality and ingredients are appauling
233. Quality awful, made my child sick.
234. It should be simple local produced food. A healthy bowl of soup made daily with fresh ingredients a sandwich would be preferable to microwaved dinner which has been transported for miles
235. As I'm not involved I'm not aware of any challenges however due to the poor choice and quality there is alot of waste
236. I just want to emphasise that my child never has enough time to eat her lunch
237. Some meals can be quite high in grams of fat.
238. Over first 2 weeks, my child's order was incorrect twice
239. The app is very poor, so if the child is between 2 homes only 1 parent can order meals, so if they forget a child is left without a meal. Also, every so often (too often for my child's liking) there is a confusion with the distribution of the meals and he doesn't get what he pre-ordered.
240. No option to say ' no gravy' or sub the potatoes for sweetcorn etc.
241. There are not enough vegetarian options
242. Scheme best suited for schools with strong need vs. all schools.
243. Some of food I've seen brought home is uncooked. Raw pasta in middle of a container,very disappointed to see. My child says they have to rush to eat as teacher wants to go on their break.
244. Meals can just be warm rather than hot

245. Although, the menu is very varied, my child has decided to opt out going forward
246. Lots of meals gone uneaten and left in school. They cannot be sent home for health and safety reasons as they cannot be reheated.
247. Food providers started limiting unhealthy options like chicken goujons to only Friday, then after some time passed they extended the availability of these options to five days a week. It’s rubbish quality. I find it unacceptable that the ingredient lists are not provided. We are in an obesity crisis so it is crazy to have started a scheme for independent for profit companies provide our kids with ultra processed lunches. I have opted out of the scheme for both my kids in school.
248. Poor quality
249. The quality of food being offered varies greatly from company to company. It has become more processed over the years.
250. It would be nice to have a soup and sandwich option. More variety in fruit/veggie choices.
251. Excess Packaging. Excess waste. Carbon footprint etc.
252. Quality and nutritional value of food is not consistent and not generally great
253. My child complains she doesn’t have enough time to finish her meal.
254. "For families who sit together in the evening and have dinner it can be challenging to decide what to cook. Also it’s instilling a concept of two dinners a day as opposed to having lunch at school and dinner at home-family time!
Works well for those families that don’t make dinner at home.
Will it encourage overeating as they approach adulthood.
The portion size needs to be addressed. Juniors getting the same as seniors. No doubt causes food wastage! Older children still hungry."
255. There seems to be very little time for the children to eat, sometimes the teacher turns on a program on the white board while the children are eating and this can distract them from eating. Lunches are for food but also social interaction and chat amongst friends. More time needs to be allocated to this in the school day and not a tight 5 mins before yard time
256. I’m sure there is lots of food waste. Everything come in plastic containers, where is the thought for the environment? Even if they are reusable they are plastic and that is not good
257. "I’m a teacher in primary, I have seen so much waste
Young Children need supervision at meal time which is not always the case when teacher is on a break "
258. Everything has pasta, huge lack of variation and fresh food. All cheap ingredients, kids don’t even like the goujons and pizza options
259. There are not many options to choose from and the food quality is not quite good compared to what we had in previous school. Child only gets hot meal in current school but in previous school he used to get a snack as well in short break

260. I think the school food scheme could've been an opportunity to support local fruit and vegetable growers and farmers. I think it's a real shame that cheap imported meat is used in these meals. In order to make a profit which all businesses need to do, I think the quality has been squashed. If there was some way to incentivise companies to cook good food from scratch with local ingredients it could be hugely successful.
261. Same menu for the entire year
262. There is a lot of waste in relation to packaging
263. My youngest child in 1st class finds she doesn't have enough time to eat and would have more food waste that my older children.
264. Food Quality is an issue. Meat not tasting like meat. Kids not enjoying it
265. Some meals are frozen in the middle
266. My daughter is vegetarian, and there is not much choice for non meet eaters
267. A lot of the meals they don't like this year as much as last year
268. Parents not changing order for weeks on end and child not eating food ever. It is an unnecessary scheme in most instances. Money should go direct to schools who are struggling with basic costs.
269. Quality of food, multiple ingredients
270. The vegetarian options are not suited to young children, most include sweet chilli sauce or Chinese spice, also there is no option even for basic pasta with sauce, yet for the meat eaters they get 3 options of sauce for their pasta, my child has just plain pasta and I have to make sauce at home and send that in with grated cheese.
271. The food choices are good but the quality of food is not really good
272. "An awful Lot of highly processed foods. Very little.vegetable content and limited quality/range "
273. I thought this scheme would mean I don't have to worry about my child eating a nutritious mea during the day however day after day she comes home starving as there are no extra snacks or spare meals she can eat. I am encouraging her to try all meals , some days are good but to be honest the quality and overall taste can be improved or I will resort back to making sandwiches as I know my child will eat these.
274. I am also a Principal of a boys school and what I find here is that the children are getting fed up of the hot meals everyday and would prefer if they had them less frequently during the week. Also the smell throughout the school is very strong. I also find that teaching and learning time has been cut short due to the necessity to allow time to eat the lunches. There is a big increase in the amount of wasted food which is very upsetting given that there is so much money wasted which could be spent on more beneficial things.
275. Difficult for small local businesses to get approved meaning more food miles with bigger companies delivering in
276. Sandwiches or wraps with fruits and vegetables seems more better
277. The children girl bored of the menu
278. Are they really healthy!

279. I think the breaks are too short in school for eating time, my daughter complains about this
280. Low quality (tasteless and not appealing, sometimes burnt) and small portions.
281. Removal of option of prepackaged meals such as sandwiches and removal of option to select break time snack which they previously could do in a scheme prior to the hot meal scheme. This had a lot less waste and I can’t see why basic sandwiches (cold) can not be offered as an alternative to a hot meal on a daily basis.
282. As mentioned above the scheme is starting next week. This survey is taking place too early for us :-)
283. I have two children receiving the hot school meals. Overall their experience is positive. They do eat the meals and I vary them as they could easily eat the same thing daily given the choice. I am aware though there is alot of food waste generated in the school
284. See above food is often uncooked and inedible, going straight in the bin or to the dogs at home.
285. Food quality when transported and reheated.
286. New meals should be added more frequently, they removed meal that was most loved by kids (pizza sub/sandwich)
287. The food quality has seriously gone down from when the program started, there is less choice, food is half cooked eg dried pasta are too hard to eat, some variety has been so simplified that my kids eat less rather than more and are missing some more nutritious meals like chicken broccoli pasta.
288. The small room is the healthy way to provide meals
289. Although the meals are intended to be nutritious, they are overcooked and watery. The food is prepared off site and reheated, which affects the quality also. Some basic options of food, for eg a bread roll, plain pasta, a yoghurt or cheese would be useful.
290. School questionnaire as to parent & child satisfaction completed & completely disregarded by school.
291. Catering for various tastes. E.g. some days all options other than the baked potato are spicy and my child doesn't eat spicy food or baked potatoes
292. I think if there was less options but put better efforts into what was available ...
293. "Takes up valuable space in the school hall which restricts PE.
There is no way of cancelling on a day when there is no food option my child likes. Something will be given to my child regardless & ends up going straight in the bin.
Food allergies is another big issue. Children have been given incorrect food also sometimes the meals are not labelled, leaving it to the children to decide which meal is for which child. "

294. The lunches come home unopened about 90percent of the time. Boxes have stickers on that aren't compostable so they take an age to sort before going in compost bin. Extra lunch boxes to wash, leakage in the bag. I appreciate the sentiment behind the service but sandwiches/salads and more variety of this sort would suit much better. The parent can decide then if they want a cold or hot lunch - would lead to a lot less wastage.
295. "Not enough fresh vegetables included in the food selections."
296. Meals should be means tasted to reduce food wastage
297. Quality of food is poor
298. The diet is not supervised for a dietitian so it has abused of fat, not introducing good culture of food like eating fish or fruit.
299. Parents dont know what children have eaten, how much etc.
300. There is a huge amount of waste. I am actually taking my child off the scheme. I prefer to send in a wholesome lunch
301. Children with allergies (other than the European confirmed ones, eg. peas) does not have a clarity on what it is included on each meal which can be harmful for lots of children with multiple allergies. For example, on the last 3 days of the last week, my son has received hot meals that contain peas, even if won't show up on app or ingredient list on the box. This is a serious problem as my son has multiple allergies and he is also seriously allergic to peas.
302. I am aware that the budget allocated to the provider very likely restricts them being able to provide food that is more nutritious
303. I wouldn't give some of the food they receive to my dog.
304. "Quality of food is not up to standard!
Soggy food is not appreciated by children "
305. I couldn't care less. Challenges are your issues to deal with. Not mine
306. One day my child bought unopened Meal home, the quantity was worrying, not sure there is enough oversight on this area.
307. My daughter used to enjoy the meals but when the changes came in she no longer eats them. So many children may rely on these meals to get them through it’s imperative they taste nice and the rule change totally ruin them. We feel for the supplier as they are doing their it best.
308. Not cooked properly. Not enough variety and flavour.
309. The food seems to be ultra processed - on paper healthy but not in reality. Huge waste - single use containers, not a good example for children.
310. No lunch by provider one day then kids had no meal, principle had to scramble to provide food for children at short notice
311. "Auto ordering for child results in over eating.
Food quality is often inconsistent and poor quality"
312. My child mentioned they aren't allowed talk when eating lunch which i found strange.
313. Beans and spuds and gravy are cold.
314. Food waste and time to eat a full meal are huge issues.
315. "Funding for other school
Items not available "

316. Packaging waste
317. I’m aware that some kids sign up to it and don’t eat the food and those extra dinners are distributed to who wants them.
318. "Quality of the food provided
Small portions for older children "
319. "There is not enough time given to the children to eat their food during the school day. Children are given a meal and a very little time to eat it.
The food provided had decreased in quality, freshness and taste since being introduced. Some meals are inedible.
The food that is provided is overly complicated. Parents do not need a set meal list, we need options that we can make work for their child.
There is no drink option, this is an added extra that you need to pay for separately.
There is no fruit option, this is an added extra that you need to pay for separately.
There is no option for a bread roll or sandwich. You can buy a roll is an optional extra that needs to be paid for separately. There is no option to have it cut or buttered or include any filling. A uncut unbuttered bread roll is not edible for a primary school child.
There is no option to pick plain food for those who do not want a meal. Some kids just want just the mash and gravy on the side not a sunday roast. Or just the wedges and not the chicken. You should be able to pick elements from a meal to give greater choice.
Very specifically to the meals being provided to our school:
The plain pasta is hard around the edges and soggy at the bottom when the boys get it, they can't eat it.
Cheddar roll: the melted cheese has congealed and is inedible. The tomatoe sauce makes the bread soggy. There is no butter. Or any butter option.
Chargrilled Chicken: the children cannot cut a breast of chicken by themselves, can the chicken be cut into bitesizes pieces?
Veg Pizza and side of corn: the corn on the cob is hard to eat, the pizza is too small to feed them on its own.
This is just some of the feedback from my children. "
320. "Serious lack of time to eat meal and not in great conditions.
Lack of variety, in the majority of meals, there is a huge imbalance between carbohydrates, proteins and fats."
321. My child does not like the hot lunches they’re not nice. He says she says that they’re all soggy disgusting and the cardboard box smells and I do think it does as well and I would like if I could get it cancelled if there’s any way to do that
322. When the scheme first started, the food was much better quality. It has declined since then. My kids have complained of plastic and foil in their food, as well as raw chicken.
323. Some of the choices are limited as quality isn't there. My kids pack their own food now and order 2 times a week

324. Hot meals started in the school in Jan 26. So far it is helpful & kids like it. My children had cold meals prior & I cancelled as they did not like them. I hate food waste. I feel a communal canteen would be better with time to eat. Obesity has a number of factors & rushing to eat food is certainly one..we need to change our food culture in this regards as well as portion size. I think portions are pretty good with the scheme .. however some 5th & 6th class children with growth spurts may require more .. so parental responsibility to sort that in my opinion.
325. If the food was good more children would take part. Our children are used to higher quality at home. Give the job to a local business and give soup, brown bread/sandwiches. Made fresh before being delivered!!
326. "Huge waste. I work as a primary school teacher and see this daily.
A Nutritious, fresh diet that involves as little processing as possible is the goal. I'm not aware of any funding for schools to grow their own vegetables, fruit etc.
ideally pupils would have a more holistic approach to healthy choices and food preparation. Unfortunately, basic cookery is not part of the primary curriculum along these simple life skills.
To have a healthy thriving adult population in the future we are not adequately meeting the pupils potential to become more independent citizens. "
327. Extremely poor quality food
328. It has increased our food waste as my kids won't eat the meal they get about 70% of the time so I'm having to send in their normal lunch every day aswell - that is not eaten the days that they do eat the meal
329. Most of the food my children are given comes home.
330. Nutritional value is questionable - it is not a healthier option than a homemade lunch
331. As per box above
332. Lunchboxes provides have all broken
333. "High electricity cost to the school causing a budget deficit due to low school numbers.
Difficult for children with food allergies "
334. Food often cold.
335. Where are the ingredients sourced, it would be great if local growers and local butchers near the schools in Ireland were supported. The food waste worries me.
336. Our school had to stop hot lunches for a while because of food hygiene and safety concerns.
337. Children need a separate space and time to eat as per the French/ Italian models - they should be learning about nutrition and healthy eating as important life skills through living healthy eating at school, growing or sourcing food locally, and tasting new foods as created by local chefs. Delivery of hot meals from outside the school falls far short of the food education they deserve.

338. I would love to see canteen style facilities in Irish schools, like in other countries. I understand that this requires funding and space. My kids in general don't like eating in the same place as they do their school work and having a hot meal with a sauce dripping over school table/books just added to the negative hot meal experience. We are in a fortunate financial position to be able to afford to opt out of hot meals however this is not the case for all kids, many who come to school regularly without a lunch. I love the idea of providing hot meals in school to all kids but am extremely disappointed at the lack of planning and insight that went into rolling out this programme. My kids can't believe the massive amount of daily food waste created from hot meals programme in their school. Also as a health care professional, I am even more disappointed about the poor nutrional value of these meals, better than nothing perhaps... but just not good enough. Surely we could have done better with this.
339. Children need more time built in to the day to eat their food
340. The children can't bring home what they didn't eat so we can't tell exactly how much they have eaten
341. I am concerned that the quality of the food is inferior to the lunches provided from home. Would far prefer my child to continue with lunches from home (homemade soup and homemade brown bread). Mass produced reheated food will never be as nutritious as this.
342. Lunch break is limited. Kids dont have time to finish. Sometimes we finish their lunch at home,.sometimes has to go to waste.
343. The meals were very tasty as he did get them and I tried thinking he might once he sees me eat but unfortunately cancelled as didn't want to waste
344. Food is soggy abd tastless
345. A complete waste of money and expenditure. I understand that some disadvantaged children may benefit which is great but to offer this to all children without consultation has been a crazy decision by the department. We need teachers, technology in schools eg more ipads and chromebooks, specialist teachers for music for example. The money could be well spent in other areas. One size doesn't fit all. In addition to this, it baffles me that dieticians are only coming in stream now to look at the nutrition of the meals provided. Government PR stunt.
346. Quality of ingredients used by the provider's
347. Surely a junior infant doesn't need the same size meal as a 6th class student? I alsogear in other schools that when children are absent, other students take their meals meaning children are overeating.
348. Only concern would be ingredients used. For example sugar content, sulphites and preservatives (often used in pre-peeled and pre prepared vegetables)
349. A lot of children do not like the food. There is huge food waste
350. The food is often too hot when given to the children so by the time they let it cool there's not enough time left to eat it

351. Potato cubes are not fully cooked through so my child will bring them home. I think there should be an option to get chicken coujongs with rice. Alot of kids don't eat sauces there there should be an option to have no sauce on food. Example no gravy on sausages and no sauce on meatballs
352. When one child decides they don’t like the food, they can start a rumour (it smells, it’s made with honey off meat etc) and suddenly the entire class are agreeing due to peer pressure and not eating the meal (this has been my experience and my child won’t eat the food as a result) other problems are when the food is reheated it can change the texture eg hard pasta , soggy potatoe cubes, resulting in the child refusing it and leading to huge food wastage. I’m aware our school food comes from 2 hours away each day.
353. I am also a primary teacher in a DEIS Band One school. Am shocked on a daily basis re. the number of lunches not eaten and subsequently thrown out. Feel this money should be targeted at pupils with SEN.
354. None
355. Some of the options just don't seem nutritious, essentially fast food in some ways. What's wrong with nourishing soup and sandwich as an option.
356. Challenges in smaller schools related to having staff to heat meals as per SPU requirements.
357. I say this informed by being on a Primary School Board of Management: there is zero effective competition in actual service - there are no functional, material alternatives in nutrition choices offered among the limited companies providing the service.
358. See above, the quality has diminished over the year or so. My dog won't even eat it. Such a waste, food provided isn't nutritionally good and I would like to see more variety and sandwich options. Healthy appetising meals. Unlike the stuff provided at the minute.
359. "My child is repeatedly given the wrong order My child's name is on the label but it is not what I ordered.
Not enough time to eat, then sent out to yard, coming home hungry"
360. The school is run over 2 campuses as it is a new amalgamated school. They had to choose a company that would delivery the meals heated and within a certain distance from the school.
361. Even the chicken goujans have been made too healthy. They are mushy and unpalatable. Healthy requirement means children with sensory needs around food are often not eating at all.
362. As a parent I think the hot lunches are a fantastic thing for all schools to have but I do wonder could the meals be improved as most come home and into the bin unfortunately
363. Children do not bring the food home so parents cannot see the quality of the food or if the food was eaten fully, partially or at all.
364. Portions are getting smaller
365. "Huge amount of food waste
Children will not eat and our bin charges have increased significantly as the waste food (none of it eaten) must come home for us to dispose of "

366. I would have concerns about the nutritional value of these meals - seem very processed and reheated
367. Less vegetarian options
368. The quantity of food provided is far less than what a 10-13 yr old growing up kid would need. It's a tiny little box with very less food. We always have to send something from home to top up.
369. The selection of meals available for my children is small as they are halal. This means that they are getting fed up eating the same meals over and over so eventually they don't like some of those meals reducing the options even further. I expect that we will be opting out of the scheme in a few months as they just won't want to eat any of the options.
370. Changes from initial recipes eg Mac and cheese no longer contains sauce just pasta and cheese. Shortcuts are made
371. Administrative tasks for principals. Providers deciding to drop smaller schools.
372. A cold lunch (sandwich) would be better
373. The quality of the food during the pilot year was excellent and both children ate the vast majority of what they received. Now the food is sometimes undercooked and often cold by the time it gets to the children so they don't want to eat it. Nor do they have enough time to. One of my children brings home his entire lunch each day. I have raised this with the provider but got a stock reply back so they are clearly uninterested in improving their service.
374. More selections please
375. The food is very repetitive and they stop eating it
376. The allocated time given to eat lunch from the Department of Education is not efficient.
377. Packaging sustainability
378. Food needs to be guaranteed Irish and preferably organic
379. Soke cold food options might be useful. Simple things like sandwiches. Soup would also be nutritious, cheap to produce and healthy.
380. Sometimes food is not cooked well, can be overcooked and mushy and sometimes happened it was undercooked and had absolutely no seasoning (I am not fan of over salting etc but a pinch of salt can be used). I understand that quality and how food is cooked depends on the food provider.
381. Presentation of meals in awful boxes or bags does not give the children a developing sense of a meal. Think it is training them to eat takeaway meals ie you buy things in bags and scoff it in 10mins whilst watching a screen - this is mindless eating rather than mindful eating which is what we should be encouraging for good long term health eating habits. The wooden cutlery is disgusting mouthfeel for kids to eat their food- adults wouldn’t like it day in day out, but we are ok doing this to our children
382. No idea if my child is eating all or none of the meal!
383. Plastic packaging
384. The food is in plastic containers which is surprising in the current day and a massive source of waste.

385. Overall I found this to be a positive experience. My daughter was in half way through 6th class when the school started with the scheme so she only used it for a few months. She seemed to get tired of the options very quickly! She also commented on how the portions are the same for everyone in the school and how some of the boys in her class needed bigger portions and the younger classes needed much smaller portions. As we can appreciate it takes time for a new scheme to be accepted by everyone as the 'norm'. It is important to foster an environment of eating together and also of eating was is given to you for children growing these days.
386. For small schools the food cannot be heated onsite & has to arrive to the school hot therefore not many companies can deliver food to the school
387. Time factor in handing the food out. Our surname starts at the start of the alphabet and therefore my children's food was packed first and therefore at the bottom of the container on arrival. By the time they received their food (last) the 5 minutes that the children are giving to eat is up and they are being sent to the yard for playtime. Food waste is massive unless the food coming home is being eaten by someone else or given to a dog.
388. There is so much waste. most of the kids say they don’t eat the lunches. Lots of parents opting out. I’m not very sure about the quality of the food in particular the meat. I’d love to see children have simple wholesome meals or fresh soup & soda bread. The best option in my opinion would be a cook placed in the school, just like big crèches, cooking fresh food daily. However, it is great to see children all having hot meals, particularly children who don’t go home to a home where they get nutritious food. It’d be great if left over, untouched meals could be sent home with children who wanted one later in the day.
389. Not enough variety for the fussy eaters. Most children dont eat veg and this is what has led to a lot of food waste in my household.
390. My child doesn't really like the meals, he said the chicken tenders are not very nice but we have changed this option for him
391. Very limited Halal or Veg options.
392. I wish come of the dinner options came without gravy. Or sauces.
393. The fruit is rarely available despite my children looking for it
394. A lot of kids only eating the meat/main part of meal. Vegetables and sides are very hard when cooked and not appetising
395. My son comments on quality and how it can vary from day to day.
396. I've no idea how nutritious the meals are.
397. Surely in the longer run it would be more sustainable and cost effective to make a space for a small kitchen and employ a small amount of catering staff, providing freshly cooked meals. It would also save on packaging and waste.
398. Just to expand on food waste. A junior infant receives the same size lunch as 6th class, this is bound to create waste.
399. Day 3, id there were problems i wouldbt be aware of them by now
400. There are very less halal options.

401. No option of cold sandwiches or any sandwiches my son isn’t eating his dinner because he gets a full dinner at school
402. Packaging waste
403. You cant just opt out of getting the food and if I forget to cancel it my child then gets a hot lunch . This is not eaten, not even opened and then binned. Its such a waste .
404. I don't know of any but I suspect there's a lot of waste and I often wonder if my child has enough time to eat.
405. 10 minutes is definitely not enough to finish any meal in general. I think this really should be extended to 20 minutes at the very least.
406. I think it is a very poor use of public budget given that the majority of children could bring a perfectly adequate lunch from home and considering the other uses that money could be allocated to.
407. The boxes have snapped on us a few times and there wasn't spare ones in school .
408. I'm not 100% sure, just guessing re above!
409. Some of the option are repeated all week and my two boys don't like what is offered. So we are limited to two or three options per week.
410. Some children and parents have complained about the quality of the meals, though this has not been an issue for our family. I think a free hot meal is a plus.
411. Too many changes in recent months to recipe/ingredients
412. Its my understanding that the children get very little time to eat their lunches. Rushing eating does not build a good relationship with food and I would like the children to be given more time to eat.
413. The food that's left over isn't sent home, therefore I don't know how much my child is eating.
414. Meals cannot be customised for picky or plain eaters.
415. The listed challenges do not apply to my children or their school, and the quality of the food provided by our hot lunch supplier is high, with compostable packaging. However I'm aware this is not the case in other schools with other providers.
416. some broader options
417. Many parents send alternative packed lunch with their child so they choose it over the hot lunch most days.
418. I very satisfied with your hot meal service but u added vegetarian meal also it's my small suggestion
419. The food turns quick
420. Quality seems to be poor, kids don't like the food. Lots of waste. Same portion size for junior infants and 6th class
421. It would be great if sandwiches or rolls were available here also as it would help with fussy eaters.
422. Allergens are catered for but heavily limit the options and variety available to the child
423. Meal consistency. Sometimes the same is not as good as before. Also not all options are equally nutritious
424. Dislike the food.

425. We have a childhood obesity crisis, why are we providing Ultra processed foods for school lunches. Plain pasta, plain rice, sausages, gougons, not suitable food for children.
426. There needs to be healthier options - more fruit options, more sandwich filler options etc
427. Portion sizes are the same for junior infants up to sixth class. Older pupils could do with a larger portion size.
428. food is overheated and children cannot eat it because it is dry and moldy from overheating
429. Our school is just doing the cold lunches for now but my 2 children like them
430. I do feel quality...of any food...stored and heated in plastic is not good for their general health. I also feel this is a novelty that will.wear off and become a total waste of money for our school.
431. Temperature of food has to be certain temperature when given to child but this does be too hot to eat straightaway and by time it cools sure break time over no time to play....so kids making choice of playtime over hot food
432. We stopped the hot lunch service for our daughter after the Christmas break. The quality of the food is not ideal - I would not eat it myself. The entire first term she did not eat even one bite of the lunch. There is nothing on the menu that she as a picky 6year old would eat.
433. It’s not necessary in most schools and huge waste . Some yes but not needed in all schools
434. "I'm not aware of any challenges in the school. We don't know all the ingredients that go into the meal.
There are a lot of pasta dishes. Sometimes the options on the day are limited. There are no wholewheat pasta or rice or noodles given, it's only white pasta.
There isn't a lot of variety. "
435. Good being over cooked making it inedible e.g pasta being over heated to the point that it is burnt and/or crunchy
436. My son stopped getting the chicken curry even though he really liked it cause it was too hot and he didn't have enough time to let it cool down before he ate it.
437. Some options aren’t nutritious enough. 2 crackers and a laughing as “main” aren’t fit for 7 years old.
438. Since having opted out of the meals due to reasons above, I have heard of other parents concerns with food quality, mouldy food or food that smells particularly bad. I understand the school does not have the facilities on site to prepare and provide meals themselves, which is a shame.
439. Many dishes have sauce or gravy which limits children choosing the option. Gravy on the side would be very beneficial
440. I understand this is to do with food safety but i would prefer to see leftovers coming home so as to have a better idea of the food quality and how much is eaten
441. Portion size could be looked at in more detail and adjusted to match different age brackets

Q6. If you selected “Other,” would you like to tell us more about how the scheme has helped you or your child:

1. should it be?
2. N/a
3. n/a
4. My child doesn't like the food so I still have to make lunch. Also not enough time to eat
5. Nine
6. N/A
7. My child doesn't like them
8. Na
9. I ended up sending in a packed lunch also in case they don't like the hot meal they get that day. So there is a lot of food waste overall. And in our school you don't seem to be able to opt out of hot meals - they are contracted to provide a certain amount of meals per day for every child in the school and will provide that whether or not you select a meal on the relevant app.
10. N/A
11. N/a
12. Less time making lunches in the morn
13. Nothing
14. N/a
15. Na
16. At the beginning it was brilliant, meals are too complex.
17. Initially the scheme helped save time in preparations for lunches but, as time progressed the hot meals service disimproved and my child no longer likes the food and we will probably stop it.
18. N/A
19. NA
20. N/A
21. Saves money and time
22. N/a
23. It hasn’t really! I’m still sending in lunches as the quality is not great. Most days it’s plain pasta and rice.
24. .
25. N/a
26. NA
27. It makes it more challenging to plan our family evening meals at home as I have to be mindful of what hot meal he has eaten during the day to avoid repetition and over eating
28. N
29. Created some bad nutrition as i made healthier lunches before....its very repetitive and limited in vegetables
30. My child dislikes the food offered and struggles to eat it so we have to provide more food for him. The choice is limited and not very enticing.

31. My children eagerly tried however each one of them do not eat the food anymore as its inedible.
32. Still someone lunch in as well because I’m not sure how much my child is eating
33. Very conscious about the lack of quality ingredients used but wanted to trial it
34. children are more aware of what other kids in their class are eating - possibly just the novelty while it's being introduced.
35. It hasn’t helped, caused more waste; some meals aren’t get at all it’s very cheap based meals mostly look under cooked
36. I have one child who uses it, portions are very small so we send in a sandwich and fruit. My other child is a fussy eater and wouldn't eat anything on the menu so I took her namenoff the list for hot food and send in her usual lunch
37. NA
38. No
39. na
40. NA
41. n/a
42. My son is autistic, highly functional, and because of that a picky eater. Eating along with his classmates the same meals has encouraged him to try new foods, and although he's not eating the whole meal, he's not reporting being hungry
43. The quality of the food is not good, when I see what comes home I wouldn’t be tempted to eat it. It’s putting my daughter off trying food if it’s something she’s had at school.
44. Over all poor
45. Has encourage my children to try dinners that would say no to at home.
46. Saves me time and money but meals provided are not healthy and menu is not great. Children only eat 1 or 2 of meals out of 12-15
47. Ended up just eating plain pasta. It hasn’t helped. It’s really dependent on provider and kids aren’t given enough time to eat
48. Our school does not provide hot meals, but cold options instead such as mini rolls, salads and wraps. A hot meal would be preferable especially in the colder months.
49. Na
50. It was good at the start but they gradually went off them so now it's a struggle to get something they like and they only want it some days so it's a mix which is not really helpful.
51. I didn’t choose ‘other’ this question should not be marked as mandatory!
52. Improved regulation by having a filling warm meal in the middle of the day
53. N/a
54. She has tried some new things
55. Scheme has not helped our children

56. I still send a full lunch in with my 2 kids, 8 and 5 as the hot lunches are tiny. Also my kids wonder why the pasta isn't wholewheat, I don't think thr school lunches are very successful.
57. Program good if school utilised it more effectively. Giving a child choice of hot food or trip to shop to buy whatever (normally sugar based snacks) is not effective, not good for child , and complete waste of resources
58. NA
59. Enable my child to have a hot meal, which was not always possible if brought from home. For me is not about saving money. I would be willing to pay for such a service if needed.
60. "Helped my picky eaters to try new food.
Improved my kids moods - less hangry"
61. My kids are trying foods that they would not eat at home; encouraged by their friends choosing those options
62. It has helped my child feel a bit more in control of their eating at school
63. My child eats a breakfast in school with his friends now, where as he would have refused previously to eat before school at home. This helps his concentration during the school day.
64. My child has sensory issues with food and the menu does not cater for her I have contacted the company but they cannot accommodate her and we cannot cancel it so she brings home food that goes to food waste bin.
65. It hasnt helped - my good eating children complaining wont eat certain foods now after questionable tastes at school meals
66. There is pressure for my children to get the hot lunches despite the variety and quality being offered.
67. When hot meals were introduced in my childs school most of the food was tasty, so my child would eat. The quality of the food went down, so at the moment my child doesn't even try the food anymore, so the program doesn't help me in any way.
68. It hasn’t helped. The hot lunch food is not eaten. The standard of food has dropped since the scheme started
69. None of the above. My child will only eat a limited amount from the menu provided as she does not like the food in general.
70. It’s made me more comfortable to know they’re having a hot nutritious meal during the day as they recently started in Junior Infants and were used to that in creche.
71. Unnecessary waste.
72. I am still giving my child a lunch so it hasn't helped us very much. She is vegetarian and alot of those options are curry or have vegetables thrown on top. Protein like cheese or tofu or lentils isn't used so I have to make sure she gets protein in a packed lunch. She is currently opting for plain pasta or noodles because of the choices available and these often come home uneaten.
73. They have been exposed to new foods
74. The food is poor quality and no consulting about menu means most items on menu the kids don't like

75. Gives him another opportunity and option of food during the school day.
76. It doesn't benefit me, the meals provided are disgusting I wouldn't eat them myself. I give my child lunch going also.
77. Less stress in planning a lunch every day
78. My child is eating more processed food of lesser quality
79. I would not classify the programme as helpful
80. Child now eats less in school unfortunately. She wants to be part of it because everyone else is but eats very little of it. The waste is phenomenal. Preferred giving our own full lunchbox
81. I do not think the scheme helped a lot as my child gets additional lunch box from home
82. None of the above
83. Feeding neurodiverse children is challenging. I feel like there is less pressure on me with the availability of hot lunches
84. -
85. It didn’t do much. My child doesn’t like it says the food is diabolical. There’s only some meals she will eat.
86. They enjoy choosing from the menu each week
87. My daughter does not enjoy any of the hot meals that are available now she used to eat some but non now ut we continue to encourage at home
88. It gives us peace of mind if our children do get a balanced meal. Saying that, not all meals are liked and some are a bit bland or devoid of flavour. My boys pick and choose what they like but often refuse the meal if it is not liked and bring it home to me and I have to bin it as there are no fridges at the school...
89. I would think that for one of my children she has more variety because prior to the hot meals we tended to stick to pretty much the same thing every day for lunch. I wouldn't say it has helped as much with increasing the variety for my other child as he would be more picky.
90. It hasn't changed anything for me
91. I think the scheme is using money and an opportunity incorrectly. the food is not nutritious and it is very hit and miss if either of my children eat it. i think simple foods can be the best.
92. It was a novelty at start, but the poor quality of the food has now caused the novelty to wear off. These School Meals cannot match the good home cooked organic food I can give them.
93. Prior to the hot school meals, my child ise to eat nothing from her lunch box appart from fruits. She used to come home, tired and cranky. I saw a massive difference since the introduction of hot school meal in her school. She comes home full of energy and bubbly.
94. Still have to make lunch. The meals are hit and miss.
95. Didn't help in any way as they are sometimes more hungry when they come home as they didn't eat it
96. The portions are always different. Some days he is hungry because he said there was only a smaller portion in his one..
97. The food isn’t healthy v limited choices poor quality food

98. I try to my kids taste and like all the the Hot School Meals.
99. Opens him up to knew foods as my son always wants to bring the same things every day. The hot meals shows hom new foods.
100. Overall we are not happy with the scheme. The food is not appealing to a child and a lot remains uneaten. Beforehand my child ate pitta bread, fruit, cheese, cucumber. Now she is eating processed chicken covered in gravy which may be salty, "cubed" potatoes which have a long list of ingredients. I do not feel in control over what she is eating.
101. My child loves the hot meals it also saves time and money
102. No difference as I still give child lunch going to school
103. None of the above. I feel that the scheme is a waste of money when supplying it to the whole country and that it should be targeted to those with the greatest need only. My children are fussy eaters so do not eat much on the menu.
104. Has helped my child to be less of a fussy eater and eat with her friends more often.
105. Cancelled for one child and 2 other don't want me to cancel but said the quality and portion size on most days is terrible. One the 1st year it allowed me only provide a snack and was a huge benefit but now I am back to providing lunch as they cry if I don't because the food is so unpredictable
106. Encourages trying new foods
107. Options are a wide variety of food that my children just won’t eat.
108. Gives my child a slightly more varied lunch on a daily basis than I would likely provide
109. It is useful that it opens children up to a wide variety of food in principle. However, some of the meals were initially unhealthy and the (valid) removal of these options have not been replaced with any decent alternatives. I am concerned that the meals are still very processed and not particularly appetising.
110. It has saved me time but I have less control over what he eats. For example he loves bangers and mash but not the gravy so he won't eat the one provided in the hot meals. Few veggies as sides. The vegetarian options all have beans which my kid doesn't eat. No broccoli, green beans, root vegetables as an option to potato cubes. Chunks of chicken in the chicken melt are massive even for an adult so he leaves it out
111. It’s helped him to actually sit & eat a lunch as he doesn’t like sandwiches & used to come home hungry. Also it’s helped him experiment with a broader range of foods as he sees kids from other cultures enjoying different foods. He was already a great eater but it’s definitely made him a better eater
112. It didn't help at all. The food is not edible, so I still have to make lunch for my daughter. Waste of money!
113. Of limited utility when the mandated quality is so lacking.
114. My child wont even open the box off the food as the smell puts him off. This hasn't helped us at all as I still have to send a lunch everyday.
115. They both hate it.

116. I feel that my child is not being offered healthy nutritious food and that th standard and quality of the food is very poor.
117. My child is a fussy eater & doesn’t eat the lunch. I’ve no option available to cancel it on certain days. She didn’t want to seem different to the others so it’s a complete waste.
118. equality across children as well as healthy food only (as there is many kids in our school not following the healthy eating policy)
119. No real effect bar she enjoys selecting the option each week. She still brings her lunch as she can sometime change her mind on the day and opt out of the hot meal
120. Trying new foods she wouldn’t necessarily try otherwise
121. Child is frustrated as what they order they rarely recieve and not a lot of plain options
122. The meals has pit more pressure on me to make my child eat. They won't eat the meals
123. Takes pressure off parents having to cook a hot dinner. We can just sometimes have sandwiches or something smaller now, if we're not too hungry
124. Meals arent eaten.
125. She's a fussy eater but over time she is trying new things when she sees her class mates getting other meals.
126. The scheme has helped my child as she is now having a full meal at lunch time which improves her energy levels, mood etc towards the rest of the day.
127. Has not benefited my child at all.
128. I still provide snacks for my child but I choose meals that she eats at home.. like chicken curry plain pasta spaghetti etc
129. Just gave him the foods he loves which would normally not be able to be packed cold for school
130. Saves me money
131. None of the above, still sending lunch in for small break and along side with the meal as its not big enough!
132. Tends to be a bit more adventurous with food now
133. Has encouraged them to try new foods as they see their peers eating it
134. Introduced child to new foods
135. Saves time in busy mornings
136. The scheme is great
137. Options are very basic for picky eater …. Only plain pasta which is not nutritious. A cold lunch option would be better
138. Child does not eat much of the hot lunch currently (in senior infants)
139. My son had issues with eating and of his own accord he asked could he try the hot meals. This was a huge step in helping him
140. Allowing them to choose from the menu each week gives them some autonomy over their diet. Sharing the experience with their school friends.
141. My daughter is delighted with hot school meal. She is enjoying each meal everyday.

142. My child is eating food he wouldn't try at home! He is not as hungry coming home from school as before.
143. Child preferred cold menu. Doesn't like the hot and there is no option to choose
144. Meals not balanced and not really tasty
145. Mornings are easier as there are no arguments about food
146. The meals are not appetising but my child does not want me to cancel her order as she does not want to be different within the class. I am concerned re food waste also.
147. It hasn't at all it doesn't support the needs of children with food aversions amd has put my child off some meals they used to love
148. My children both look forward to the meals they have chosen for themselves. The company we use provides plenty of options, including a variety of healthy options.
149. My children believe the choice and quality has deteriorated in the current academic year relative to the previous year. Standard portion sizes from Junior Infants to Sixth class mean that older children are hungry while younger children are not using the full portion.
150. Its actually not great
151. Portions are too small for the older children.
152. The hot school meals for our school were suspended for a period of time due to rodent infestation. This was distressing to all.
153. It has created more food waste for me as my children don't eat it every day because the standard of food is not good, so i have to send in a packed lunch in addition to the school meal provided
154. "One of my children accessing the scheme is in an autism class. His specific food tastes and needs are not always met by the selection of food offered each week.
For example the inclusion of certain foods such as mixed vegetables can often result in the entire meal not being eaten. I asked gbe company if the veg can be left off his meal and they cited the departmental nutrition requirements as the reason this cannot be done. Some weeks this has resulted in him only having one option - plain pasta - five days of the week which (1) caught in some instances have less nutritional value than the meal that he would prefer without vegetables and (two) create an expectation and routine for him that he gets past at school every day which if established could be very difficult to break. "
155. The co. That operates in the school takes the leftovers back so we never know what is eaten or not!
156. "While my child is extremely picky and will always bring more than 50% of the lunch home, I like the fact that, as a working parent, it saves our family time and money we would waste on the lunches. I have no control of ingredients but my daughter sees all her peers eating the same food, eliminating social discrepancies. Like in any free service, there are things to improve but the overall benefits for communities and families by far outweighs the negatives."

157. It's introduced some new food to her, but she's bored of them now.
158. It hasn't made any difference. We weren't given the option to opt out, the children aren't given enough time to eat and they only like 1 or 2 options available. Most options I wouldn't consider healthy. I still send in the lunch I was sending before. It has definitely increased my food waste
159. One child will eat it and one wont
160. It did not - before the hot meals they would actually eat the food, but with hot means they refuse to eat it. :(
161. As a neurodivergent household it has helped with things like predictability, decision fatigue, and sensory issues. Hugely beneficial with autism, adhd, and dyspraxia.
162. Will try new things 😉
163. It's giving them something warm during the day
164. One of my kids eats the plain pasta and I provide the sauce and my other child won't eat anything so I'm cancelling his hot meals
165. My child is underweight and eats very little. I am not sure if he eats the meal at school or swaps the chosen meal for plane rice with other kids
166. Not much of a choice on the menu for children
167. My ten year old is not interested in a lot of the meals at this stage- her sister loves them. I think a few small changes with ingredients would help.
168. I would rather other options , like sandwich's than hot meals . The hot meals aren't overly tasty or nutritious
169. She loves the meals and choices
170. The quality of the food is unreliable so we still have to provide a lunch. Some days he receives the wrong lunch entirely.
171. The cold lunches provided more options for my child to eat during the school day. The hot food, for younger children isnt exactly suitable. If hot meals are going to be provided, then cold meals like sandwiches, should also be an option for children who wont eat the hot food, so they are included and dont feel left out and have something to eat as well.
172. It makes lunch quite social for them and is really good for them to have hot food while sitting with their peers.
173. It's a wonderful service, it really helps manage the mental load of lunches as well as ensuring that they are eating well.
174. It has not made any impact
175. It's great my son can eat a hot lunch as opposed to cold pack lunches from before.
176. My daughter is really enjoying school meals
177. The choice and standard of the meals has changed, resulting in less meals been eaten.
178. "Both children have opted out of most of the dinners at this stage due to quality very poor
Son only keeps 2 days at moment as he likes but I wouldn't see either as a proper dinner "
179. Has impacted negatively child's perception of food
180. Still give lunch as hot meal quality is questionable.

181. "Having a warm meal.
He enjoys our home meals more"
182. Waste
183. eats less as feels wrong eating 'home food- and is starving at end of day
184. There are few things on the menu that the kids like. If there was an option to have a sandwich that would be good
185. Introduced my child to more diverse meals.
186. obesity
187. I still have to send food in because they often don’t like what is served, so I haven’t seen a huge benefit from the scheme
188. Willing to try different meals
189. Is exposed to more foods
190. My child is autistic and has a limited diet so it has helped him try more foods as he is seeing others eat too
191. I have hot meals assigned for my child every day but she is saying she doesn't like it and now im not sure what she is eating. I try to change it up so she tries new food options before we stop getting it. But my child has asked to stop getting it. She liked Pesto pasta and then they stop doing it. Loved the soup at start but hates it now. She said food is not the same as when it started. I will probably be stopping it as i dont want to waste food if she is not eating it. I would. Love to keep it if food was better.
192. knowing a little bit of hot food will be provided
193. The variety of food or meals my child will eat from what is available has become more restricted since the scheme began.
194. None of the above - it’s quite wasteful. We send in lunches with them.
195. Kids are more independent, they prep their own small snacks for school and select their own meals for the week ahead
196. Reduce stress at home with more quality time. This led to better inclusiveness at school for child on the autistic soectrum
197. Negative impact on my child having a balanced lunch everyday
198. My child says the food is disgusting. Personally is not very healthy. I would like to see more fruit, houmous, raw veg.
199. It has allowed him to try different things. One son has certain things he always chooses bit the other son tends to leave a lot and has no favourites.
200. Quality of the food is not great. Child is taking the hot food but not eating it as she doesn't want to be the only one not taking the meal. So now I am making a lunch and throwing a hot school meal uneaten into the bin. Option for a cold lunch also side a hot meal Option would suit us better.
201. It has probably encouraged my children to try new foods since they see their classmates eating foods various food options.
202. My child still wants to bring a large snack to school so I feel it has encouraged over eating.
203. As the meals are not same for everyone cause everyone chooses different, it doesn’t make any differences, cause my kids are not really eating much, sometimes not a single bite, even though the taste is really good

204. Hot meal during the day instead of a packed lunch us always welcomed but like all kids some choices are more popular than others which is ok as it allows them to try new things
205. Gets the kids to try new foods
206. I don't have to make lunches before school/work
207. Encouraged my child to eat different foods that he would refuse at home. Not so much around healthier eating as he eats healthily at home but he would be a picker eater at times so this has expanded what he eats.
208. It is an excellent service my kids eat different every day
209. Standard of meals has slipped
210. I have tried all options and my children do not like any. They normally don't eat more than a bite. I cannot customise eg no gravy on the bangers and mash. Or chips instead of cubs
211. Tried foods with his friends he may not have eaten at home.
212. My child still brings a packed lunch but it is smaller because of the Hot Lunch
213. Hot meal programme only in its 2nd week. Dificult to say at this time how good it is or will be
214. It has expanded my child's favourite foods. He has a very active appetite at the moment and as a naturally very slim child I'm delighted he has access to a warm meal during the day. It's great to have his friends around him eating similar meals, which prevents him getting distracted. He loves the ability to change meals out the week before if he's getting bored. I have heard some schools don't have the choice that we do with the company we chose, but I honestly can't say enough great things about the scheme. Very happy with it
215. My child is a bad eater. Eating the same meals with her class mates may encourage her to try things
216. Do you believe it has had a major impact as need to send additional food in incase my child won't eat the dinners
217. My son eats a healthy lunch, always has. It seems the only meal he eats in the hot meals is the plain pasta. I don't think he should be eating it every day so we only order it for three out of the five days of the week. I think it's a great program you are running, most of the meals seem to be nice but my son just won't eat them.
218. can be very hit and miss and changes a lot. The way the chicken or fish fingers comes changes a lot which out my children off the food. Too many changes not consistent enough. Also, wish gravy could come on the side not just dump on top of food.
219. The food in last year was premium. How've this year the quality has been cut back. The child is veey disappointed and often comes home hungry
220. Open mind to new attempts
221. She eats things that she wouldn't have had at home so it broadens her horizons
222. Feel my child needs a second dinner due to having a dinner so early in the day at school

223. Our school chose a provider who provide proper dinners of meat and veg and or rice and pasta. Excellent menu choice and great to know children have a decent dinner as so many children do not get this
224. It's just great to have the option
225. Time and effort to plan school lunches. Less fighting about them! Remember to buy stuff at the shop. Reduced cost of weekly shop.
226. Even tho they repeat eldest prefers the variety compared to sandwiches
227. My child only likes one meal from the menu . And would prefer if we could have the option for extras as our school has the option disabled
228. It hasn’t really helped she had been exposed to lots of food before school & eats a large range of food. She doesn’t eat as much of her dinner with us in the evenings but I can’t deny her school dinners as I feel she would feel left out
229. Has provided my children autonomy and ownership over the food they eat due to the varied options.
230. They dont like the food,Pizza is like a rock and does not taste like pizza
231. "Children get it 2/3 times a week. Quality is not consistent. Food comes from an outside vendor and doesn't always travel well.
On 1 occasion all goujons had to be taken back from children as there was green mold on them"
232. It hasn’t really to be honest.
233. As fussy eaters I had hoped it would broaden their palate. This hasn't worked really. And I don't think they get the benefit of the meals..
234. She looks forward to lunch time & enjoys choosing from the menu each week.
235. Started off great, kids tried more foods and seemed to enjoy it. I don’t know if the novelty wore off or if the standards dropped but they like very little of the foods now and there is an awful amount of waste. I feel the money would be better spent elsewhere.
236. Less stressed morning, less effort.
237. Less fussy because has some element of choice
238. My picky eater child tried different meals at school, she is changing to be more open-minded to newly introduced foods.
239. My child likes some of the food but not enough to eliminate me still having to supply snacks and food
240. Every meal is brought home full so I have to dispose of this. Not helpful unfortunately.
241. Helped him try more foods and build a positive relationship with food you can add extras to the food and this is great when you want to offer a reward especially on a Friday as a treat and it doesn't cost much extra
242. It has helped me greatly. But it seems my children are getting bored with the menu. They are not picky eaters at all, but somehow they are not eating the full hot meals at school. I have tried them to make sure how they taste, they seem fine to me. But kids say they are lacking flavor, sometimes sacies added before makes the meal soggy, etc

243. It hasn't because the meals provided by fresh today are terrible
244. It is good for my daughter to have warm meals. And the new supplier provides more healthy food with much less E-numbers.
245. I find it still have to give my child lunch as he has come home to tell me the food wasn't nice or it wasn't hot or pasta been hard so it hasn't changed things at all for me
246. Opens up new food options to them.
247. "It is teaching children it is acceptable to eat out of single use take away containers. This is not something children should be learning and doing in school!
They are not being educated about food.
I don't trust that the quality of the food is of a good standard.
The scheme was rolled out too quickly without fully considering quality, parallel education on nutrition and sustainability in terms of how it is provided in single use packaging."
248. Turned my daughter off certain foods eg carrots, as they can be frozen veg or watery. Smell can be bad also
249. Child says still hungry so have to provide extra lunch
250. No difference. They dont like it. Very repetitive. I still.have to make a lunch. They might like 2 things out of the 5 days but can only order it once.
251. Provides protein which I was finding difficult to include in the lunch box.
252. Gives my child a feeling of ownership over what they are choosing to eat. We discuss together food choices and options and together we plan food for the week
253. "It’s a great initiative which encourages kids to try different foods they may not have at home.
It’s also a very important service which ensures that all children receive a hot meal each day "
254. Mt child us fed very well at home. Since he has been getting the school meals he has become much fussier. I think the school meals contain too much processed, salty or sugar ingredients.
255. More food options than sandwiches all the time
256. Although I provide extra food and hot food myself she finds the lunches to be more of a hot snack
257. Im not worring about has he eatting
258. My child would prefer to eat a cold meal in school for lunch such as a sandwich but that’s not offered while the hot food is running so the scheme to us as a family is unhelpful.
259. Initially with my 5 year old it caused GI issues (severe constipation) that we had to seek medical assistance for. The portion for a 5 year old are the same as a 12 year old which is madness.
260. No difference, I still give her a packed lunch as the hot lunch is quite small and quality isn't great.
261. I am not sure hot school meals are the reason but since she started eating those she is more appealed by processed foods

262. My child has ADHD and some foods are soggy (meat)and not fully cooked (pasta) and apart from obvious these textures do not always agree with her and then she comes home hungry
263. To try new foods and flavours he hasn't eaten before.
264. Given him the option to pick his own meal, try something new
265. Helps because don’t have to make lunch so time and money…. Think soup and rolls should be an option in winter. Also plain pasta should have a choice of sauce to stir in
266. Encouraged child to try new food - however I cannot tell how much they have "tried".
267. Nice to knwo he has had a warm meanl so can have just a sandwich when he gets home before dinner.
268. He still won't stop talking long enough to eat his food, he's gone off the food, despite a huge range of choices. I like the healthy choices of fillet of chicken/beef/ham with veg and potato but he won't eat them everyday. I'll probably get to the point of sending in a lunch again with him.
269. Allows him more variety for lunch time
270. It didn't. Options aren't a one size fits all and doesn't suit all children. Still have to provide the same lunch as it is a long time from breakfast to when they recieve the food
271. I had hoped it would help me save money on shopping and time in the morning preparing lunches and offer my children more variety however my two children, who are good eaters at home, eat a varied diet and love to try new things, complain about the school meals, they find them tasteless, stodgy and off putting to look at and therefore do not eat these meals. So I continue to buy food for lunches and prepare lunches in the morning.
272. He does not like the food
273. The meals in my child's school seem nutritious enough, according to the ingredients on the site - I wasn't able to taste them, though that would be really helpful - so although I have less control, it seems she's eating good food.
274. Hot School Meals Scheme affected me and my Child in a very positive way - she can bring less food from home, it is making her meals various and not boring, allow me save time and money as well "
275. Encouraged him to try different foods and have a varied lunch "
276. I still have to send in a packed lunch in case the hot lunch isn't eaten which it is never fully eaten. I support the initiative but I think the option for the cold lunch as in sandwich ,wraps etc should be available as it was eaten and so less food wasted
277. They're not a fan of hot meals so I still have to make a full lunch. I've no control over what they are eating or how much/little
278. "My child tries new meals in school. She would not eat some meals such as curries at home, yet loves chicken curry at school.
Same with sausages - we are not big pork eaters at home so my child gets opportunity to try new foods at school. "
279. Only positive impact

280. He doesn’t eat it. It’s an enormous waste of food. The main reason he says he doesn’t eat it is because they aren’t give enough time to eat in school for they are sent outside to play. They get 10 minutes to eat. This is apparently the standard for all schools.
281. The scheme has not helped us in anyway at all. I still have to send in lunches as hot lunch is not eaten
282. Even tho they have hot school meals it doesn’t make a difference as I have to give them more lunch as they don’t always like the hot meals
283. In junior infants, any uneaten food should be sent home so parents are aware what, if any was eaten
284. Disrupted our routine of mealtimes at home. Somedays theyre hungry, someday theyre full. Dietary change: They wont eat some of the healthier options so are now eating nuggets and pizza every week, which wouldn't have been part of their weekly diet before. Its either that or we have a lot of food waste.
285. Kids are much happier with hot meals as opposed to sandwiches.
286. We really welcomed the scheme at the beginning, and my child enjoyed the food for the first two terms. There seemed to be a change in quality which my child commented on. The quality and type of vegetables in the food was always an issue, but the overall quality and flavour of the food went downhill. I remember my son commenting on a turkey dinner where the turkey looked green. Eventually, he decided to just have noodles every day, but after bringing them home untouched for several months, I actually just yesterday cancelled his meals because of the waste. It’s such a shame.
287. Helps expand their palette, helps them make decisions about what they like or don't like, helps us with conversations around what do you think versus what do other people think, peer influence, etc, discussions about nutrition
288. The options are not great especially if your child has allergies. The rule changes this year took away choice from the suppliers and has led to a lot of kids not liking the meals. My child wants the lunches but doesn't like most of the foods. The options for him are particularly bad as he has allergies.
289. It hasn't helped if anything it has made my child eat less healthy foods at home. As the veg in the meal is often frozen or else not cooked enough and is hard.
290. Most days we choose the options which best aline with healthy eating guidelines. What is challenging at times as other children have pizza/ sausages/ chips. While I don’t have an issue with these foods- as daily options this does fit with guidelines as occasional foods. The menu should set children up for positive choice
291. I still send his normal lunch incase he doesn't like the hot lunch
292. Unfortunately it has not helped. My children do not like the hot school lunches and bring them home uneaten so they end up going in the bin.
293. I find it brilliant as I have a child who would be a very fussy eater, sensory issues around food and was very anxious when I first heard about the scheme until I found out they actually catered for him which was a huge relief.

294. It has shown my children what other children eat
295. My child is trying a variety of items and benefiting from being able to make their own selection on the menu. Previously they would only bring a bagel with butter or plain pasta for lunch.
296. Child has started eating food they weren't eating earlier. Food quality is good, and is hygienic.
297. Helped improve food variety and trying new foods
298. More aware of food waste, what other people eat et
299. It has kept them fuller but I also give them a small lunch with it
300. I’m happy my child is getting hot meals but the standard of food is very bad.
301. It hasn’t helped because there are not many options available for autistic children who eats plain food. We only have plain pasta or rice and the past is not edible, is always hard and dry
302. The vegetarian options are not suited to young children, most include sweet chilli sauce or Chinese spice, also there is no option even for basic pasta with sauce, yet for the meat eaters they get 3 options of sauce for their pasta, my child has just plain pasta and I have to make sauce at home and send that in with grated cheese.
303. Recommending sandwiches or wraps more than hot lunches
304. He is trying a new things
305. Quality of the food isn't good
306. It allows more variety versus the cold lunch, she loves it
307. My child has T1 diabeties so it helps me to understand the carbs he is getting everyday
308. Being honest they don't like them.
309. He has tried a more variety of food that he would not eat at home.
310. Some days she eats it and others she doesn't. So she is wasting a lot of food which is not good. We have only started since after Christmas but in the next week we might cancel the lunches.
311. Only starting this week
312. They're encouraged to try other things and eating with their friends and classmates will help. Although the quality and amounts are not right, so often they (and their friends) won't eat it.
313. Quality of food really bad. Fat content was so sorry high it made my child sick. Our doctor told us to stop meals to see if he improved which he did within a week
314. The scheme is only starting next week. I am from Spain and I always had hot meals provided in primary school. I think it is very beneficial for both children and parents. It improves nutrition and the capacity of being focused for the child
315. Feel food isn’t great for kids
316. Encourages them to try new foods
317. My child has Dyspraxia and is very fussy about what he eats but yet doesn't want to be left out a d be the only one not getting the lunch so he picks the same every day and only eats the same part

318. One of my children likes a few of the options but prefers home cooking, my other daughter cannot eat gluten or dairy and has very few (2) options. She comes home with half of it every day. A lot of waste. I still need to send a lunch. Only two options for fruit, there could be more.
319. At the beginning it was super and She loved it but since before xmas i feel the standard has defo dropped on quality
320. "None of the above, he won't eat any of it and there is no easy to cancel. The standard of the food is absolutely atrocious and often undercooked, very poor quality, cheap terrible meals.
Waste of money, it usually goes to the dogs. "
321. Still have to send lunch with child as not always sure they will eat hot dinner
322. "Hot food provided at the most demanding part of the day is great.
We didn't get to eat hot food until 6 pm. It was too late to eat main meal at that time. "
323. All food suppliers should be fully funded and not for profit. As long as they are "for profit" they will continue to cut corners.
324. Saved time and knowing my children will have food served.
325. It's not nice
326. It is very difficult to feed my child, he is never hungry, I was in a group and he eats with everyone without excuses.
327. The scheme was great when it started, however the quality of the lunches provided has reduced so much that my child no longers eats it.
328. My two kids only gets it 2 days a week as they aren't gone on the menu
329. What started as a positive approach has become quite Negative approach to eating as a result of the poor quality food.
330. Great to have such a selection to chose from
331. It has made very little difference for us. I still pack a full lunchbox every day for my child as a lot of the time he doesn’t like the food.
332. It hasn't helped them at all.
333. Son initially got lunch 5 days a week - only gets it 2 days now. My son is not a picky eater, didn't like the taste of a lot of the traditional dinners - he eats traditional dinners at home. Was a lot of food wastage when he received dinners 5 days a week. From speaking with different people is an extreme amount of food waste - alot of people forget to switch calendar off for the days they are sending in lunch from home. Should be a traditional cold & hot sandwich option every day for those who do not want traditional dinners.
334. Has tried diff foods. But quality has decreased and size of portions too. And choice
335. I think it’s unnecessary & somewhat wasteful. I would prefer if the budget was redirected to education services and resources.
336. It is good because it can combine with the home food some days
337. I dont honestly see a major difference other than perhaps having to provide less food for morning snack.
338. I bit enjoyable. But not fantastic.
339. It hasn't helped.

340. My children still bring their own food as well as portions are small. In Winter it is useful due to being hot but not great variety and soup would be good addition
341. It hasn't helped my child. I give him a packed lunch every day. The scheme makes no difference to me. I'm not looking for a hand out
342. My daughter used to enjoy the meals but when the changes came in she no longer eats them. So many children may rely on these meals to get them through it’s imperative they taste nice and the rule change totally ruin them. We feel for the supplier as they are doing their it best.
343. It saves time and money when she likes the food. And its cooked correctly.
344. A hot lunch is much more beneficial to a child than a cold sandwich and more filling!
345. Duplication of offering and sharing of lunch result in over eating
346. Willingness to try something different
347. Although a very welcome initiative in principle, , the food (even the ‘healthier’ options) is less nutritious than food the child would otherwise eat/get
348. I don't think it has really helped, my child eats it every day but still likes the comfort of home food so gets a smaller version of her previous lunch for little break so I am still preparing food.
349. Menu is continually reducing options to less filling ones which seems to happen unchecked
350. "I have 2 boys, ""J"" like plain food and ""L"" loves all varieties or food including spicy meals. When the hot school meals were brought in 2 years ago, food options were great, quality was excellent, and food was fresh and tasty. My 2 boys loved picking out the meals for the week on the app and enjoyed tasting the different options. It was a time saver in the mornings, and it saved us money.
It started to become challenging finding any meal they will eat, because the quality and freshness began to decrease. They began to refuse certain meals because they were not nice. Meals were crossed off the list because they were not edible. The meals came home so I was able to see that they were not good for a variety of reasons. I tried to keep their interest; I paid for the optional extras on the app to make sure they got food during the day they would eat. This ended up costing us over €10 a week and it became unsustainable.
I had to re-valuate what we were doing as I became concerned they were not eating properly during the day at school. And I was spending money on food in the app and still they were not eating a proper meal during the day.
Now I send in a sandwich which is made fresh every morning at home for ""J"" and I provide both boys with crackers/cheese and fruit and their drink, usually water or juice. ""J"" never eats the hot school meal and ""L"" will only eat the curry chicken, nothing else.
We order 10 meals a week and 7 are uneaten. It costs me money to get rid of the uneaten food in our food waste. "
351. it did not affect my child

352. Encouraged them to try more
353. It had helped my child eat better during the day as traditional lunch box options were both being eaten by them
354. I’m sorry, but my kids don’t really like their hot lunches. I thought it was a great idea at the start, but it failed us. So sorry!
355. Alot of food waste
356. My child enjoys the food.
357. I still prepare a lunch as she doesn’t like any of the hot meals and they mostly come home untouched
358. It has made family dinner times stressful. Trying to plan around what has been ordered, from a limited menu and not clash rice with rice at home or chicken with chicken at home etc.
359. They don't like some of their chosen meals, full of oil and colour is off putting, sizes have been reduced.
360. Unfortunately as time has gone on, the standard of food being served has slipped and my children dont eat them at all. Cold option would be more welcomed
361. It hasn’t totally benefitted one of my kids. She’s a picky eater so the items on offer don’t suit her. So I just end up still giving her a lunch every day. My son though has tried and liked some new things through the hot meals.
362. At the beginning my children were eating them, but I feel standard has dropped and they rarely eat the meals now.
363. My son is more adventurous in his eating
364. Brings a positive and exciting time in the day to have a warm lunch
365. The scheme has encouraged an over reliance on convenience diets. This is not a good option for my.children. The supplier does not provide enough variety or choice for my.child.
366. The food was any of that quality and varies from week to week my child brings her own lunch to school as it’s so poor
367. The provision of a hot meal to school children is invaluable to developing healthy eating habits. My son looks forward to lunch time and always eats majority of food provided to him. I believe he would not eat as well if he was not provided with a hot lunch. It is so late by time I get home from work and get him picked up I do not think I would be able to provide a proper hot meal every night if this was not provided in school
368. To be honest our kids don’t want to eat the food they got at school. While we really appreciate the idea we feel bad that so much food is going to waste. We don’t opt out because we heard that if too many parents do this the school might loose the participation in the scheme.
369. "Missed opportunity here in that meals are not being prepared onsite or in local community hall through some government scheme that would provide local employment and also have less processed meals.
The daily funding per pupil of under €4 is unrealistic. More guidance needed from DES to investigate local sourcing of meals. "
370. Hate them says they’re like dog food not fit for human consumption
371. It has not helped in any way

372. "The school meals have reduced the variety of what my children eat."
373. Waste of tax payers money. Schools need more SNAs and money funneled into support for the children. I send a lunch in anyway- total waste of food and money. Shame for not using the money where it's really needed. Government needs their heads examined.
374. "I disagree with how this scheme has been
implemented. I would have preferred to see more money spent in areas that needed it and for a proper set up either using local cafes as suppliers or setting up school kitchens and cooks, creating long term local jobs and using local suppliers and ingredients.
Much of the meat is sourced from abroad, including from outside the EU (I have checked this). This includes from the hot lunch suppliers who claim to be using Irish suppliers such as Glenhaven. In reality, while some of Glenhaven's products are Irish chicken, many are not and are sourced outside the EU. I am aware standards are supposed to be the same but I suspect that there are many breaches. I only buy Irish meat and chicken when purchasing food myself. I don't like that my children are now potentially exposed to more hormones and antibiotics in their food. Yet there is a strong incentive for suppliers to source ingredients as cheaply as possible.
The fact that all the children are getting these lunches makes it very difficult for me to withdraw them from the scheme as they don't want to be the odd ones out (our scheme only started in December). I will be withdrawing them, but have to give it time for the novelty to wear off for them.
I also really hate the fact that the food is served in essentially take away boxes, creating waste and giving the impression to children that this is normal.
I also really dislike the fact that we are encouraging our children to essentially eat ready meals and very processed food. If you look at the ingredients list nearly all the meals contain preservatives. Even where for example the chicken is advertised as preservative free, you will find preservatives in the curry sauce that comes with it. I feel that this scheme will increase the obesity problem in Ireland.
In terms of portion size, the portions are too small to fill even my 8 year old (same for her 6 year old cousin). For any child who has a good appetite, they will need a filling sandwich also. That said, some of the food does come home when the children don't like it. When it has the quality looks really poor.
I understand that there are children that really need the meals. I feel these cases are likely focused in particular areas and that money would have been better spent on these areas initially, setting up proper local set ups, with a much slower roll out to other areas afterwards. Instead of thinking through all the implications and putting in place a proper long term focused solution in the best interests of all children, I feel the job was rushed to tick a box. "
375. The quality is extremely poor and my child is not eating most of the meals as she is Muslim and the quality of those meals provided is very bad ,she can eat them

376. We were hoping that the hot meals would help us to both save money and save time each morning. The reality is that I have had to cancel this service a few times now for my kids as the food is not good quality and comes home all the time. The only reason I end up signing them back up is because they see their peers with new meals and want to try them. Overall, we are not happy with a service that seems as if it would be. A great support for families and children.
377. Want him to try different things
378. My child now has way less variety in his diet and eats less healthily.
379. It has encouraged her to try different foods. Positive eating experience from seeing her peers have food and wanting to try it herself
380. N/A - still send additional lunch with child to school. Time Not allocated to eat either.
381. I still give them the same lunch but im happy there is mie food there for them. Even though its rarely eaten.
382. Our child has added two different meal elements that they wouldn’t eat at home before to their tastes and now like to eat it at home as well as at school because of the hot school lunch.
383. It encourages him to try new dish,but sometimes the food you provide is not cook properly. Or over cook
384. There's no added value in this initiative. In fact, in order to try and provide a balanced diet for my child, it has limited the options I can offer at home as my child eats mostly chicken nuggets in the provided meals
385. Children are excited to try out things and glad of hot lunch on cold days
386. My child misses having a plain sandwich. He has no interest in his family dinner after as he has already eaten a pasta meal.
387. Introduces more variety into their diet.
388. Didn’t impact them at all they don’t like it
389.
1. Additional time is used to choose meals for the week. 2. Sometimes there are days that kids don't like the meal and then they are hungry for the day.
390. "Encourages them to try new dishes.
Encourages them to eat more."
391. Kids dont eat all the food. Menu change is necessary to appeal to them.
392. My child eats less abd has caused issues which food anxiety now
393. It has not really helped as neither child really likes or eats the hot lunch so I still need to give them a packed lunch each day. For one child I only opt to get a hot lunch once a week as it was going to waste.
394. It has little to no impact on my child.
395. I don't know what my child is eating as my child's school does not send home leftovers. My child wants to order the unhealthy options and i wish we ciuld go back to simple brown bread sandwiches. We don't struggle financially and my child was eating better meals before.
396. No change, food not liked
397. My kids dont like the food. Most of it goes in the bin. A cold sandwich option with fruit should be offered
398. Not a great selection

399. My child is now more likely to try new dishes that he sees his friends eating. It has led to him expanding his range of meals at home.
400. Causes arguments, my child does not like to eat hot food everyday, but there is no cold food option. He will often eat nothing other than his fruit all day, this ends in an argument about food waste.
401. It hasn’t
402. It doesn’t make any different to our lives as she doesn’t eat the meal so it’s brought home for the compost bin
403. My daughter was very excited initially about the lunches. After 3 months she would prefer to be back with her sandwich which was originally what she would have had. I feel there is a huge waste of food from what she tells me.
404. My child doesn't like most of the food on the menu so only gets it 1/2 days a week
405. Quality of food is poor , child eats a bite and brings home the rest , on par with deli food which you wouldn't give a child 5 days a week
406. My child will only eat one hot meal from the menu. He says the food is all sweaty and wet. Most of the time the food is brought home and thrown in the bin. I still provide a full lunch every day.
407. "They have gone off certain healthy foods from home as a result
They often come home upset about the lunch they got as it didn’t taste nice
408. To be honest the quality of the food is horrendous, my children bring home most of it. It seems to be tasteless, not appetising and a waste environmentally. They give it to our dog, who won't eat it. Variety is poor and nutritionally it is appalling. They now bring in their own sandwiches again. Surely ye could provide hearty sandwiches or 🍽️. The quality is shocking and gotten worse.
409. Broadened variety of foods eaten daily (fresh fruit which may go to waste at home eg excess melon following a few portions eaten
410. Causes more stress for child that doesn't eat well. Child often comes home having not eaten, even if I send a cold lunch.
411. My child was a picky eater and would not try any new foods. But with hot school meals he started eating variety of new foods. Now he's less picky.
412. Initially it helped save time but mostly now my children need a packed lunch sent to school as they find the hot lunches not very appetising except maybe once a week
413. I not sure that it has
414. It hasn't changed any of the above, so I could not select any of those options
415. Encouraged my child to eat more portion of food as can be food avoidant (autism)
416. My child is fussy. Has doen syndrome and only eats certain foods
417. My child eats healthy hot meals in school as opposed to cold sandwiches every day.
418. "Kids want choice to not order meal somedays.
Kids like vegetables. Kids like salads "

419. Hasn’t made a difference as I still have to pack lunch cause they don’t like some of the lunches
420. He doesn’t like any of the meals - he says they are dry and won’t eat - I’ve reduced his meals to 3 days a week and order the one meal that he might nibble on. It’s definitely a waste of food and money that could be directed else where in school. A roll/sandwich, fruit and yogurt would be better
421. No problem impact as such, the end up eating a lot more pasta
422. Picky eaters don’t eat the food- it gets binned. Wasting food and money
423. In addition to all above it also gave my child responsibility of choosing the meals he wants to it.
424. My child is trying new recipes and loves them
425. Child does not like parts of the meal so hard to get an even balance
426. While I appreciate the intention behind the scheme, it has not worked well for my child in practice. She often comes home with a lot of her food uneaten. Some of the meals provided are foods she regularly eats at home, but she will not eat them through the scheme due to the poor quality. For example, pasta is often dried out on top and soggy underneath, and bread rolls are frequently very dry around the edges. In contrast, the paid food services in my other children’s schools offer better quality meals and a wider choice, which they enjoy and eat without issue. As a result, my child is often still hungry after school, which is disappointing given the purpose of the scheme.
427. Having Hot lunch is good but seems the taate and the options available for selection is not up the mark
428. Stopped some arguments about what to have for lunch.
429. One of my children has opted out for now. She enjoyed them at the start but now not eating them. She might have them again anothet time. My other daughter is still enjoying them.
430. He is getting a hot meal on cold days instead of his usual sandwich.
431. None of the above
432. "She has colesterol, so I am not sure if the quality is good for her. The amount of salt and sugar...
Not healthy sometimes, too many options but about the same..."
433. Food quality is extremely poor . Has not helped one bit.
434. My child has not enjoyed the food. It seems bland compared to seasoned, homemade dinners she has at home. Before the hot school meals, I was sending her lunch in a Thermos which I will be doing again since she is coming out of school hungry due to not eating the hot school meals.
435. I feel it’s q waste as my kid doesn’t eat the food, they are tasteless and it doesn’t look good at all. My kid doesn’t even touch the food, there are no real vegetables available
436. My child has more variety with the hot food as they were fussy about what they brought in a packed lunch.
437. .

438. The food that comes home seems pretty stodgy. I'm not sure that I trust that it's very healthy. There seems to be a lot of waste. It's great for the kids who need it, but not for the kids who don't. There seems to be a lot of waste.
439. My children don't really like the meals provided and would prefer to have the option to receive sandwiches, rolls etc instead free of charge
440. He appreciates good food at home more as he sees the type of food being served to him as part of fresh today and has a new found appreciation for proper food. The standard of hot food is very low.
441. I would still pack a lunch incase he wont eat the hot meal.
442. Its the third day if shool meals at Ennis National School. Hard, im sire many of those boxes above will apply. Just too soon to say
443. My child will eat the ham or chicken from the meal but leaves the rest. I am still packing a full lunch and is looking for another dinner a few hours after school. It has had no real effect or change to our lives.
444. She's too picky
445. If it is uneaten in school then they will eat it at home instead of having snacks
446. It's made him more open to trying different foods because he sees other children eating things he refused at home.
447. It does not help that much. My children are asking me to refuse the meal because they don't like how it taste, and look. The past few weeks he brings back home the hot lunch. Also we noticed compared with last year that the quality of the food is lower.
448. It’s not nice
449. "For the first few months they didn't feel well.
We cut down to 1 day a week but she doesn't eat the food "
450. "Encouraged your child to attend school more regularly"- really? The school Must Educate them-that i the target for the new generation... Very strange to have such question in here... Unbelievable...
451. My child more than often doesn’t eat the meal so it has no affect.
452. Makes the mornings much easier not having to prepare lunch.
453. She doesn't like a lot of the meals even when she has tried them.
454. "It only started 12th January 2026. Options are OK but could be better. Hard to know what my two boy eat as the remainder of the food is being picked up by provider 'the Lunchbag'"
455. Aa of late the scheme hasn’t helped at all - i have still been giving my child some form of lunch going to school as it is very rare now that he will eat his hot meal choice.
456. She is a migrant and hot meal helped her to adopted to food in EU and Ireland .
457. It has expanded my child’s palate and willingness to try new foods
458. Child now trying new foods and enjoying them.
459. I feel the general standard of food is insufficiently good, meaning my child brings his food home uneaten, leading to unnecessary waste and an extra burden in terms of both porterage and disposal.
460. No affect

461. One child eats it and one child does not . I still pack a full lunch daily for both my children . The food sweats in the cardboard box. I don't find it very appealing for them.
462. More willing to try something different initially
463. My child may eat more when their friends are also sitting down to eat.
464. Helping him to try new foods
465. Encouraged him to try different food.
466. The hot meal is important,because a child spend half a day,in each days in school.In order for a child to be happy and healthy in class,he needs a hot meal
467. Helps the child to try variety if food
468. He is eating more.
469. It hasn't, it has created more waste and hugely time consuming to select from menu. Total waste of state funds.
470. He is happy to participate in the scheme but we are ordering very plain/processed meals. Just pasta, noodles, chicken wrap.
471. Don’t think variety is healthy or encourages children to eat healthy
472. No difference. I still give my son a lunch as he generally doesn't eat the food
473. I don't think it helped
474. More Choice ideas
475. Hi there my kids like all kids can be tricky eaters .we try see what they like from trying selection of hot lunches available. Like all kids they can be fussy .I tend like alot of parents send in lunch every day . Being honest we have dinner together everyday and unlike other children who maybe dont get an evening meal . This should maybe only be offended to them as it must cost government a fortune for i know alot of it is binned. Where upon kids who know that they won't get evening meal would appreciate it more .
476. “They have supported us more than we ever expected. We are very grateful for everything you have done. Thank you.”
477. My child orders snacks but not hot Meal anymore as she does not like them.
478. I’m trying to get my child to try different foods it’s not really working as she sticks to the same thing each week and sometimes doesn’t even open the box
479. Less stress for me trying to think of new lunches every day and I like the fact she is eating a hot meal in winter.
480. Turned them off certain foods
481. Unfortunately the menu/ingredients have changed so much. My kids used yo like the food but now no longer eat them. This seems to be reported by many students in the school. Proving pointless
482. I disagree that children arent taking the food home. Parents have no idea what has been eaten / if your child is trying new foods.
483. Added an additional peer based social dimension to eating. The child is more willing to try new foods when they see others eating them to.
484. Exposed and encouraged my "fussy eater" child to eat a wider variety of foods which I am extremely grateful for.

485. I like that my child eats not only cold snacks at school, but also warm food.
486. Not sure it has helped as such. They still need another lunch going in.
487. Food presented in a box, child not used to this, hates seeing the box without looking inside.
488. Its a brilliant scheme with good variety for them to choose from
489. "My child still takes his own lunch to school everyday as sometimes meals too hot when given to them so cant eat at guven time
Despite all the choices not liked, ie would like the cheese roll but because it's melted cheese not eating butvif ordinary cheese roll it would be eaten
It would be nice if a choice of a sandwich on it (I know this not hot meal but better than pizza or sausage sandwich which is on menu choice etc)
Alot of food waste "
490. More stress as more food waste. Still have to send full lunches.
491. It hasn't helped at all. In my opinion, the food isn't healthy. My child gets plain pasta and barely eats it. I send a lunch with him
492. My son has a food restriction and tolerance so this helps him he's often inquired and been curious about what other kids eat and had even trade foods that he normally wouldn't
493. encouraged him to try other foods he normally wudn t see
494. It has contributed to food waste as my child does not like a lot of the options. I feel the quality has gone down since starting the programme. It started off with tasty food but it has declined in quality.
495. "I would like an option for No Lunch some days. I have emailed The Lunch Bag in relation to this and it cannot be done unless we contact the school and opt out completely.
A cold option eg sandwich etc would also be preferable "
496. Getting a hot meal on a cold day.
497. They only eat one if the meals. It makes them feel like they are doing the same as their peers but it’s not giving any nutritional value to their diet
498. Not as hungry when he comes home from school which is great! Better meals full of protein, carbs and healthy fats. I'm a big fan but my son is a good eater.
499. They don't eat alot at lunchtime. Don't like taste of food. They eat varied diet at jome
500. My child is excited to go to school to see what he has for lunch that day, he also has food adversaries and is trying out more varieties of foods
501. Currently cold lunch in our school
502. Trying different food
503. There has been some stress with the change to hot meals (only started a few days ago) but so far it seems to be going well.
504. Given our child an decision over what the can eat during the day, which is helpful in making her feel independant. She is however ceoliac, and options are limited, but there are still items she will be able to choose. The scheme is appreciated, but it would be great if there was a broader choise

Q11. If not, would you like to tell us more about this?

1. We were just told it would be introduced at some time!!
2. Have not heard further details of what it will entail. Concerned about waste. Also would like sandwich option in addition to got meals.
3. There is no chance that my child will eat any of it and from what I've heard from friends and family the meals provided are usually at best low quality and unappealing and at worst undercooked and unsafe to eat. I'm apprehensive about what accommodations will be made to suit her extreme dietary needs and whether the smell and sight of the food will be too much for her to cope with
4. There just seems to be constant delays it is an old school with no access to a kitchen
5. I hear there is a lot of waste in the scheme so would worry about that
6. They just said over a year ago they were hoping to bring it to the school but no date or information given
7. Principle didn't want to introduce hot food so purposely missed initial deadline for application in 2025, has now informed that it will be coming soon
8. very little info given
9. Our school has applied for the scheme following requests from parents. However a number of logistical challenges have been encountered (not sure if these are unsurmountable or not) and the plans have been downgraded to "cold meals" with the possibility of revisiting hot meals at some point in the future. I don't think this will be happening any time soon.
10. We need a concrete start date soon
11. Very little has been shared to date. The meals were meant to have been in place in September but got delayed and again after Christmas but are again delayed. To be honest after seeing what my nephews and cousins kids get in their school meals I'd rather they weren't there. From what I have seen the food isn't healthy and its a waste. The school day is short enough, and now they have to squish in time for a hot meal in too.
12. My child has ARFID and sensory issues and having the smell of hot food in the classroom (as they have no where else to eat) will be a nightmare for him. He won't eat any of it. I am concerned about the quality and variety of food and the waste
13. It was due to be rolled out Sept 25. Then it was delayed to Jan 2026 and weve been told it will now be another "few" weeks with no preparatory work even started to accommodate the roll out. I envisage it will be at least Easter before it might happen
14. The information relating to the roll out has been limited and it was supposed to be introduced this month but has been moved again so it is unclear when it will happen now.
15. As an SNA in s school I see the quality of food supplied and the waste
16. information shared is very limited at the moment.
17. It's been going on too long. We should have the hot meals by now!

18. From speaking with other parents at other schools, it appears that there is a considerable amount of Ultra Processed Foods which I think is ridiculous for our children's health! Also, parents have said that the waste is quite substantial, bringing food home to put in the bin. It's not something I agree with as I think the funds can be put to good use elsewhere. The amount of packaging, food waste, labour to go into something that a large number of people do not need or use correctly.
19. The emphasis seems to be on finding the cheapest supplier. The Department needs to be willing to pay more for suppliers that provide better nutritional quality food and have greener / more sustainable practices.
20. No clear.impending date as yet TBC
21. We are waiting on 3 phase electricity to be connected for the last two years so in the mean time they have cold lunch service which has been very disappointing and only creates more waste. I dont have picky eaters and the nutrition element is minimal and its not very filling. Doesnt make sense that a junior infant gets the same size lunch as a 6th class student
22. Still no start date, was expected in Sep 2025.
23. Don’t think it’s necessary for all schools, concerned about quality of food, children eating too much ie dinner in school and at home, waste, time taken from teachers, money could be spent elsewhere
24. We dont have a proper plan in place with a timeline for getting them
25. They will be reheated pre-prepared meals. We won't know the ingredients
26. I feel that the money being used for hot school meals would be better directed elsewhere like resources for children with additional needs. I have no objection to providing children at school with a healthy, balanced lunch, such as a sandwich, fruit and a drink, but they really don't need to be having a hot meal that is like a dinner, at school. In addition, we will actually inadvertently encourage overeating and contribute to the growing obesity crisis by encouraging children to have two whole meal dinners per day. Thankfully in Ireland we don't face largescale food poverty, so most children will end up having a dinner at school and a dinner at home in the evening. Coupled with the fact that much of the food will be processed and prepacked in factory settings, I would have concerns about the nutritional value and overall composition of the meals. I understand that there is no distinction between portion sizes for children, so that a child in 1st class will be eating the same portion as a child in 6th class, with no discrepancy made for age or food requirements of the child. Many schools do not have the facilities to provide hot school meals or their distribution and it will fall to the teachers to provide the meals to the children or for schools to pay additional staff to distribute them. Given our climate crisis and the huge issue of food waste we in Ireland currently experience, I have major concerns that all the money poured into the hot school meals provision, will actually contribute to food waste when much of the food goes uneaten or half eaten and is thrown out. Overall I feel the current programme is not fit for purpose and is money poorly spent.

27. I guess it is just speed of implementation. I know they are trying to source good food and that GOOD food is a challenge for this scheme. I only want it if the food is actually good, otherwise I am better off giving my child food from home.
28. "I have significant concerns about this entire programme, outlined below.
Food waste
From speaking with parents in schools where this programme has already been introduced, food waste has emerged as a serious issue. I only have to look at the level of waste generated by initiatives such as The Food Dudes programme as a benchmark. There is a real risk that large quantities of food will go uneaten and discarded.
Nutritional quality
There appears to be no central oversight from either the Department of Social Protection or the Department of Education. Responsibility for the nutritional quality of meals rests entirely with individual suppliers, leaving scope for standards to be compromised over time.
Value for money
I understand that the annual cost of this scheme is approximately €150 million. I have concerns as to whether this represents the best use of public funds, particularly when there are ongoing shortages in areas such as special needs assistants and classroom resources.
Unintended consequences of good intentions
For many families, the evening meal is an important time when children see parents cooking and when families sit down together to share a meal. I am concerned that this tradition, and the learning and connection that come with it, may be gradually eroded.
Environmental impact
Our school, like many rural national schools, does not have kitchen facilities. Meals would therefore need to be transported daily from another location, potentially involving journeys of several hours. This raises concerns about both environmental impact and sustainability."
29. I'd like to know how soon they plan on starting the scheme as I have three children and will greatly appreciate the meals
30. They have just announced that the meals will start next Monday, but I don't have any information about the type of food, how my child will be encouraged to eat the meals, what information I will get back on how much they've eaten - basically we've had no info. except for the start date.
31. Ongoing delay with implementing the Hot School Meals Scheme at our school but seems to be up and running in all other schools in our area.
32. I would like more info on nutritional details. How food is prepared etc
33. Nothing about when they have started the process, how long it takes. 34. We had hot school meals in St. James, Bushypark National School, Galway City up till Spring 2025 as this was a trial school but the school then changed from Carambola provider and the new provider never started. So no school meals for almost one year now. This is very disappointing. It was to have started after October mid term break but still has not started.

34. We had hot school meals in St. James, Bushypark National School, Galway City up till Spring 2025 as this was a trial school but the school then changed from Carambola provider and the new provider never started. So no school meals for almost one year now. This is very disappointing. It was to have started after October mid term break but still has not started.
35. The scheme has enormous issues with availability to rural schools. Principals are forced to try to find suppliers at the same cost for food and transport to tiny rural schools as to larger schools in towns. Thus, our school has been unable to find any supplier to agree to supply our small, rural school. The closest agree we almost succeeded with was with a large supplier based more than 2 hours away. It makes no sense for the government to subsidize one huge business to mass-produce meals and ship them for hours across multiple counties. It would make more sense to provide greater subsidies to smaller, more remote schools to allow them to supply the food from a local source at a greater cost.
36. We have no details of how this will work other than hopefully it’s this term. Timescales are too long and the children keep asking when.
37. We have not been given any information about it.
38. I am not entirely sure that this scheme is necessary in every school and that it is cost productive.
39. We don't have a definite date for hot meals being introduced as yet. New food/nutrition standards from DEY have delayed the introduction in our school.
40. We are unsure when it will begin. Unsure if it will begin and I have concerns over quality of the food. The quality of the food may not remain high as standards could drop to cheapen the product over time.
41. We have not been given much information. We have no timeframe of when it will happen. At this stage we might get it September (but I only know this because I’m on the PA)
42. "The school has made it very clear they do not want to introduce Hot School Meals to our school. Eventually applied due to pressure from parents.
Our school was on the Department list published in April 2025. School had potential supplier in for tastings in June 2025, they chose a supplier June 2025 and it was expected hot meals would be introduced in September 2025. We were then told by the school there was an issue on the Department side which was delaying things & we will be lucky to see the hot meals started before the end of June 2026.
I recently had a parliamentary question submitted to the Department and they confirmed no issue on their side, that our school has only started the procurement process.
Our school clearly do not want to have to deal with the hot meals scheme and are delaying introducing it for as long as they can which is very disappointing."
43. The school keeps postponing - avoiding updates and information - clear sign they are against it

44. "Our school was unable to get the hot meals in as there were issues around keeping the meals hot. A cold lunch was introduced in the interim. School is now looking at switching to hot with the introduction of the “hubs” for keeping food hot. Not happy about the fact that food is not allowed to be sent home with the child and must be discarded by the school. Child is autistic and without this being sent home we have no way to know how much the child has eaten. Child has sensory issues around food and has a limited diet and if we cannot be sure food is being eaten we cannot adjust order or send supplemental food to offset. Previously the food planned for the hot meals was not suitable for children like mine as all food is serves in one tub with no option to separate out foods so foods are not touching on the plate and no option for plain foods. I have asked the school to consider this as the hot food is being rendered at the moment. If the foods cannot be served separately then it is likely we will have to revert to sending cold lunch again, as child is unlikely to eat what is offered. We will continue to order and offer, in the hopes of watching peers eat similar food will encourage them to partake. "
45. We had hot meals at our school but can no longer find a provider. Potential providers have told us the scheme is not financially viable.
46. Little information shared to date as scheme not yet implemented, and vendor not selected yet, so no info on types and quality of food to be offered, or detail on how it will be managed in practice
47. Original provider picked pulled out due to new government restrictions/regulations. Meals were supposed to come in September. Now January and still not sorted
48. The scheme date for the meals introduction has been repeatedly put back. This scheme should have started two years ago and is still viable.
49. We eat organic locally grown food. I would like school meals to be of same quality- organic and Irish produce.
50. We were told we were getting it about a year ago and no sign
51. I am on the parents council and we have repeatedly asked our school for updates on it and they haven't responded with a satisfactory answer they have told us it out of their hands and with the department.
52. I think the hot lunches in schools will result in a lot of food and packaging waste. I also would question the nutritional quality of meals that will be delivered. I live in a privileged area and acknowledge that the hot meals will bring a lot of value to disadvantaged areas. I think there should be separate approaches adopted to reflect same.
53. No communication at all regarding the plans for hot lunches
54. No current information given to parents on when the hot meals will commence .
55. No definitive timeliness for implementation
56. I have not received confirmation that hot school meals is going ahead and when it might start.58. No the speed required for implementation
57. I would like to know what supplier it is
58. No the speed required for implementation

58. We are waiting months for the scheme to be introduced, the school next door aren't their second year of it. The options are not child friendly- things like bacon and cabbage? I don't know a single child who will eat that. We won't be getting the left overs so we will have no way of seeing how much our children have eaten. Bread rolls and crackers would be better at this stage as we are still sending in full lunches.
60. Hot meals haven't been finalised yet so were not sure when it will be up and running. It's in the process seemingly.
61. It's taken so long and I'm not sure what the schools approach is to it....seems to be not so keen.

Q13. If you selected "Other," please tell us more about how the scheme would help you or your child:

1. Save time
2. n/a
3. Child fed up with sandwiches and wraps.....a battle each day to try and give her something nourishing especially in cold weather. Hot foot she would definitely eat.
4. Picky eater. Might encourage new foods
5. None
6. Social benefits of eating together
7. Na
8. No
9. Try new foods
10. I think a breakfast (or toast) would be helpful to encourage children into school early in the morning
11. N/A
12. All of them make sense
13. ..
14. N/A
15. N/A
16. na
17. It would be nice for the kids to have warm meals instead of cold.
18. If the scheme is created and supervised by nutritionists, then it should provide children with all the required macro and micro nutrients and avoid processed meats, salty industrial foods, while giving more focus to legumes, vegetables and a more balanced weekly diet. Is this in place?
19. I would like my children to have the hot meal option
20. N/A
21. N/a
22. convenience, nutrition
23. Potential for improved awareness of nutrition, social benefits of sharing meals with peers, taking more time over meals (hopefully!), reponsibility for tasks such as meal delivery etc.

24. To me, this does not appear to be a good idea. My children attend a large school, and due to its size we have been informed that it will take time for hot meals to be implemented. While the school is hopeful that this will happen within the current school year, I am concerned about where the necessary fridges, ovens, and other equipment will be housed. If space is taken away from classrooms or other essential school amenities to accommodate these facilities, then this would not be appropriate. The school already has very limited space.
25. Hot meal in school very important on cold days
26. Children will benefit physiologically and emotionally by eating fresh hot food, instead of snacks and sandwiches
27. Healthier eating habits
28. He's a fussy eater and it would encourage him to eat vegetables and try new meals
29. It will not help my child
30. No comparisons between children and what they bring to school.
31. Nice to have option of hot meal during the day .
32. encourage his independency eating with other children and reinforcing his confidence.
33. He would be more open to trying different foods with his peers
34. "Introduce new foods."
35. In winter a hot meal would be nicer than a lunchbox meal we can send from home, and in warm weather it would save food safety concerns about food sitting outside the fridge for several hours.
36. "If the food is not healthy and good produce used, I'm not interested in it being in my kids school.
I have heard terrible feedback from a lot of schools re:waste, non nutritional food and it actually making good eaters picky due to peer pressures in a classroom setting. "
37. Choice ... parents need to be allowed to chose if they are given option not schools decision. Principal does not want the free school meals.
38. Warm them up on cold days
39. Child is very picky eater but more likely to try new things with peers
40. Allow children to experience positive social connections in the school environment without being linked to the curriculum, may also be a positive benefit for indirect teaching of SPHE for classes 4-6th.
41. My child craves warm food and won't eat cold lunches. She comes home from school starving.
42. Hopefully offer a nutritious meal and to help concentration.
43. My child is a fussy eater and likes hot food, so is very picky at what goes in her school lunch box and often doesn't eat much at school only snacks until she returns home again. The hot lunch meant she ate more during school and a variety.
44. Well being & community spirit. Resilience if linked with sustainability and growing some ingredients in school garden and using local produce

45. Allow children to have a warm meal during the winter months and to keep a diversification of taste and have access to a balanced diet for lunch which is not always easy to achieve when preparing lunch boxes.
46. I know I am a lucky parent who is able to provide hot meals for our children and they are all good eaters therefore I don't think this will aid me and others who are lucky enough to be in the same position. In my opinion I don't think there is a large percentage of families in this area who actually need this scheme
47. We would be interested if the meals were balanced and of good quality. We have heard v v mixed reports.
48. To eat a warm meal at school
49. Has taken massive pressure off our family very busy mornings, kids refuse to eat the same things for lunch, one child has T1 Diabetes so having a varied but rotating menu with full nutritional information makes it easier for us, the SNA and the school to manage each day. Their lunches sre almost always eaten fully - or sometimes finished for snack after school.
50. Build healthy eating habbits
51. My child currently has to travel 1 and 1/2 hours on a bus to a special school so having a hot lunch would help his learning.
52. It will only help if the scheme provides wholesome nourishing foods. At present we receive the cold lunches. I ordered the brown bread option but it is not the higher quality brown bread, n kids wouldnt eat it. The rolls are not wholesome etc. My worry is that the hot lunches will include additives etc that are not best for children's health etc
53. Provide the option of a hot meals, rather than cold lunches.
54. N/A (see response below)
55. I am excited for the hot meals, to ensure my children get a warm meal for lunch especially over the colder months, nutritious warm meals are always best.
56. My two daughters are coeliac, so they would have to be provided with gluten free food, and I feel that this would just broaden their horizons of what gluten free food is available.
57. There is not sufficient time provided at school for my child to eat their lunch and other kids are eating junk, sweets, biscuits and crisps, whilst I send my child to school with a balanced lunch at the school enforces healthy lunches, but they are not monitored.
58. More nutrition
59. "This will depend on what is served
Currently the cold meal is not halal, so we stick to dry food & snacks. We still bring our lunch. "
60. It might get him to try different foods
61. It would be great to get a hot meal into my children during the day, they get bored of sandwiches
62. Hot meal will give child good balance of nutrients and healthy concern, definitely needed specially in the cold winter! Hope SPN Foxwoods cork will be arranged soon. Thank you very much.

63. Through peer support, encourage them to try new foods. Fussy eaters!
64. Get child to try different types of food
65. It’s in every other school locally & it’s not fair that our school hasn’t offered to us. Can’t understand why not.
66. Promote different foods, save time in lunches at home, would want healthy lunches
67. The option of hot meals would be a great addition in our child’s school..however only after schools with children in more need are already provided for under the scheme.

Q19. Is there anything else which you would like to add?

1. Hopefully it will happen soon!
2. There is great variety for food for children who this suits but for those who do not there are not enough of plain choices available
3. I think portions should be small
4. I would be delighted to have hot meals in my child's school but only if healthy. If it's being funded by the state then it should at least be nutritional. The state should set an example. If it's just nuggets and other UPFs then I'll stick to a cold packed lunch
5. This is a great initiative which will bring us a level higher in quality of life for our children! Full support
6. No
7. A meal arrives for each child even when children know in advance they will be absent Facility should exist for parents to mark child absent in advance (holidays, wedding etc.) and the child will not receive a meal that day - to cut waste If the child is sick it is different But with so many families taking kids out of school during term for holidays this might help
8. No
9. The scheme should be in all schools, it shouldn’t be at the choice of the principal. If there are difficulties implementing the scheme in the school the department should resolve them. It’s totally wrong that some schools have it and others don’t.
10. I really do understand the premise behind it and think it is good for all children to have a hot meal in school but without providing canteen for the kids to sit in and proper choice of freshly cooked food I don't see it as a positive for our family
11. There is poor selection of meals - not much to choose from if we wanted our child to eat a different meal every day. Very few meals offer good balance between carbohydrates, protein and fat. Very few meals have an adequate serving of vegetables.
12. Please continue the scheme
13. Its a great scheme but food needs to be simplified. Too many spicy meals and tomato sauces. A simple roll, ham or cheese sandwich. The sub was a great success but taken of the menu.

13. Its a great scheme but food needs to be simplified. Too many spicy meals and tomato sauces. A simple roll, ham or cheese sandwich. The sub was a great success but taken of the menu.
14. Quality assurance of food provision by this scheme will ensure it's success.
15. Notuing comes to mind.
16. I don't know how much my child has eaten during the day or if they have eaten any of the hot meal provided. I provide a packed lunch to ensure he has something to eat.
17. Time to eat in school is limited also.
18. There is a lot of pasta on the menu.
19. IT seems like the money spent on this scheme could be better spent elsewhere (on school facilities, learning equipment etc), Personally I would prefer the scheme were scrapped.
20. N/A
21. Can create a lot of food and packaging waste
22. N/a
23. Some parents seem to think it's unhealthy..in my son's class of 20..Only 2 get the lunch..my son likes it.mayve a better marketing plan and greater variety...and even fruit/veg I think ..
24. The options could be more varied
25. More options the children will actually eat
26. If schools were to ask for feedback we could provide better response to individual schools rather than this very general response as across so many schools and providers vary across locations
27. I'm very happy with the hot food idea but not with the company my school picked the lunch bag
28. can a cold meal option - sandwich /wrap be offered
29. It would be nice to have a list of meals that are usually used in schools who provide them.
30. A better mixed variety of what's available
31. Hot meals only in the school a few weeks, but I have noticed that while there are many meal options, these are mainly limited to either a meat option or a vegetable option, with the rice or pasta dishes. I understand that this is to encourage children who don't eat vegetables, but it to the detriment of children who eat veg and meat.
32. It would be nice to have the option of a cold meal (e.g. sandwich, fruit and snack)
33. Would be nice to have a survey on what meals the kids like so there is an option of something they like every day. Sometimes I cannot find something they cannot choose something so I give a packed lunch
34. Good iniative that needs work and development. Provide healthy cold lunches either. Reallocate funding
35. I think it’s a great scheme to have but as discussed I don’t think it’s reliable unless it’s the snacks.
36. In theory it is a good idea but most schools are not set up for a canteen so there is a lot of waste that goes with pre-pack meals

37. More frequent feedback would be helpful so that the children are empowered to provide feedback and make change.
38. Our school uses FreshToday and the food is honestly inedible. Absolutely horrendous experience with below par ingredients and no option of a basic sandwich, yoghurt, cheese, crackers, fruit etc.... It literally is like slop and the slop tastes of cardboard!! Awful food waste and money.
39. Would like to see better quality, fresher and healthier meal options
40. No
41. Option to include veg or not
42. The cold meals were a better option.
43. Not sure of the quality of the food, is it ultra processed? Could this money be put to better use or targeted to families most in need.
44. My child can be a picky eater so leaves alot of the food. But I am hoping she will grow out of that.
45. n/a
46. Could sandwiches be added as an option?
47. More options for smaller meals or sandwich/ snacks
48. Child should be able to bring home their food if not finished
49. I don't get to see what the food is like or how much of it they eat.
50. Put sandwich a choice
51. No
52. We were promised hot meals over 1 year ago and no update.
53. No
54. No
55. Very happy. Think it is a great scheme
56. Importance of quality
57. This is a great initiative and would be wonderful if it were rolled out as a standard
58. No
59. n/a
60. Why the preference to hot meals? Nice rolls or sandwiches should be provided as an option also.
61. a greater variety of food to choose from would be great - and the meals need to scale with the ages of the children - there is totally no point giving a big 4th or 5th or 6th classer the same size meals as a jun or sen infant class
62. Reserving judgement as we are only one week in but I would have an issue with the quality of produce being used and how processed they are
63. This scheme should be run by the state and not by for profit companies (who will always have to keep an eye on their profit). The state should have set out guidelines by dieticians regarding salt/ sugar /processed foods. I think it would be *as useful for children to get a cold lunch - for example a sandwich, piece of fruit, yoghurt/ carton of milk/ bread roll so the option is there to take food home for children who may not get another meal or other food during the day. Taking home food that was previously heated is less appealing to eat hours later. I do think it is a positive introduction and if it helps any family with the cost of living crisis and feeding their children it is worthwhile, however it was rushes and not thought through properly.

64. Hot meals should be replaced with fresh fruit, fresh vegetables and fresh sandwiches or soups.
65. I think providing a cold lunch would be more beneficial as I am aware of a large number of students who availed of the cold lunch during the care taker/ sectary strike and the same children will not eat the hot lunch.
66. Na
67. I think this is an excellent service being provided to families.
68. We have a health and ovesity crisis. Lots of kids are getting a hot meal in school, another in afterschool and more food when they get home. Its too much. I know this was well intentioned but a good quality sandwich would have sufficed besides a poor hot meal
69. The time to eat seems to be the biggest barrier. Also some vendors better than others but overall happy
70. No
71. It is a very tough balance to strike- food kids will eat and actual nutritional food- My son now eats the same thing 3 days a week- chicken tenders/slice of pizza- the other 2 days he brings in a sandwich as he does not like the other choices-- however- other people in the class like the food and eat it every day. The issue is the texture of all the food after being reheated- nothing will fix that unless the school actually cook the food on site- this is just not possible so we have to work with what we have. The food is better than nothing and hopefully as time goes on, it will just continue to improve.
72. More attention to a balanced diet and healthy options would be extremely beneficial. Kids are not getting enough good food to grow up healthier and make responsible choices in the future.
73. Hot school meals are not available in my childs school. They are only able to avail of cold lunches, due to the requirement for a person to heat the lunches on site each day. The school is a small school with 20 pupils and it is not financially feasible for the school meal provider to hire a person to heat the meals and provide the meals.
74. I would like a proper survey of waste conducted and a review of providers using hubs as a work around , travel times etc... Kids should have a relationship from table to fork and this ain't happening . The quality of protein in the 19 meals we sampled was poor.
75. I would love more variety if possible. But I am much satisfied overall, I think it's a great idea and I am very happy that my school is part of the hot schools meals scheme
76. It took me weeks to opt my child out of this service as there was too much food being wasted. The company doing it wanted the school to cancel, the school said the company had to cancel. Meals were arriving for her long after I had requested them to stop.
77. Quality of food is poor & only able to get hot food option. I don’t need children to eat dinner in school & then again at home.
78. There should be options for schools to e.g. just to provide fruit. it seems like a waste of money
79. As a nutritionist I would happily support my child's school to review and make healthier proposals for the Hot School Meals Scheme.

80. Our school said ‘that a decision was made that the hot meals won’t be available in the school from January 2026 onwards as originally planned. After going through the long process of etenders and consulting with representatives from the school community and the board of management.’
81. The hot meal scheme is a brilliant initiative, provided that the food offered is genuinely healthy. By healthy, I don’t simply mean bread and cheese, but the quality and ingredients that go into the food. Currently, my child receives a sandwich, but the list of ingredients is very long. Even the wholemeal bread contains a significant number of preservatives and additives. He has also received cold pasta bolognese, and again, the ingredient list is extensive. I understand that pasta and sauce naturally involve multiple components, but I can barely see any vegetables listed in the sauce itself. If meals are being provided, I believe they should truly reflect healthy nutrition. Alongside this, it would be great to build awareness so that children understand the value of eating a healthy, balanced meal.
82. A couple more choices or adding a fruit / vegetable side would be great.
83. Too many pasta options. Is meat provided guaranteed irish
84. I think the quality of some of the food needs to be called into question - in particular the meat.
85. The amount of chemicals in food is a pure scandal. Kids forced by peer pressure to eat pure rubbish
86. Better guidelines on portion and more transparency about the portion sizes being provided to children.
87. Menu is not great, very limited what my children will eat maybe 1 or 2 meals. Soup and roll or fresh sandwiches should be an option instead of hot dinner
88. Works in France where proper eating habits. Not here. Too short a day with lack of facilities
89. No
90. Longer breaks need to be given in school even if that means extending the school day. Hot and cold options should be available in each school.
91. Food is poor quality and looks anemic the chicken goujons do be white and look raw. I would prefer cold lunch options as children having 2 hot meals a day will be obese soon enough whg can't a cold lunch be offered sandwiches wraps crackers juice and fruit and yogurt I think there would be far less wastage as we are throwing it in the compost bin everyday as she doesn't like any of it and has tried all the options
92. Quality of the food has dropped dramatically since its inception. I believe the food waste is astronomical, which equates to a complete waste of money. The ban on ""non-nutritional"" foods has also had an impact. Whilst my child is not affected by this, I do have concerns. The initial idea behind hot lunches was to try and eliviate child poverty. The children whodesperately need a hot lunch provided to them are being forgotten about yet again as the voices of those parents regarding healthy foods is louder than the people in poverty who do not advocate for their children. I would much prefer to see a hungry child eat a ""non-nutrional"" meal of sausages & beans / ham sandwich than not eat a beansprout curry! I feel the intended purpose of the scheme has been lost.

93. Insulting to parents to try to pass this off as healthy food and engagement with Glanmore foods was frustrating
94. There are families who badly need this hot meal scheme in our local rural school and I feel the school is failing both the children and their families
95. Huge packaging waste/recycling. More work on teachers. Why can't they have the option of a cold lunch/sandwich, fruit etc. Quality is only ok. The cost of the scheme is enormous. Is there a cost benefit analysis? Could disadvantage schools/kids be targeted in a better way?
96. Standards need to be set for the food packaging to protect the children. No item used sound contain BPA. Reusable items should be considered. Inclusion of traditional Irish cuisine should be expanded. I like the other options which as noodles, pasta, curries etc but feel there isn't enough choice of Irish meals.
97. I would like to see snack options for morning break or alternatives like a roll or a sandwich and some fruit being offered.
98. I think there could be more joined up thinking particularly around the procurement of providers I am based in a rural area with a boys school and a girls school, the schools do not use the same provider, how is this economical or sustainable - to have 2 companies delivering meals each day in the same small village
99. Hot food is an amazing service but the lack of options for a child who is a plain eater is disappointing. We have to send a packed lunch each day in case food is mixed as it is all given in the same container and not always separated.
100. Our school has advised that the meal portions are age appropriate however my son who is in second class is a bigger child for his age, he is in age 13-14 clothes, could eat a bigger portion. The quality of food is great and we are very grateful that our son gets a hot meal at school.
101. Removal of ""treat"" foods very positive but no replacement so reduced choice/variety. Significant difference in standard/quality depending on provider. Local suppliers should be supported to provide service to local schools rather that few centralised providers based far away.
102. I hope it gets implemented very soon. I hope my girl will like the hot menu and will eat better than her cold lunch everyday.
103. In regards to some dishes that come with "mash" most parents have commented that it comes home as it isn't real mash! It can be quite runny and ruin the other food with it
104. No
105. I think choice and keeping up the quality of food is important. The children opinion is vital. As they vote by not eating the food. Overall I appreciate the Hot Meal Service and glad it's in our school.
106. I appreciate the scheme so much! My only feedback is very specific to my son, he's got trouble with sauces and some textures in food. I wish there were more options that came without any sauces, beyond the plain pasta (eg a chicken and potato dish without beans).

107. The quality of the food.Offer a good sandwich and fruit would be a better alternative.Save money and spend the money on school facilities.
108. I have friends whose children receive food that is not edible, and as a result they end up sending lunches from home anyway. I do not believe this is the best use of resources.
109. If there was some segregation within the container I believe it would be more appealing for kids to eat. Some may just see something they dont like straight away and decide not to even try. If different parts of the meal were segrgated it would also allow better visibility over what is not been eaten within the meal.
110. From speaking to parents on other schools, the standard of meals provided is very poor. Additionally, the time allocated to eating lunch is not sufficient as it is, so eating a hot lunch in such a short amount of time to me is not encouraging good eating habits
111. I stopped my child receiving a hot meal as she was eating goujons and/or sausages every day. These, in my opinion should be a Friday option only. There was no vegetable choice with these options either. Also once a child commented that they didn't like a certain meal, the other children suddenly didn't like it. She reported back that some food was soggy Eg fish fingers.
112. There should be a handful of choices only—- shepherds pie, spaghetti bolognese, mild curry, savoury mince, and a fish dish. All
113. Vegetables should be included but hidden. This should then remove waste, all dietary requirements are covered and just a bit of cop on needed for the whole thing to stop these companies making massive money and the government loosing money and children who actually need the hot meals are getting fed. "
114. I think there needs to be more variety and mix it up everyone and then
115. The meals are ultra processed with little nutritional value. Better engagement with the relevant stakeholders is needed to address the issues and ensure this resource is fit for purpose. In house catering should be provided where possible to ensure better standards.
116. If we look at other countries there are many positive models for how this can work ... and how the benefits go beyond the immediately obvious. I would like to see a longer school day, personally, with more time for play, social, eating etc which I think are limited in the current short day.
117. I think these meals are a great idea, especially for the children that may not get a hot meal at home. However, I think there are necessary improvements needed.
118. Would a deli counter be healthier? Salads, wraps etc
119. The app is constantly breakinv down
120. On question 5 above it is not always over 50% brought home but only if it's too dry or very liquid. Sauce on the side would really help or a large portion of sauce to be shared as quite often very dry (noodles, pasta etc though I have started making/sending in a sauce). Was told gravy just tastes like grease. Veg is usually very mushy so not eaten (though my kid prefers raw so still send that in)

121. Sometimes the food (such as pizza) is soggy.
122. Review at national level the time kids have for having food and make sure there are strict guidelines in relation to what each meal should contain as part of a balanced and healthy diet
123. My child is fussy and eats the same things. I find these are too salty. I'd love if the salt content was looked at more
124. Great service!!
125. We are lucky that the quality of food provided to our school seems quite good; however I have heard of other schools not being so lucky. Food providers should be audited to ensure quality and effectiveness in each school
126. Appalling waste of time, money, resources and food. Scheme should be scrapped. DIABOLICAL in every way
127. i'm only giving it a 1 above as it was a good idea from the government to do this but the implementation and follow up is shocking.
128. Some of the food is just not great. The rice is easy cook parboiled rice which is horrible. The pasta sauces look and smell like they are from packets. The choices are very limited and not healthy.
129. Our previous school used lunch bag, which granted us a private company which parents had to pay for but the variety was much better, food looked more appealing and no food waste happened for my kids. "
130. My primary School children withdrew from the scheme due to the poor quality of the food. At the time the portion sizes are not in proportion to what a child in Junior Infants can eat, in comparison to a 6th class child.There is not enough time on School breaks for a younger child to consume so much food. I feel the scheme should be cancelled.
131. There should be an option for hot and cold meals.
132. The options are very carbohydrate based pasta and potatoes
133. Great idea but the quality or time to eat the food was not high enough
134. This is a great service. Thank you! It takes enormous pressure off parents, time-wise, financially and also reduces conflict at home with regards to lunches etc.
135. Money could be better spent elsewhere....not remains coming home means never see exactly what offered why bringing remains home creates extra waste & schoolbag mess
136. Would like to see the menu habe a change uo after aay a school term or something like that, some variety so my child doesnt get sick of it as he only eats the veg pizza at the mo
137. Why does it need to be a hot meal option. On days the kids have outings our hot lunches provider provides rolls/sandwiches etc and the kids love these. With soup it would be ideal for example and not expensive. Choices are poor. It’s costing the country a fortune and the providers don’t care what they produce- the schools don’t want to complain as it’s another issue for them to manage- passing it back to parents. And the companies don’t listen to individual parents as they are employed through schools/scheme. It’s a mess.

138. Nutritional value and variety of food needs to be revised. A very small range of vegetables is used, at least 90% of that beeing root vegetables. The snacks provided (a fruit/day and something more) are often sugar loaded. Fruit option very limited: apples, oranges, bananas; nowadays it's been only apples since few months, and went from full fruit to sliced. Reduced vegetarian options.
139. The food programme idea is good however, financial availability for equipment to meet health regulations don't allow schools to implement it properly - this seems to particularly be the case for smaller schools.
140. Combination of hot meals and sandwiches would be good.
141. I think overall tge hot food can be soggy and not very appetising by the time it is handed to children.
142. I would like to see the portion sizes or what’s actually eaten - that visibility would be good but I understand it’s a school specific choice not to send leftovers home
143. I feel that our school dragged their heels on this, hot school meals are in many many schools already and only after multiple requests are they now bringing it in, in January 2026.i am thankful that eventually we will have it in our school soon. I hope the meals are of good quality, the scheme should only be using Irish and in season produce to support Irish industry, and I hope the ingredients don’t have lots of additives or preservatives as this is very important to me. The pressure on parents at the moment in immense, we are supposed to work like we don’t have children, and rare our children as if we don’t work and it’s very stressful. Raising children is expensive, our family are in the stretched middle class and get very little government supports, I feel we are always paying a huge price financially and in tax with no let up, so this scheme is very welcome.
144. We should have an option to opt out of the scheme and allow child to bring their own packed lunch. Also option of a cold sandwich might be more suitable to be offered.
145. Need to engage children in development of meals for school to find out their likes and dislikes
146. Hardly any vegetarian options. The app account only allows for one parent, which means that the mental load for dealing with the lunch company generally falls entirely to mothers. It took months before an ingredients list was provided to parents. Overall the food is of really poor quality. The scheme itself is very important, but the private companies fulfilling it do not provide good quality food.
147. More vegetarian options that include protein. Children don't often like chick peas or beans especially when not cooked in something. It turns my child off them when she would have eaten then before at home. Currys are used alot but again if a child doesn't like spice then they can't choose them & they are often the only options for vegetarians apart from plain option. The veg tends to be pea/beans carrots which are overcooked & thrown on top of the pasta/rice,

148. The quality of the food is extremely poor it has really gone down hill. the mash potatoe is awful like watered down smash. there was much nicer options last year
149. In my opinion the regular lunch service pre hot meal was sufficient however my children have dinner when they get home from school & I appreciate some kids may not.
150. Simpler options would be better: Plain pasta with a choice of sauces/toppings that the child can add themselves. Soup and bread rolls. If providing currys, pasta sauces etc blend the sauce so there aren't chunks
151. Kids enjoy the interaction of eating with friends and has encouraged them to try new foods. Variety of foods and lack of variety can be a problem to ensure they don’t just eat pasta meals each day - access to fresh fruit or veg snacks are extra
152. I have two vegetarians in my house, and the choice of food for them is poor, and does not reheat well.
153. For new school buildings, the planning committee should explore the idea of a mess/canteen space for children to utilise during hot lunch time, instead of the food being carried to their classrooms. This is already done successfully in many countries outside of Ireland.
154. Ask suppliers to meet with a student rep from each class to give feedback from the children on what not liked
155. I think if there was more choice the kids would be happier.
156. Process for schools to join this is extremely slow
157. Quality of the food is very poor
158. Long delay in availability in my childrens schools, very disappointing
159. I find the negativity around this scheme to be misplaced. It’s a huge benefit to all children and their families. Yes there is some waste but there is with any lunchbox. It’s been a big benefit to our family.
160. Would be great to have a snack too for small lunch
161. Please put a stop to this food waste and complete waste of tax payers money. These funds would be far better used in bringing our classes in line with European averages - not with 34 and 31 children in the class which my two daughters have.
162. I gave a score of six because I have some concerns about the nutritional value of the food. I would also prefer the service to be provided at a local level, as this could improve the nutritional quality of the food while also supporting the local economy.
163. When our school started in May 25 with the program the quality was good and the children were happy with it. Since September it is predominantly pasta based dishes and the potato options are not good quality they seem to be the processed ""smash"". My children are now footing out of the lunches due to the poor quality of the food.
164. The quality of the food is shocking.. dry, burnt at times, supposed to be healthy but are ultra processed not fresh. Not appetitsing for children. Children wont eat them
165. Add more time for lunch time. 20 mins isn’t enough

166. The scheme works great for me as a working mother. However less than 1/3 of the class are getting the hot lunches now, approx 1 year after the scheme starting in our school. My children want to discontinue the hot lunches & there's a lot of pressure as so many others have stopped partaking in the scheme. I think the meals would be more successful if there were options outside of the "traditional dinner" e.g. toasted sandwiches, wraps or rolls or pita pockets with chicken, veg etc. It would be even better if these were served "hot" in line with the scheme.
167. The meals have to be in before 6pm on a Thursday for the following week, which is ridiculous also.
168. My son was super exciting to try the hot food supplied by school. But unfortunately he doesnt like the menu. So he eats his own packed lunch. But its definitely making my son more interested in food. As he see his friends eating it. Will eat more for me at home. As we had issues with his diet intake.
169. I'm in favour and support of the scheme but seeing how it is done in other wealthy countries I can't understand why the investment in the tendering process isn't greater. There should be firm priority on the quality of the meals, including the nutrition factor, quality of ingredients and the variety of the meals and not on providing the cheapest option.
170. All dietary needs should be catered for, with a similar amount of options as the child with no special dietary needs.
171. Meals need to reflect what children eat at home
172. As someone who works full time i think its great thst my child gets a hot meal. I think what he gets is decent enough and i think people whp cpmplain about it clearly have a lot of time on their hands and expect chilsren to be given gourmet meals for lunch! My only convern is thsy its not preparedom the school premises and i would be worried about the re heating etc
173. Please include an option for cold meals e.g. a sandwich or salald if preferred by the child. Also not enough tine given for children to eat lunch either sent in or provided in school.
174. The children don't like the taste of any of the food
175. Quality of the food I have seen doesn't seem great
176. I believe this is a massive waste of money, food & packaging. These initiatives should be more targeted to schools where they are actually needed. The student should be viewed holistically, not just based off different departmental budgets. In reality, if the money had gone into extra SNAs rather than hot meals (that in so many cases were not needed), it would have benefitted students and school life a lot, lot more.
177. I think there would be a lot less waste if cold lunches were provided - sandwiches/wraps/rolls/yoghurt
178. I believe the quality of the hot food is very low when it comes to the nutrition values, the choice is also very limited with the very poor taste, the meals do not look healthy at all. In my opinion the meals encourage children to develop rather not healthy eating habits like preferring to eat meals like food fish and chips and fat burgers. Overall limited choice, low nutrition values and not tasty at all.

179. My child would perform much better if she were provided with a hot lunch, Its very unfair how her school has been overlooked
180. I'd love if there were normal sandwiches as an option for kids, along with a piece of fruit, such as was done during sports day etc.
181. I would like for better quality ingredients to be used. I also don’t like that the uneaten part of the school meal is sent home with my child everyday, the meals often leak into her school bag making a mess. The uneaten meals should be disposed of at school, sitting in a school bag at ambient temperatures for hours is a food poisoning risk if my child were to eat the leftovers after school.
182. It would be great to be able to take things out of the hot lunches ie mash without sausages, pasta and sauce without meatballs etc. This would add more choice for kids who dont eat meat. I would also like to see plain pasta/rice/potatoes with sauces available on the side. Would really help picky kids to have more exposure to new foods. It seems like it would be an easy option to add. I very much look forward to compostable boxes, I was told these will be coming soon.
183. Some children are very plain eaters, I feel that offering at least 1 cold sandwich/roll option each day would benefit a lot of children , in my opinion it would be better that these children are eating something in school rather than nothing. I also feel schools need to push the emphasis on children selecting their food for the week as opposed to the parents because some parents are ordering what they think will look good or what the child should be eating but then the child gets the meal and they won't eat it because it's something they don't like
184. The food being offered, though appreciated, does not always reflect the preference of what my son would eat. The pasta can be hard, cold etc and so won't be eaten. I send him in with a sandwich as well as other snacks just in case he can't eat what is given to him. The school try very hard though. More often than not he will come home with half or uneaten lunches, sometimes he says its because he hasn't had time to eat it, other times, he says the pasta isn't good.
185. The scheme is great as makes sure every kid has a hot meal.
186. He's in 6th class now so unlikely he will ever have school meals. We were told last Spring that it would be introduced but his teacher said he doesn't think it will happen.
187. I think it's a great initiative. It reduces the burden on parents regarding the preparation of school meals. In the long term it would be great if larger schools could move to having a school canteen.
188. I understand we now have a lot of different cultures in our country but when it’s ridiculous that the menu consists mainly of other cultures foods. How is it other schools have the option of fruit and sandwiches etc but ours is just hot food. A lot of people I know have unsubscribed to the hotmeals. My daughter complains the food is soggy and the chicken is pink. Does not give me great confidence in it.

189. My child overall enjoys the scheme but more variety would help to keep the interest
190. Poor quality food. Keep it basic variety of sandwiches and any amount of fruit
191. I get that there are areas where children need these school meals as they have very little at home but in my child's school this isn't the case, it is not a DEIS area, children come to school with Stanley cups and have nannys. I would rather see the money go towards things like more laptops and better tech for the school.
192. My daughter got the meals last year but came home with most of the food uneaten each day. Also, the quality and variety of food on offer is not as healthy as we would like. Therefore, we stopped the meals this year to avoid the food waste. I do think the meals are very useful for some families though to ensure that the kids get a hot meal, but I think the nutritional value should be improved.
193. My child has a great appetite and enjoys most of the options, the only issue I have is that they are small and still requires an extra snack
194. Information needed on the nutrition, quality and choice of food that would be provided. Choices for children with allergies and food intolerances need to be included. I am concerned that allowing children to select their meal, may reduce the nutrition and variety they would get from own home made lunch, carefully packed by parents.
195. It would be fantastic to have more options for the children, even within the choices available. For example, my child doesn't like sauces/cheese and most of the meals come with sauces. It would be great if the plain rice or plain pasta options could have the option of adding some meat /veg to make that choice a more balanced meal. My child is neurodivergent and I feel there are many other children like him who would be able to eat the meals if given a little more choice.
196. My daughter really enjoys the cold packed lunch when its used for outings I fel this could be something children could benefit from as an option
197. All schools should have a canteen and should have longer time to eat
198. I have one girl being offered school meals but my 2 sons are in a boys school which doesn’t have the scheme. I’m making lunches anyway every day so one more/less isn’t that much of a difference. Furthermore my daughter may eat the same meal twice a day if that happens to be on the ‘menu’ at home eg pasta/curry etc
199. Choice of food isn't great . Food is tasteless my child says doesn't like it most days I have to send him in with extra food
200. I think its a fantastic service and vital for children who do not get sufficient food at home.
201. Has to be a better way of targeting children who need hot meals-there is so much food waste in this
202. Small portions sizes, my 6 year old gets the same amount of food as my 11 year old.

203. It’s only up and running since January so far my daughter is happy with the food
204. I believe it is a learning curve for both suppliers, the schools and the children. I think it would be great if the kids' had tasting menus periodically to discover what's new and what might be interesting to eat. I know this sounds like too much of a personalisation but I think it might prevent wastage and repeated rejection of certain meals that can be quite flavourless. Just our 20 cents worth!
205. There is no reason good quality nutritious meals cannot be provided to all children. The offering should focus on wholsesome nutrition with a good variety for children. Some of the offerings that have been brought to my attention are not good quality and lack in nutrition
206. This is a great initiative and we are looking forward to it's introduction in our school in due course
207. One of my children is vegetarian and the options are very limited. I often have to send extra lunch for him when the week has little variety so he doesn’t end up having soup every day
208. The provider we get is the Lunch Bag. Whilst I support hot school meals for schools I think that improvements could be made. With the Lunch Bag there are so many choices, I think too many, with a lot of them focused on chicken and virtually no green vegetables. The lack of veg overall is really disappointing. Also I think it is really pointless including the option of plain pasta or rice on their own. This isn't a meal and I assume a company is getting paid for a full meal. I accept there are children who would choose this option but I think if this is all a child is ordering then the parents should opt out of the scheme. I have seen schools in Spain and France that provide the option of 2 meals for kids to pick from. I think 2 meals made well with good, fresh ingredients that are tasty is a much better option than the inclusion of meals that are basically fast food-like or snacks e.g. chicken goujons, pizza, sausages. A lot of these options are a “once a week treat” with the Lunch Bag but there is nothing stopping you ordering them all/most days. My suggestions for the two options would be a “separate” type option e.g. potato/pasta/rice, veg and meat and a mixed option e.g. cottage pie/spaghetti Bolognese. These options could then be changed each day. I am a dietitian and whilst I don’t work with kids I get questions from parents and whilst I do support the scheme I find it hard to defend. The last time I checked there was one dietitian taken on to review this scheme which is inadequate, we should be looking at the funding for this scheme (surely savings could be made by reducing all the options) and putting down good foundations so that healthy nutritious food is normalised for future generations. I don’t have much faith at the moment. This is not my area of professional interest but I do have a personal interest as a mother of 3 young children. I would be happy to contribute to future discussions.

209. My child loves the school lunches and we are very happy with the variety and the information that we get from our provider (Lunch Bag). We appreciate the effort to ad veggies wherever they can and to make improvements to the overall nutritional value of the meals. We are quite happy with the scheme.
210. Venetian to provide to areas of apparent need. Not where social demographic does not need.
211. Funding better spent on education, support, facilities etc to enable staff to incorporate more exercise into school curriculum "
212. If there was a cold lunch/sandwich option with some fruit, this would be my choice. Hot lunches are not providing children with high quality whole foods like a cold lunch could.
213. Our school used to use the lunch bag company. Food was awful, almost like food you'd get on an airplane. Thankfully we now use a local restaurant called wild thyme. They are fantastic. Great quality food, plenty of variety and proper homecooked meals. We're very luck to have them make the meals.
214. The school sent out questionnaires for the children to complete in 2025 but not parents. we always provide lunch and a hotmeal aside from the school lunch as we do not know if they will eat it. it is a wasted opportunity.
215. Food education needs to be first. See the Japanese and French models. Much food is wasted what is this teaching our children??? This money is wasted and could be used elsewhere.
216. We were told it is not possible to have this scheme due to lack of space in the grounds
217. All schools should have it . More communication to when it show up happen would be great .
218. From talking to other parents, food waste is a concern in their school. According to my daugther, there is no food waste in her class at least. If kids are out of school due to illness or else, their meals gets redistributed to other classes.
219. They say the curry is too spicy and the chicken tenders are soggy.
220. Overall quality is good from the supplier with the exception if the gougans and mashed potato being watery in texture
221. Food all mixed together,if child doesn't like one thing they won't touch anything. Potato cubes and wedges are very soggy. Plain pasta is swimming in the oil. Absolutely disgusting and no child would touch that
222. The portions are huge the choice is elaborate not suiting little fussy eaters there are meals like burritos and sweet and sour chicken that very few 5 and 6 year olds would eat
223. Quality of food is dreadful. Not fully cooked chicken and rock hard pasta.
224. I feel the money spent on this scheme could do a lot of good being spent on other things that the school needs. There are huge amounts of food being wasted
225. Dreadful waste of money that could be used elsewhere and very bad example to children that waste is ok

226. My other daughter couldn’t do it as is vegetarian and doesn’t eat melted cheese or pasta
227. Too little choice. Portions far too small particularly for older children.
228. Portion size are the same for 4 year olds as they are for 12 year olds. Food soggy, wet . Burnt pieces. Protein at a bare minimum. Not enough variety. Very poor quality and tasteless
229. The amount of food that is wasted is quite shocking. More research should have been done and should still be done on how to provide lunches for children that are education and nutrition focused. There is a unique opportunity in school to have children learn good eating habits from each other that they might not necessarily get at home especially in DEIS schools. Eating luke-warm food from a box is not a good habit to form and some of the food choices have no nutritional value at all.
230. Option should be for sandwiches/roll most kids have dinners at home in evening
231. I do not agree with this scheme and think it is a waste of government money. I understand meals were already being provided in DEIS schools which I do thinks is beneficial, but not in every single school.
232. I know there are a number of families that require this and I understand that. I do however struggle with the quality of the food being provided to children. As far as I can see, alot of the families in our local school do not need this and I didn't think it would be more waste and again a threat to our children's health, not to mind the fact that this money could be used for children who really need assistance in education!
233. All the kids hate the potatoes used, they are bad. The quality has dropped a bit since beginning. The menu should change often.
234. I would strongly suggest the scheme is remained as a cold school meals scheme. I am not aware of any evidence that hot food is better nutritionally than cold, or has long term benefits to those from a disadvantaged background. A cold school meals scheme would climate the need for timed delivery, allow food to be eaten at home, shared with family. Foods would be highly appealing to children including fruit, yoghurt, cheese slices, crackers, breadsticks, brown soda bread, cucumbers, rice cakes. All food that is eaten readily by most children I know.
235. Too many food choices at once- less options each day and more variety throughout the year would improve the service. Kids get fed up with the same menu constantly.
236. I appreciate the effort and scope of this scheme. However I feel local. Fresh food, perhaps a free healthy option only tuck shop rather than mass produced options. My child does not like the food but does eat some bits of it.
237. Unfortunately the food is not great to be honest, I would not eat it myself
238. My kids generally aren't enjoying the meals. The pizza in particular doesn't look very appetising & the kids say it's ""soggy"".

239. Service should cater for all students, focus on students in DEIS schools and money spent to provide higher quality whole food for those that need it most.
240. Would like a few more options but my child eats most of the current menu
241. I understand the reasoning for providing a hot lunch but when all the difficulties in providing this leads to poor standard of food and little choice available, a simple sandwich and piece of fruit should be an option to have instead of a hot meal.
242. Great meal selection. But would be great of they could have fish on the menu. Thank you
243. My child is very happy 😊 Thanks
244. My daughter has dairy allergy, very limited options, she is tired of eating the same thing everyday, so now she does not even open the box
245. Can we have cold meals instead please, there is no need for a hot meal during the day - it is a waste of food, time and money!
246. Both my children say the hot food is disgusting. They liked it when they started getting it first from Glanbia but wont touch the Carambolo hot food as its disgusting
247. Idea is fantastic but not rolled out correctly. Food should be healthy. And options of hot/ cold.
248. Please review the merits of the scheme- this money could be used better in other ways
249. Allow for non gravy options and add more veggies
250. Great as my daughter benifits from the hot lunch
251. My daughter brought the meals home uneaten and im not surprised. Some examples are a baguette with sausages (3 tiny cocktail sausages when put in length ways filled not even ⅓ of the baguette) roll could have fit 8! And the plain pasta was covered in some sort of foul smelling oil..food not 1 bit nutritious, bland and bread always wet as left in steamed up bags. We had to cancel the scheme as so awful
252. I'd love to see more fruit & veg added in & more menu variety to include fresher items. The processed food is acceptable but it would be good to include some days where it's less processed. And balance that out the other end by bringing back the sausages!
253. initially the meals were of a good quality and my child, who is not in any way a fussy eater enjoyed them. he has since stopped eating them; the food was returned home daily unfinished. I have since cancelled the orders and reverted to packed lunch as as there was too much food waste. very disappointed that this is the outcome of an otherwise promising food programme
254. Please offer a sandwich rather than a hot meal.
255. There should be a fresh (cold) food option. Sandwich, fruit, yoghurt etc. Portion sizes are an issue. Junior infants are getting the same portion sizes as sixth class. Not all packaging is compostable/ recyclable. Options are so limited so kids end up eating pasta every day.

256. The food is tasteless, dry, and not fresh. It is far from healthy.
257. Less pasta dishes. It would be great to have a choice of a cold wrap or sandwich one day too. Soup and a sandwich would be a nice option in colder months.
258. I really want this to work, but I'm close to considering cancelling it. The food waste alone is shocking. I wouldn't eat some of them food that's presented to the kids myself and so why would I expect them to.
What needs to happen:
- Mandated quality
- Reporting on audits of providers
- Protected meal time (not just yard time)
- More diversity of food. There is only so much pasta we can force on the children!
259. Very disappointed in the amount of processed ingredients. The kids were experiencing regular tummy aches, illness when using only school meals. Please please change this and switch to locally sourced suppliers with as much non processed food content as possible. No point doing initiatives like Food Dudes and then handing out a box of processed food.
260. Please provide halal meal as there is many Muslim kids in school
261. Quality of the food is questionable, by the time it comes home in the bed the smell is so potent. Not been funny but the dog won't even eat it.
262. Please organise an on school collection for food waste
263. Better quality of food needs to be provided.
264. I think hot meals scheme is a great program and hopefully soon we will see it live in our school. thank you.
265. More variety on the menu and larger portions for older children would be welcome
266. As above re packaging.
267. I wish it wasn't taking so long to introduce into the school
268. Brilliant addition to the school day, our school has a particularly good Provider from what I have heard from other schools
269. while hot lunches are great and a lot of money and effort has gone into setting up the school our family would love to also have a cold option available to the kids (sandwiches, wraps or paninis) This would increase the variety and bring more 'new' food options to the table.
270. It's necessary. Spend this huge cost on sports equipment instead
271. It is a great initiative and I do feel it's a great benefit to students especially those who may not have a healthy hot food option available at home but the standard in some food provided can be hit and miss.
272. No
273. Like above, quality has gone down hill. Sausages and goujons for example. Not nice at all now and they used to love them.
274. Most of the food comes home and goes into the bin. Its serverd soggy and like warm.
275. I would like to be confident that the lunches given to the children contain healthy ingredients

276. I believe the concept of the hot meals scheme is excellent and should be retained. I support it wholeheartedly. However, the quality of some of the food is very poor and needs to be improved. This leads to half eaten or abandoned meals on a regular basis. It needs more government investment so the suppliers can work to improve their offering.
277. It would be nice to get the choice if hot or cold meals.
278. Can Senior infants and first class please bring home what they don't eat as parents have no idea how much they have eaten during the day? This is particularly important for children who are picky eaters. As parents have no knowledge of the portion they have eaten.
279. Food is processed
280. It is creating obesity and also adding to climate change and the money could be better spent on SNA's and supports for schools.
281. Whilst the concept of ensuring all children have a hot meal is excellent - the fact that children are not being provided with good quality food makes this a false positive.Insisting that the food must be hot is a bad idea and prevents something very simple like providing fruit.
282. Add rolls and sandwiches back
283. Maybe adding more sauces to the meals so they won't get too dried out especially the pasta dishes.
284. i gave a 5 as there is a lot of choices
285. Sometimes the food tastes of the cardboard packaging and it puts my child off that dish. Secondly, the breaded food is not crispy but a bit soggy from the condensation within the box, again, puts her off
286. Very small portion
287. I hope the food would be nutritional
288. Our school has a very good provider and my daughter enjoys the meals and (I believe) eats all of them every day. She isn't a picky eater.
289. Just some more plain meals
290. Very pleased and happy kids happy parents. Thank you
291. Nutritional value of the food is questionable. Not enough vegetarian options. Should have possibility to order more plain food ie no sauce added. I really believe the money could be better spent
292. Serious need for change in the menu and more child friendly
293. Would like to see some portions a little bigger
294. My daughter reported all meals are nice except potatoes are very runny and not nice , everything else seems good so far
295. Food is not nutritious, ingredients used see to be of low quality.
296. I think there could be some more variety in the food offered and different options added every couple of weeks to avoid eating the same food every week. It would also be beneficial if there were some cold food options to have like a sandwich, roll or wrap.
297. Thank you for this initiative its huge support for kids and parents.
298. This is such an important thing to teach our children about proper nutrition, and unfortunately the scheme largely fails to do so.
299. Lack of variety. Huge food waste. Same portion size for all ages of children. School day taken up with eating.

300. My child with sensory processing disorder struggles with the wooden utensils.
301. I'm nit sure if any of the materials are recyclable. I am thinking of giving my kids cutlery to bring in so they are not using a set every day
302. The choice is poor.
303. Are portions still the same for junior infants right through 6th class? That's crazy.
304. Our school say they can’t change provider because the contract is for 5 years. It’s absolutely awful
305. I am very happy with the food served, it saves me a lot of time organising lunches. However, I'm really struggling with the amount of waste and particularly packaging that comes with the food - the provider (Ashdale catering) don't seem to make any effort with regards reducing the packaging. If anything - the amount of packaging seems to have gotten worse in the last month or two. This is the only reason I'm docking the satisfaction score.
306. Our school was meant to start the hot meal programme this year but bureaucracy slowed the process and we are still waiting for it.
307. An option for customisation eg no sauce or to omit an item would be great and may help with food waste
308. The quality of the food is very poor and choices unhealthy
309. Cold lunches rather than hot lunches. Massive waste of food, resources and public spending. Money would be much better used spending money on resource and equipment for school
310. Would be great if the kids will have healthy meals and no processed food, more variety of foods
311. I am very happy the school offers hot meals for children. My child is very happy and said the food taste very nice. Very wide choice and I think it could suit event a very fussy eater
312. A lot of wastage, it's not being ate due to lack of choice and quality of food. My dog won't even eat when it's brought home. No choice of fruit or yougarts, fresh appetising food. Also can't bo.option to.cancel.meals, and rigmarole of logins etc.
313. Poor selection not healthy meals
314. There needs to be care taken to ensure Neurodivergent children's needs are. My own children will really struggle with foods that touch each of their for example. This is a group already at significant disadvantage in our schools, so we need to make sure hot meals (and all the sensory challenges that come with them) don't create an even wider divide
315. It’s a fantastic initiative, long overdue in Ireland.
316. If there was a no sauce option on certain hot meals. Not all kids like sauces.
317. The meals are not healthy enough
318. More variety in choices
319. Few more choices be great but all on all very good

320. I am delighted with the hot lunchs scheme but I wish there were more options and that parents and kids could give more input to the options.
321. It would be great if the schools could avail of hot and cold lunches without having to choose one or the other. Also it should not be so restricted on flavouring and sauces as this can effect the taste of the food leaving it bland. The food must be healthy but we don't have to go overboard on that.
322. I’m happy to do whatever we can to help reduce the waste from this scheme as it is fantastic for families.
323. It would be great if a sandwich or cold option was available
324. Procurement principles for providing hot lunches to school children should be designed to balance quality with affordability to the exchequer. Additionally, all new schools should be mandated equipped with cooking facilities and all existing schools should be provided grants to add kitchen facilities, where possible. The amount of food waste from my children and anecdotally what we hear from other parents would lead me to beleive that the programme has merits but that the food choices and delivery are severly lacking. This is a very big waste of taxpayers money. We now give our children food from home 3 out of 5 days because of the challenges as above.
325. None
326. the service is great, food is varied and nutritious, kids love it!
327. School have said that they don't have the space to accommodate the scheme and will include it in plans when the school is being upgraded. However, the upgrading works hasn't even got planning permission approved yet and so will take a long time before they are complete. Therefore, I feel if the hot meals is contingent on those works, that my children (2nd class and Senior Infants) are unlikely to ever have access to the scheme.
328. I don’t know if the demand is there for every child, it should be an Opt in service
329. It would be nice if the children could get the option of a cold lunch aswell
330. There should be a choice if the child wants the cold menu
More fruit and veg and dairy products.
331. It frustrates me to see the expenditure on the hot school lunches and the reported profits from the private companies paid by government to provide this service. Surely there is a better way to do this rather than tendering to private companies and paying more than the meals are worth?
332. Very unhealthy food choices
333. If there could be less processed food and more fresh meat, veg and fruit. Its all well giving the children a treat one day a week. A fresh fish option would be great, not covered in batter or breadcrums. Could there be a fresh fruit salad pot with prepared fruit like the veg tray? With a little fresh yoghurt? It would save time for the children peeling oranges, or apples and pears for the little ones.

334. I have concerns that obesity will be an issue in the future. There is a serious lack of normal food on the menu example ham/cheese sandwich. Include foods that kids both recognise and like. Sausages/ chicken nuggets. These foods can be simply made nutrionaly and don't have to be deep fried. Children with additional needs are seriously being left out. No options at all for them. My kids both use to eat and enjoy their meals last year. This year, not at all. To be honest its a waste of money, the funds would be better spent increasing staff, facilties and nuerodivergent class rooms. Teachers know who need support with meals and should be able to make allowances to ensure they are taken care of
335. I think this is a fabulous initiative and a great investment in young people and their wellbeing. It doesn’t differentiate between socioeconomic backgrounds and encourages young people to incorporate different meal types into their day.
336. The Food Company needs to provide more information to parents about what is in the food.
337. Better quality food particularly that the meat mainly chicken is not coming from Ireland it’s processed here but the actual chicken is not Irish
338. This is an unnecessary service for most children in our school who had access to varied and nutritious lunches prior to the scheme
339. The portion sizes for older children are too small. There should be a larger option available for children from 3rd to 6th class. Or if a larger option isn’t possible then additional snacks should be provided
340. My son says the food is better than any restaurant!
341. Should give option if child doesn't want a certain item so its not wasted
342. Recently our school changed the menu. There is less choice of 'real' meals and now more choice of plain food. E.g. plain pasta and plain rice as an option. I understand some children do not like any flavour to their food, this has reduced the amount of flavoursome meals for every other child
343. I think it is a great scheme for those children whose parents are struggling with the cost of living. I am concerned about salt content and nutritional values generally in the meals and I am glad for now that there is no scheme in place in my child's school. However, if it were brought in I would avail of it as I wouldn't want my child to be left out.
344. The scheme has been very disappointing and I wish there’d be a better follow up on it so the government can see its not fit for purpose
345. There are a few options, but... I hope it will be cooked with a slight addition of seasoning. In the case of pasta, kids say it it was cooked well.
346. I am very surprised that deis schools have not been fast tracked in the scheme. We're part of a very educated wealthy patent body that are very vokal. Otherwise our school would not have been one of the first to avail of the scheme, which im
347. There is a good variety of options for the Hot Lunches but unfortunately the food is sitting for hours before the children get to eat it and it ends up wet and soggy
348. No

349. Lack of variety in school lunches. Too much procceesd food. I believe it's not a balance diet.
350. More vegetarian options. My child is eating every week the same meal. Pasta often was uncooked. I would really appreciate if vegetarian dishes (especially sauces) could be enhanced with more flavor to make them more appealing
351. Too many treats included. I would question nutrition which I note there was no question on. Suspension of meals for a long period at our school would be nice to be able to choose between the hot food and the cold food
352. Id prefer if the food was sourced and prepared more locally - we are in south Carlow but the provider in based in Kildare.
353. From a tired overworked mother of a picky child , that most days decides not to eat anyway, thank you for this service.
354. I still have to pack lunch. The vegetables are always the same (a mixed melee of peas, carrots, corn) and it NEVER gets eaten.
355. Our school is great in that you can order food for specific days only. I heard from others that they have to order food every day which leads to waste. In general a good scheme but I am worried about food and packaging waste
356. My child was bringing meals home and we were feeding them to the dog. It took weeks for the company to cancel them after they were emailed by both principal and me, still arriving in every day. Quality was very poor, choice was very limited. My child says many children don't eat them. Recently I met someone who was with a principal on a freebie night away in Dublin before Christmas, hotel, show in Bord Gais, drinks and dinner- all paid for by one of the school meals companies. There was a group of them there. I have a big problem with this. I don't believe principals should have kick backs like this and I think it's obvious that if the company is doing this then they are being paid too much money. I think the scheme needs an overhaul to ensure good value for PUBLIC money bring spent
357. It's a great initiative! My son is autistic and very fussy about food. It would work better for him if the meal was separated into portions rather than all in one box. Would it be possible to choose different elements to build a meal, say pasta and chicken goujons, in separate containers/section?
358. I'd like to be given the option to opt out and would like the children to actually have time to eat instead of spending their break practicing hurling and doing jobs ...
359. I would to know the nutritional value of the meals and be able to view an ingredient list. Important to be able take into consideration when selecting meals especially if child is selecting the same meal a few days of the week
360. The hot meal was a change for the bad. Before - children would eat the school food, with hot meals they refuse to even open it altogherher.
361. Maybe more funding per meal barely covers cost
362. Review of supplier, menu & ingreds used.

363. I understand the healthy eating campaign but my child is underweight and we have been told we need him to gain weight. He didn't touch any of the food from the hot lunch scheme after trying loads of options and there was plenty of options to be fair but he didn't like it so now we are back to making his lunch again
364. I would highly recommend that neurodivergent children and the options are examined closely - this is not always considered in main stream policy decisions. Saying that, we are really impressed and helped by this scheme. My daughter has even become more adventurous, even trying other textures and flavours. I can imagine the impact on families with low SES is huge and it is welcomed by us.
365. Great initiative. Would love to have leftovers sent home to see how much is being eaten.
366. A lager portion of food for the older kids , my 6th class is always hungry when he gets home at 3.30pm .
367. I think there is too much food waste and perhaps offering snacks and fresh fruit would be a better alternative to the hot meal.
368. The deis schools should be fast tracked and supported to overcome the logistical issues This has not happened at all. The food quality is very poor and instead of many choices, there should only be one meat, one vegetarian and one soup to counter that. We're not talking restaurant, its a hot food for schools scheme which imo has failed dramatically
369. The portions should be appropriate to the age of the kids. My 6th year old that is training a lot needs a much bigger portion.
370. But overall, not the voice of highly educated v noisy parents should be heard, but instead social economic background should be the first thought when introducing a scheme like this. Another sign of a government that isn't thinking initiatives through, unfortunately.
371. The kids menu no matter what company is the provider , it seems to have no variety. The commun protein is chicken and it's repeated at least 4 times in the week menu. Fish is not offered, and the meals are not appealing to the kids eyes.
372. As above. Maybe sauces separate. Some feedback for suggested foods etc
373. Needs more choice of food options like sandwiches and rolls .
374. Love to have input from parents taken on food choices
375. The portions are too small and what's provided is not a complete meal. It is necessary to add on (extra costs) from the provider or continue to provide a separate lunch box so the child has a complete meal, e.g portion of fruit, portion of cheese, etc. while the scheme is appreciated, it has not been given enough funds to actually provide what children really need.
376. Please add sandwiches - like ham and cheese or ham
377. Would love to see it continue
378. More input from children on meal choice
379. My dgt would prefer sandwiches not a hot meal
380. I would rather /also like to see it be available to secondary school children

381. It is good that there is an option for no meals which my son is now selecting 3 days of the week as he finds the food too much for his appetite. However, he is small & eats well enough at home. He has an older sister who eats more than him and he brings home lasagne one day a week for her. Children who have less at home and are larger in build would benefit from this most. Children who dont find this as useful have the option to opt out.
382. I really appreciate the sentiment in the scheme but I think a one size fits all approach is not working. I feel for our school I feel a cold lunch / snacks approach is more suitable. Or provide school with a discretionary fund to be used to order in / buy lunches and have food in a fridge/cupboard for kids who the staff are aware and they are usually aware of the children who need the lunch and support the most. I think there is a case for giving more automomy to the schools on how best to handle the lunch situation.
383. Poor choice for vegetarians and what is available is of very little nutritional value
384. Food quality is generally poor & alot of kids choose not to eat it because of this. It is more quantity rather than quality, Is is mass produced, with poor ingredients, that provide little or no nutritional value
385. If hot meals are provided, then options for cold meals should also be provided. Lunch is not the time for some of the options of hot meals that are offerred. A 5 year old is not going to eat soup, or chicken curry at the time of day where sandwiches should be eaten.
386. Would love to see Irish farmers supported and Irish produce used. Irish chicken. An Irish apple. The scheme is so far away from what I expected, it is such a waste of money. Totally agree with others who make the suggestions that it needs to be a not for profit model. Attention needs to be actioned with priority. When parents contacted are supplier last April regarding concerns they told us in November they were waiting on up to date guidelines from the department... Vulnerable children are not been protected. They should have the same right as any child to a healthy lunch.
387. More fresh vegetables. Even raw with Hummus. Or chickpeas and beans etc.
388. Not to be as strict with the requirements of the meals. They can still maintain a level of healthyness but be more accessible for more of the children. It feels like some very reason6meals are ruled out as not being healthy enough when in reality they would be absolutely fine for most children and parenta and offer more options for particular children helping them to engage more.
389. I know that the whole idea is hot food and it's really great. One of the days before Christmas due to school plays, the company provided rolls and sandwiches and the kids loved them too. Would it be allowed for the company to provide an option for a non-heated ham roll. My children were really picky with what I used to send.eg ""I don't like that roll/bread, cheese etc"" but I find that they're much better to eat what they are given in school. I really really appreciate the service.

390. Our children used to take part in the hot meals scheme, and as parents we were very grateful for it. After several months, we noticed our children were coming home hungry and we started supplementing their lunch with extra snacks. We eventually decided to opt out altogether. Our children's main complaints were that as vegetarians, the choice of food was limited and that the food was not tasty. They complained that the hot food was 'soggy' or 'disgusting' and that on days when there was no better vegetarian option than a cheese sandwich, that the cheese tasted like 'plastic' and the tiny sandwich was not enough for them. After several months of experimenting with all the options, with trying to supplement with food from home, we learned: 1) the food available is not tasty; 2) the food available for vegetarians provided insufficient variety; 3) the food available was not healthy (soggy pizza? no vegetables?); 4) the portion sizes were very small. We also learned that our children found it difficult to eat the food (that they did not really like) in the very short amount of time dedicated to lunch. Since switching to providing lunch again fully ourselves, we see that our children are eating better, not coming home hungry and enjoying school more. However, we are disappointed that we have to take on the expense and hassle because the hot meals scheme (which is something we love in principle) is just not up to standard.
391. There should be options in the selected food section to add or take. The potatoes always look watery, does not look like real mash. Looks like the safety packet of potatoe mix. I think more Irish food should be on the menu. A lot of the food is all spices.My 8 year old daughter had always commented saying its like the foreigner food. All spices etc.
392. Overall I think it's fabulous for children who don't get access to regular meals at home, but would like to see the quality improved. Even if that meant means testing children and thus upping the budget per child for those who need it most.
393. I think the concept is excellent, especially for children who may be in a deis area but I do think it needs rejigging. A one size fits all, doesn’t work.
394. I think parents need to be more supportive of the programme I for one think its brilliant. I hear there's alot of waste from it, but not in my house. I think parents need to cancel thedinners on the days they know theor children will not attend school and I think this needs to be easier to find on the app. It would be nice if there was more options like salmon or beef. Lots and lots of chicken options. Nothing wrong with that, but would be nice to see other options. What about cabbage and bacon etc. I think overall its very good. I like it. Packaging very robust as well. "
395. Food isn't nice .. simple
396. Food children can actually enjoy!
397. I am a mother of four children. Working full time to be able to afford the necessities. It take me lots of time to prepare lunches, have to wake up way earlier in the mornings. Also, it’s not easy to find something healthy that is also liked by kids, but I’m sure if the kids see other children eating hot meals, it will motivate them a lot. Your help will be much appreciated!

398. Having free food for children is an amazing privilege. So don’t get me wrong when I say that my issue with the scheme is the quality of the food. It’s a privilege that many kids can eat for free, but if what they eat is low quality, illness-causing food, then we will have bigger issues than hungry children down the line. We’ll have unwell adults because they spent years eating highly processed food created or farmed using inorganic means and harmful chemicals and additives. If anything can be done to increase the quality of the food, please let it be done, for the sake of our children’s health.
399. There's only 2 dinners my child will eat off it and shes not a picky eater she eats everything normally, but finds the food plain and dry sometimes
400. Very grateful for this service however he food has been very unpalatable for my children who are very non fussy eaters. Mashed potatoes grey, watery with crusts, hard pastas, grey inedible peas. Generally these peas seem to be the main vegetables.
401. There is definitely not enough varity and the food is not nice
402. Some foods just dont reheat well. My child loves pasta but the school option is reheated so he says its chewy and greasy. Potatoes also dont taste great. He is so sick of the chicken options that he now wont eat them at home for me either. So the scheme is putting him off food rather than encouraging him to try other things.
403. It would be great if the food could be offered with the sauces separate as some children do not like the sauces or spicy food. It would be great to see fish included on the menu.
404. I think our provider the lunch bag company does provide attractive good food and responds to feedback. The app is excellent too.
405. More options of meals. Other options coming into spring/summer besides hot meals such as lighter options or sandwiches
406. Portions are small and the food is served cold.
407. I think it is a great initiative and helps children try new meals. It also encourages greater concentration in lessons
408. It has been good; it saves us the trouble of preparing more elaborate lunch boxes and saves us time on busy mornings. We used to give our children leftover dinner in thermal lunch boxes, which might have been a bit more balanced in terms of nutritional value. However, we are definitely fortunate that hot meals are provided to our children free of charge.
409. The quality of the hot lunches is not good.It should be much healthier and more variety
410. Delighted to see this survey occurring, there need to be a huge rethink as the children it was supposed to help as not benefiting as the food dosen't appeal to them or poor quality
411. There should be a more varied choice. Like sandwiches, crackers, fruit
412. The meat, vegetables etc are too big and the forks does not assist with this and everything squashed together
413. Great initiative but the government needs to increase financial support per child.

414. Quality - the quality of the food provided varies hugely between providers and even when its the same provider for a few years, the quality varies across the years. e.g. provider 1 in year 1+2 was fairly ok. provider 2 in yr 3+4 was only ok in yr 3 & is absolutely horrible in yr4. Im not saying this from a snobby perspective, Im a simple mam with simple tastes and reasonable expectations. I dont expect high grade restaurant quality food for that volume of covers. However, the quality of the food such as goujons, pizza, roast chicken etc is shocking. This is not a word of a lie - at times i offer the left overs to our dog in the evenign time and even she wont eat it.
Menu - the menu needs to change during the year. having the same menu all year round means kids are sick of it after a number of months and either 1) no longer engage with it, or, 2) ya get most of it coming home to go into the bin. The snacks seem farily good like the fruit, cheese, frubes etc. i have 2 kids - one opts into it and eats some of it so you are supplementing her. the other wont have any of it.
415. Quality of the food provided & lack of facilities in the school
416. to allow variety - yes they have 'choices- but if child doesnt like sauces etc they have no choice cant get food plain
417. It would be great if hot or cold options were available to the children.
418. The food is quite tasteless and there is very little variety. The options are not very healthy.
419. More vegan options should be added
420. It is such a brilliant idea- however support on the ground in the school to monitor, liaise with the food company, give regular feedback to the food company and prioritise having really excellent, fresh, colourful and fun options for children is the key to this initiative being successful. Children today require a variety to textures, flavours, fun within their diet. It's not simply good enough
421. More of a choice to alter/add
422. I would lile her to avail as I'm on social welfare but I can't look at food going into the bim
423. Please add more kids friendly food as kids are very picky eaters
424. It is a super initiative. Thank you
425. The compostable packaging provided by our hot lunch provider works well, please make sure this is rolled out with all suppliers.
426. Our child’s school food is supplied by nourish and green from the feedback my child gives. The food meat in particular is heavily processed and the majority of students select plain pasta or rice. Not particularly very nourishing.
427. More clarity on ingredients.E.g. offered ham and cheese pizza wrap.Kids v disappointed as had other ingredients in it like corn and mango. Full listing needed to choose meala
428. Charging the meal options at least every 4-6 months or so would encourage kids to try new things or find options they like more.

429. A lot of the food is quite bland, dry and tasteless like the ciabattas, curry, etc.. More variety goujon rolls, sausage rolls etc
430. Please do better
431. food is not healthy
432. Fruit
433. We need more to cut down on the amount of waste by using suggestions as listed above. New schools should have kitchens on site where the food can be made, children could take part in the food preparation and learn invaluable skills
434. Presentation of food: it’s often mixed together so no option to have no sauce or gravy etc
435. Option of fruit and more healthy options
436. The only thing I would change is that parents are notified what the school meals are exactly for the following week as I am still preparing lunch for my son everyday as he doesnt eat certain foods and I never know what is on the menu for the week so I have to prepare lunch everyday anyways
437. pizza, wedges, gougons is what lots of kids eat most days for their school lunch. The chicken used comes from China/ Thailand.... We need only look at the very poor quality of food served in hospitals to know that our government should never have responsibility for feeding our children. Obesity levels among children in this country will continue to increase in line with the level of participation by schools in the school meal scheme.
438. It would be nice to have less processed food and more variety of healthy foods as my child is more likely to eat more of it in school
439. Having a sandwich option with snacks rather than hot food would be good e.g. sandwich with fruit and healthy snack. There are times when my children don't like the meal so wat nothing but if got a few pieces of food hopefully they would eat something.
440. Very happy with the service provided and the children like the food offered
441. Healthy option and choice is important.
442. The quality of food from the company isnt a problem its more so the waste in our school where parents sign up and never change what the children want and then its just left there as waste as children maybe get fedup of certain items and wont eat the hot food anymore. Notices go out to parents about this but it just falls on deaf ears.
443. We should teach kids good eating habits. That is sit at a eating table, take the time, talk. Have a real meal that is substancial. The food program is a good start but just the beginning. It doesnt teach them good eating habits or give good nutritious food.
444. The menu does not seem to prioritise healthy meals over what the children eat (like plain pasta??! That's a joke). There is very little change in the menu over time, so the kids get tired of the same food.

445. The hot meal scheme has not illuminated the need for me to make a good, nutritious dinner for my kids in the evening. As a working mum I had hoped it would save me doing this on some weekdays. I would really like to see simple sandwich or roll options (with butter) included so that I could pick that option and still cook dinner in the evening. I would also love to see parents being given the opportunity to submit recipes or suggestions that could be replicated and tested by the school food companies.
446. I don't think it should be a universal scheme. There is a huge amount of wastage. The scheme is not value for money. There is a flat rate per child and there are options of plain rice and plain pasta which is not nutritional or substantive for children and young people.
447. Meals to go back to more appealing meals. Could have a healthy option that parents can select instead of everyone suffering from overbearing parents' whims on ultra processed foods.
448. It's fantastic that this service is offered and we are availing of it. I would note though that the offerings are full of fat and are not healthy enough options for growing children. The menu should be reviewed and overhauled.
449. I think a complete overhaul where food is locally sourced, prepared in-house and with more variety. An option of a less healthy meal one day per week would be nice for kids too, they used to love the baguettes but I believe they are classed as 'upf' now.
450. Rubbish and a waste of time. Nutrition very low in food served.
451. I'm certain it's a lifeline for many, but for restrictive eaters, plain eaters and allergies, it hasn't suited our family at all sadly.
452. More care is needed in the preparation. The idea of the food is great, but the standard of food is not good. Eg: dry pasta, soggy "pizza", chicken not cut into small pieces (children only have fork, so cannot cut up)
453. The hot food was great when came out but food choices are bad, and I have to make my child lunch.
454. Less disposable packaging would make the service a fantastic one. Perhaps if children could bring their own lunchbox to use every day, but this might require more staffing?
455. If there are more options to choose that's be great. My two girls have to choose 3 same meal in a week because not much options. Thank you.
456. An option for a cold lunch ie a sandwich or wrap along side the hot meal option would add greater benefit and less waste. Sometimes child doesn't want to eat a hot meal that early in the day or the hot food options don't suit.
457. I hope there are more choices of dishes.
458. Yes would like an opinion to add or remove gravey
459. As a mom to 3 young boys,iam.very happy with the hot school lunches 3rd class boy eat all his lunch. 1st class boy eats good and his has started new foods as a result of the hot meals. JI boy eats ok ,his not a lover of potatoes,pasta or rice but he eats the meat out of the dishes which iam happy for him to do. Iam hoping that as time goes by he will begin to try other foods

460. The main bad feedback I have heard on this is that we are not sourcing local food and healthy food for this - also providers, once booked into a contract, can change the quality mid contract. Potentially an extra adminstrative load on an already overloaded school... I think that local co-ordinator support should probably be funded - could function for multiple schools at the same time. Make it work in a sensible way. The is ONLY a good idea if the food is healthy and locally sourced.
461. A little more selection of foods as my daughter is not to fond of pasta, she does love to eat mash but doesn't like the veg, so an option of mash and meat. She also loves raw veg for which I give to her for small lunch.
462. If my child is sick today, I can’t cancel his food for tomorrow; it turns out his lunch is simply thrown away.
463. I think a sandwich and soup option would be great. Or just a sandwich for plain/fussy eaters who don’t like the menu options. Would also save on time.
464. The fruit supplied is of poor quality and feel the nutritional value of the lunches are not worth my child getting it. A waste of money.
465. Just to know whether the child eating everyday or not
466. No
467. My child school provides a great range of food.
468. More variety of plainer option, the food at moment nealy all has some sort of relish or sauce. my own child just will not touch anything that is civered in sauce or touching other food
469. Maybe if a sandwich could be added too to the list of food.
470. If the app was available to look at in a grid-like fashion so you can have an easier view of days missed or of the full weeks to make sure you weren't ordering something already ordered that week (when bulk ordering it's hard to keep track sometimes)
471. Great service - delighted we have it in our school.
472. More variety
473. Need not meals asap
474. I believe it's such a waste of money and could be diverted to other places to support the school curriculum. We stopped using the service due to quality and happened to start back today to give it another go - both children came back with nearly full containers of food - and they are truly not fussy eaters.
475. The food options in my child’s school is shocking no veg option at all on some of the food
476. I think children should have an option of the cold lunches aswell as this did very well for the brief time it in while transitioning to the full hot lunch options
477. The food is often undercooked and presentation is very unappealing
478. I think portion sizes are off , 12 year old and 5year old have different appetites an therefore should not be same portions
479. My child the nobility gone. Waste money and food

480. More gluten free options. Doesn't effect out household but it does for some children in the school.
481. our school is newly built so it has adapted well to this new great service.
482. It would be great to get a notification or email reminder when to resubmit the menu weekly.
483. It would be very helpful to know how much the kids actually ate at school.
484. I would like to see this as just the start. Kitchens should be built onto schools and people paid to make fresh, healthy meals
485. Your all doing a grate job' thank you everyone' I hope you all have a happy new year.
486. The size of the meals are the same for junior classes as they are for senior classes which doesn’t make sense
487. Helpful to repeat this review in a month or two when the programme has had a chance to operate for a while
488. Happy for now with all meals provided. The food is fresh and tasty, as my kids said. I hope it will stay the same
489. Definitely more variety is needed.
490. I have heard from friends in other areas that there isn’t many options etc, we are delighted with our school’s offerings and I hope every school can have access to healthy, delicious options. It’s doable, it’s out there, cause we have it. I hope every child in Ireland can get that option
491. More variety in food. Different size choices to allow older kids have more and to reduce food waste.
492. More option for Meals and fresh fruit and vegetables to be introduced
493. My child's school lunch service does not cater for kids with autism
494. The meals are overly healthy. They lack fresh vegetables, salads etc. The choices are limited when the meals have alot of the elements when there is certain things your child doesn't eat. It would be nice to able to mix meals rather than a set meal to choose from
495. I think there needs to be a sandwich or roll selection a few days a week. There is not much variety in the meals.
496. It's the same meals to pick from every week and to be honest none of it looks appealing to eat so I don't blame my child for not eating it. My child used to be starving coming in the door from school so I now pack her a lunch for big break too myself.
497. Im aware the meals must be healthy options but many lack taste
498. The Hot School Meals Scheme should be replaced with a Healthy Lunches Scheme which would comprise a lunch time meal (sandwich/ fruit/ drink or similar)
499. Most days the food ends up in the bin e.g pasta not cooked so still hard
500. No
501. Think it is a waste of money!

502. I don’t think a lot of the hot meals are really for young kids e.g. chilli burritos. Understandably they may be for older kids. Maybe back to basics ham sandwich with soup, cottage pie with option to add on veg. Chicken hot pots etc
503. My daughter is 5 and in junior infants and I’m not sure how much of the food she eats or how much encouragement she gets to eat her portion or try new options so it’s difficult to tell if she is fully using the service or not.
504. Food a lot of the time comes very soggy, which puts children off food. Not sure what the solution is, but makes for a moot of food waste.
505. I don’t think the hot school lunch is a success. The children don’t have enough time to eat it and the choices are not healthy. I would prefer a traditional lunch if being provided of a sandwich and some fruit.
506. No
507. The food is not that healthy!
508. Would like the option of a sandwich along with the hot meals
509. My children prefer cold lunches at lunch time particularly in the warmer months and more variety should be offered in that sense.
510. Our children be given quality food at school, Bord Bia approved. I find it shocking that the dept of education is not enforcing use of irish products.
511. Disappointed not to be availing of the option. Kids were told of many hot options and we’re looking forward to it so are disappointed
512. Plain dinners which are healthier are not as readily available. Children out of school are looking for similar dinners to what they get in school e.g., dinner with sauces and processed meats. Query - why can a cold food menu not be also be made available to children e.g sandwiches, rolls, yogurts etc
513. It is really great to have the option to avail of free hot meals for children and I would like to see this continue. It definitely is a great time and money saver for all parents and ensures all kids are fed while in school. Some aspects such as food waste (which will inevitably happen) can be improved and solutions found to limit it (perhaps brown bin composting, etc.), or perhaps options for light meals (i.e.healthy wraps/sandwiches or raw fruit/veg/cheese) could be offered for variety as you tend to see similar options offered week on week.
514. School does not seem to allocate enough time to eat the food. My child regularly complains that the teacher said they were out of time to eat or that something else happened, and there was no time for lunch. Schools need to increase the time of the big break to allow the slow eaters to eat!
515. In my opinion kids at primary school age need to eat their main meal at home. This is when long term eating habits are set.
516. This is a great scheme that we ate very grateful to have in our child's school.
517. It would be great to include unprocessed, wholegrain and organic foods
518. Food is not hot enough when my son has eaten it in the past. The pasta is undercooked and the chicken goujons and sausages are overcooked. Therefore we opted out of doing the lunches this year.

519. First of all, thank you so much for doing this survey. My child has coeliac disease and due to concerns about cross contamination she is unable to take part in the scheme, i.e. even though there are a couple of gluten-free options, they are not guaranteed to be coeliac-safe. She is the only child in her class not taking part. On the first day of the meals, there was so much excitement in the class, but she felt so excluded and was in tears telling me about it that evening. Even if there were no concerns about cross contamination, gluten-free options from the provider are pretty limited. She would be eating virtually the same thing day in, day out. I appreciate what the scheme is trying to do, but there has been no thought given to the small but not insignificant number of children with strict, medically prescribed diets. The Education Authority in Northern Ireland has a 12-page guidance document covering provision for special diets. In the Republic, the nutrition standards document has two lines at the very end on "allergies" and a broken link that is supposed to be for further information. There is no mention of any other condition like diabetes, coeliac disease or PKU that might require a modified or restricted diet for management of the condition. It shows that the government does not take this seriously and until they do, schools and providers won't either, and these children will continue to be marginalised. Please help!
520. It would be great to include unprocessed, wholegrain and organic foods
521. I think this is a fabulous service and my children love it. This has encouraged them to try food they would not normally eat. Well done !
522. My children did not like the food. It was nice at the beginning of the scheme but as the second year the quality has gone down and food is mushed together.
523. Hot lunches only started in Jan 2026, cold lunches before that. Cold lunch was sent home so I saw the huge
524. I am concerned about the amount of plastic waste school meals create. I would welcome the introduction of paper packaging for any cold foods and cardboard packaging for hot food. I've seen children come home with apples and oranges chopped up and put into plastic wrappers, where they could just be given out whole without any packaging. We are at the stage where we know that plastic and micro plastics reduce food quality especially with hot food, and it is definitely not good for the environment.I think that the overall scheme has sacrificed nutritional or environmental consideration for low prices and political acheivement. Our children are the ones who pay the price for this.
525. Tge packaging can cause a lot of moisture pooling on the food. The one thing the eldest says can be a problem. Middle child has mentioned perhaps watery sauces and maybe lack if say tortellini in a serving of tortelini.
526. I need more options in vegetarian/vegan hot meal as for vegetarian pupils choice's are very less. I also need more fruit snacks. Thanks
527. My son loves it, he had one complaint way more rice than curry so he has waste with rice
528. More selection of what kids want

529. I would prefer an option for a healthy cold lunch as my children attend afterschool due to both parents having to work full time. At the after school they receive a hot meal so it would be too much food for them in one day. An option like a bread roll and healthy side with fruit etc would be a good option. Also I am very concerned about the standard and healthiness of the hot meals, I know some children who receive the hot meals in school and the standard is really awful. Thank you
530. My children have to bring home the plastic containers their food comes in every day. I have three children so I get 3 or 4 plastic containers home five days per week to put in my own household recycling. I'm very disappointed in having to do this. Also the containers can sometimes crack in my childs bag and food leaks out over books. I feel all school meals containers should be recycled by the food provider or school or implement a reusable system.
531. Hot meals were only implemented in my child's school 2 weeks ago so this survey is a bit early, but so far so good
532. Variety can be an issue which makes food repetitive also the undercooking of the potatoes most days makes the food hard to eat. I still have to send sandwiches in
533. I don't believe anything is healthy about the meals if it was a little salad would be served along side to expose the children to healthy vegetables
534. I believe that food education should be thought as part of this program. Kids should learn more about food, where it comes from, how it is produced and supplied to the schools, what they are eating etc. I believe there a huge opportunity to engage children in healthy habits as well as critical thinking using this scheme as the driving force. At present my kids only have 10-15 mins to wolf their meal and the only discussion in the school is about food waste which the kids internalise and feel shame and blame.
535. I think cold options should be added. Yogurt and fruit salad for example
536. I'm satisfied with the service, but I just think it's a waste of money and time. My son doesn't eat them so I have to make him his own lunch anyways
537. I think it is a great idea for children whose access to food is compromised for various reasons. I think schools should be allowed to choose whether it works for their school, and the money be given to schools to do something else that would benefit their school community. It was a political decision, not entirely rooted in what is best for children. And along with 'Food Dudes' there needs to be far greater thought put into food education mode generally. It's a wider societal, health and environmental issue and was a vote catcher, and easy solution. But not the best solution. Also, why does it have to be hot food? Sandwiches, fruit, veg, would be just as good.
538. Perhaps the option of just plain fruit or veg instead of the hot meals might encourage more kids to eat eat them and maybe less waste in resources

539. The introduction of hot meals has been a real game changer for our child, who absolutely loves the meal. We've seen a big difference in her attitude towards school in such a positive way.
540. The food currently being provided by some schools with the ordering availability is not nice. It does not taste nice, is not healthy and a waste of money for everyone. If schools are to Provide hot meals, it should be as is in cafes and restaurants (and some creches) with qualified chefs and proper cooking stations. This though would be a cost and majority of schools do not have a spare closet for storage let alone location for meal prep.
541. I think it is very good, i am just concerned about plastic or other toxin going into the hot meal as served into a boxe instead of a proper plate.
542. Satisfied with the system but do not think it is necessary for all children. Money much need in special education & services for children with additional needs (this does not affect me personally). I'd rather see those in need receiving the support they need- food for some, SEN support & SNAS as needed, assessments and services for those who need them.
543. The idea is great. But it needs to be regulated. I don't want my child eating convenience processed food everyday. Even the sandwich option is not great because I'm sure the bread has a million ingredients. A full ingredient list is needed. Every component in the meal needs to have full ingredients list so parents can make an informed decision on what their child is eating. A focus on organic would be great too.
544. school has all systems in place but the quality of the meat is terrible plastic chicken and cheap cuts of meat.
545. I think suppliers are doing their best to accommodate a large range of different children
546. Doesn't cater for fussy eaters.
547. The meals are mostly the same as we would have for dinner so my children end up eating curry or bolognese twice a day.
548. I think a better variety of options would be good
549. We are going to opt out of the hot meals this week. This has been an issue for some parents. They've stopped the meals but they still arrive at the school.
550. I think the scheme has gotten too much bad press and ppl giving out and being negative if it was something we had to pay for people wouldn't give out as much. If the food isn't nice in your school then I think you need to ask for the school to change provider. Ours is really good and tries very hard
551. A disgraceful waste of money and food. So many of the children in ky daughters class choose plain pasta as a meal. This is dlfar less nutritious than a packed lunch. Why am i being offered free lunches when i can afford a packed lunch myself.
552. Not all providers provide ingredients in food so it is hard to know exactly what is being put into the food. Overall, it's a great scheme.

553. Multiple options of types of curry type meals which not every child eats. Leaves fewer options to pick from resulting in doubling up on same lunch few times per week.
554. I believe the program is great! It helps families, it just needs input to keep it attractive to children. Continuous improvement... not a one time solution ... but rather a continuous, non-static approach. Involve the children as they are the ones who eat it everyday
555. I wish it was available on all schools, my girls twin has it in her school but her twin brother doesn't in his school.
556. Service seems good but most days my children say they didn't like the food
557. Our school principal is actively delaying/avoiding introducing the hot meals scheme.
558. Ali appreciate the pressure is off for making lunches but really need to focus on building schools and hiring SNAs please!
559. Please do something about the food provided by fresh today it is awful
560. This scheme is a tremendous waste of time and money and resources - the food served is appalling and this is across many schools I know of - the amount that is dumped is shocking. Please allow parents to parent and take care of their children in these most basic of ways - this scheme represents a most awful and shameful waste of resources.
561. It hasn't saved us time as we have to provide a lunchbox for snacktime anyway. My child has ended up eating only the plain pasta option from the hot lunch so no real nutritional advantage either. I don't see the value for us and would prefer the investment into schools and children who are more disadvantaged
562. Often to change the menu. Thanks
563. Although I understand why I don't believe the meals for a junior infant and a 6th class should be the same size. There should be a sliding scale
564. The ideal scheme should include a canteen at the school where food would be cooked fresh
565. The government pushed this program out with little of no thought. It's a total shambles masked by saying it's better kids get some food over no food. We all think that however with the rise of obesity and diseases we should be focused on Locally sourced in season healthy foods, not more ultra processed foods. Shame of the government allowing this to evolve
566. My child can be fussy but the stuff he takes home doesn't look very appealing the pizza very greasy and having very little options , he does get them twice a week but would have lunch as well as 95% time he doesn't eat them
567. Sandwich option would be great, some kids don't want or like the option available. So this would be better than nothing
568. I'd like to have sandwich options. You have a cheese roll. Why not add a ham sandwich.
569. Meals are of poor quality and tasteless, my kids have tried all options and they don't like most of them. Sandwich would be a best option.

570. Waste of money
571. There shouldn't be a 'brown food' over processed option. Budget should be targeted towards deis schools to provide better food options and on full canteen and lunch room facilities in the most disadvantaged schools. Rolling it out across all schools spreads the budget too thinly. Additionally, there is significant food and container waste generated. I'd also prefer if children brought home what they didn't eat...now I've no idea how much my child is eating at lunchtime.
572. The school previously had a service provider in that you could pay to provide a lunch each day, a simple roll and snacks. This worked better and at least you knew your children weren't hungry. The school gave no interest in listening to parents concerns and from what I've seen, neither does the service provider. For a week recently there was a trial of sending the left overs home, this was a good idea, at I knew what was eaten and had the opportunity to discuss with my children, but this has not been done away with
573. Sometimes the food when heat up sticks all over the carbon box, my son has bring this up and he said it's not easy to eat or else they don't have enough time
574. Refer to comments above regarding quality of food and wasteful single use packaging. Even though I don't like these things, it is not feasible to opt out when other children in the class are availing of the meals.
575. money is being wasted instead of doing healthy nutritional meals ultra processed foods are being served up. my kids don't get mc donalds or take away or anything that's so processed so why should I let them eat something that during one of their most important meals during school time
576. Option for cold lunches to be available especially in warmer weather. More variety with meal options every day
577. I assume it's great for some kids. My daughter still brings her own lunch and takes the school dinner home.
578. The food provider used in our school is Carambola. I have 2 kids availing of the scheme. One completely refuses to eat the hot lunches so I'm preparing her lunch myself every morning. My other kid eats the hot lunch provided in the school, reluctantly. She would like some bits from her lunch and will leave out some other that are ""disgusting"" in her own words. I'm told most of my kids' classmates do not consume the hot lunches they've be given and have completely unsubscribed from the scheme. If the provider was different, I believe my review and experience would have been different. Fresh Today is the one that most of the kids are really happy with. So overall the scheme is fantastic, we just got very poor food provider, ie Carambola. My honest advice would be to close that business completely, they haven't looked after our children's best interest unfortunately.
579. Quality from The Lunch Bag is generally not great.

580. The menu options are what a regular family eats weekly for dinner so it limits the options (of an already limited list where children are involved) of what meals can be prepared weekly-especially if you have 2 children within the scheme some days children eating chicken curry twice a day once in school and once at home. While I appreciate some children don’t get a hot dinner every day - it feels like this scheme is eroding away the vital part of family life - eating together at dinner time as children have already eaten dinner in school. I think a sandwich or more traditional lunch options maybe even toasted or hot wraps/ finger foods might be more beneficial- it can be difficult to get children to eat dinner once a day never mind asking them to eat two
581. maybe even toasted or hot wraps/ finger foods might be more beneficial- it can be difficult to get children to eat dinner once a day never mind asking them to eat two
582. Healthier meals. Meals sent home so parents can see what is been eaten in school
583. I would like the uneaten food sent home so I know what my child has eaten.
584. I am concerned about the quality of food. That there will be over processed foods etc
585. The nutritious element is really important to our family. We currently try to provide this ourselves with breakfast, lunch and dinner to keep our children healthy.
586. The food is not tasty. They should be allowed choose how to make up their own foods. Not all children eat all the same vegetables. Some like broccoli or some like carrots. But when u put it all together they won't eat it. They like the chicken roll and ciabatta. They dont like dinners mid of day. More snack choices or fruit. We have no fruit or smoothie choice. Crackers and cheese
587. This scheme is a waste of 63 million that could have been used on speech and language therapists and Occupational Therapists that most schools badly need. Not many children in this country were going hungry. Those who may have been could have been tactfully and specifically targeted. What a waste.
588. Delighted there's now an option with our provider (Carambola) to select 'No meal' as needed whereas previously we had many days where a full, untouched meal went into the bin so being able to skip lunches on certain days is great.
589. Consulting with parents before deciding a menu would make sense. Although I think the scheme is money wasted. Providing school transport would be a far better use of funds in my opinion and would help with road congestion.
590. Feel Ingredients are not over healthy
591. The school decided not to run with it, even though the parents wanted the hot meals.

592. I am unsure whether the issue with the free hot school lunch programme is that portions are too large, leading to food waste, or whether children simply do not have enough time to finish their meals. My child regularly tells me that he does not have sufficient time to eat his lunch, partly due to a school rule requiring children to go outside for exercise. This feels counter-intuitive if children have not finished eating. Not all children eat at the same pace, and some take longer than others. In my opinion, children should be allowed to eat at their own pace within reason, and a short eating window—such as 10 minutes—does not seem sufficient for many children to finish their lunch comfortably.
593. My child often chooses the same thing as there are a limited number of things that he likes. Also, things that he did like have changed and become less 'nice' (perhaps have been made healthier and therefore less tasty which only results in them not being eaten or less healthy options being chosen anyway). Do the meals always have to be hot?? My child would enjoy salad vegetables rather than cooked vegetables for instance. He also enjoys cheese or cold meats, once they are straight from the fridge. And fruit.
594. The meals are the same portion for juniors and seniors. There is so much food waste and packaging waste. It’s a great idea in theory but in practice it needs to be made work for more dietary requirements. For example the basics such as pasta. Would you eat uncooked pasta with a watery sauce for example. Corners being cut. No wholemeal pasta etc. Only white.
595. My daughter & friends are enjoying the hot meals. Takes the pressure off providing a main lunch…. Only need to provide snacks! Nice to keeping adding a new dish to the menu.
596. Government need to look at the overall cost of this initiative. They aim to say it is to reduce food poverty however more resources needs to be assigned to education and access to food outside of school settings.. providing one hot poor quality meal to children in school is not addressing for insecurity or poverty and definitely not addressing the porr nutritional needs of our society.
597. There should be a person in control of quality of food delivered as most days my child informed me that meal wasn't prepared correctly (undercooked)
598. Just well done! and keep going , bring it to secondary!
599. I don’t believe this service is worth the cost to the state. There is a small minority of children who financially/socially need these meals yet there whole country is getting them. Impossible to serve the food nicely wiht transport and reheating etc
600. Good food options but more variety is needed when I child is eating this food 5 times a week every week. Quality of the food is good & it is exceptionally important that it stays this way, the food is expensive so good food is expected & children need nutritious food
601. A cold lunch option would be beneficial, especially for fussy eaters.
602. Bring back the sandwiches from the past menu

603. It would be great if it was possible to change the menu a little each quarter, even if two different options could be added to make it more varied
604. The food waste is criminal! Perfectly good food is going straight into the bin because parents are not opting out. The scheme is a good idea in theory. Everyone agrees that all children should have a hot meal every day but there are so many grey areas. It has not been properly thought out. Children and teachers are under huge time constraints as it is and this scheme is so time-consuming and labour intensive for school staff.
605. More variety. Too many spicy options on our menu
606. Improve the quality of the ingredients
607. The options are very limited
608. I've noticed a great deal of food and rubbish waste with the current Cold Food Scheme. I do have concerns the Hot Food Scheme will increase the amount of food waste, given the items cannot be heated up should the children not eat the food that day. I don't believe it encourages healthy eating for children and many of the items shouldn't be categorised as healthy. However, I do understand the schemes primary purpose is to ensure all children have a warm meal per day and many children are not lucky enough to live with families who are in a position to provide healthy foods.
609. It’s a great service and the food is great quality
610. Thanks for this initiative, has helped me to improve my kids eating habits
611. Bigger portions
612. It would be great if there is bit more option to choose the food.
613. Hot and cold means should both be an option for the children as not all would like hot food in school for lunch.
614. Fish fingers
615. Poor quality in terms of taste and flavour has lead to us only selecting plain pasta or plain rice and then supplying our own supplements to create the meal. Otherwise the food returns uneaten. How do they bleach the flavour out of vegetables? I would not eat it myself. Some of my child’s favour foods are listed on the menu but they have been tried and refused as nothing like what they should be. I used to send my child with a health packed lunch. When the scheme first started this was replaced by chicken nuggets and pizza the only options she wanted. The pizza was replaced by a different version and then even that was not eaten. The idea is good but someone needs to ensure that providers are held to standards and not do the cheapest possible offering.
616. Kids to serve themselves and pick there option
617. We are only in week two of hot meals too early to say . But if the cold lunch was also n option that would be great
618. If during the summer months (May/June) a cold meal was an option. It does encourage children to try more options when eating in a group. Our school does use on of the reheat options, kitchen facilities should be mandatory in future school builds.

619. Eating a hot meal out of a box in the classroom with only a fork provided is not ideal. We try to teach our children to eat properly at a table with a knife and fork and the work we do is undermined in school. Then to hammer home the point you are not including canteens in new school design, one policy is undermining another one. It is costing me more in bin charges as we are throwing so much food away every school day.
620. I would really like to see a plan in place for the food that is left over...divert to other community groups, day centres, homeless etc..
621. No
622. Satisfied
623. I personally believe fed is best and given the portion sizes are so small I think there should be more emphasis on taste. It seems the priority is given to nutrition and the quality and taste suffers as a result.
624. Toasties
625. Unfortunately, the quality of the food that is delivered to our school is not great.
626. We think we should have more information on ingredients and nutritional values of our child's meals especially the level of unhealthy additives used
627. Please, make it a standard that no palm oil would be allowed in kids meals.
628. The portion sizes for my son in junior infants is very large but he will bring it home and his little brother will often have some- it’s a great service!
629. My children do not attend the school I work in. Currently, the School in which I work have called lunches.
630. Im told the potatoes are awful soggy and pizza wraps aren't nice , curry is a hit !
631. Thanks
632. My kids seems to love the food so far and are delighted with taste and quality. My youngest is picky and he has been eating things he wouldnt normally as he sees his peers eating the same thing.
633. Great initiative! with after school activities they spend a lot of time at school, so it's great to know they get something hot during the day and they eat with other kids (so try more different foods).
634. Above
635. My son gets a role every Monday which he loves but there is no "cold" option any other day of the week. The portion sizes are the same, regardless of the age of the child. I think this should be looked at.
636. I would be happy to take home the food to see how much is being eaten/dispose of it.
637. Good
638. My understanding is the food not locally sourced and often shipped from England! The meals started out ok ish when it was introduced sept 2 years ago but a change in menu meant the quality of food deteriorated.. there is not enough veg and fruit offered.

639. The cant use the cardboard cutlery. The containers sweat with the food and the children complain of the food been wet. 1 cold lunch option would be great i.e. pitta/wrap/roll
640. All foods are made bland, there should be a choice in level of spice kids want in their food.
641. More choose your own...eg choose the protein, the veg, the sauce etc. Option for hot or cold
642. Conscious the smells might be troublesome for children with additional needs
643. Some choices are only available on one day. It would be great to have all options 2 to 3 days
644. Quality of the meat is terrible in particular chicken. Potatoes often seem undercooked. Adding tomatoe paste to cheese rolls or making pizza bases wholemeal to increase nutrition has made my child stop eating them. Not sure these additions are helpful.
645. My child is a bit fussy with food, so won't choose some options as a certain food is it in the recipe
646. The food provided was not very appealing by the time it reached the kids desks.
647. I don't think the scheme is the best way to spend that amount of money. I would prefer the school not to have to fundraise or get an extra teacher than for my child to get a hot lunch that he probably won't eat.
648. Very disappointed that there was a hot school lunch provision and that this was removed from the school. My 2 other children attend another school and the school lunch is also not rolled out there yet.
649. More time for the child to eat particularly when it's hot and needs additional time to cool.
650. Food waste should come home so parents can see what has been eaten
651. Would be great to see a junior/senior portion size option that the parent can choose depending on their child (not that it is set exactly by class)
652. In our school the scheme represents the normalisation of poor quality processed food into the children's diet.
653. I would much prefer if this was a means tested scheme or at least and opt in or out option for parents and children. I would love to have support with the cost of my weekly food shop as this has significantly increased over the last few years, this would be of real benefit to most families.
654. Better selection of meals
655. Fantastic scheme!
656. It would be great if there was a sandwich choice everyday.
657. It might be a good idea for certain schools in poor areas
658. Some options do not travel or re-heat well. No option to opt-out if child does not like the choices for a particular day. Sandwich or plain roll would be a welcome additional option for those days. Treat availability is not promoting healthy eating policy

659. There are a huge variety of companies and the quality hugely varies. I work in a lot of school. Too much pressure of school principals to investigate and too much work in procuring good quality service and food.
660. I can't rank accurately because I didn't taste the food, so guessing according to the ingredients and what my child says.
661. My understanding is that there is a lot of waste with the school meals.
662. Unfortunately it is solely the quality of the meals that is the issue.
663. So much waste.
664. Not enough options for vegetarians
665. Dependence upon highly processed food has been common in our experience of using the hot food scheme over the last 3 years. Sandwich fillings are
666. This scheme obviously has a place in DEIS schools but for most schools it is a total waste of money and food. I would like to see this scheme disbanded and money invested in to establishing the critical supports children need: access to OT, Sp&L, Play Therapists, Psychologists etc. We are opening Special classes around the country and pupils, teachers and snas are not equipped or supported. Shame on the government for wasting so much money.
667. Sandwich options
668. Both my children dislike the food especially the hard pasta and soggy boxes.
669. Please prioritise quality rather than cost in sourcing the food.
670. Quality in general needs to be improved, some of my children won’t eat any of the meals and some eat one or two but they generally don’t like them. Fresh ingredients should be prioritised and reheated foods such as hard pasta should not be allowed. Halal meat should be an option for those who want it, not part of the main dishes. A cold sandwich option should be available for children who don’t like the hot meals offered.
671. Providers are not sticking to the guidelines ln nutrition. Providers need to be centrally vetted by Govt, then schools can choose from a list of approved providers. Asking school principals to assess providers is not realistic.
672. I love the idea of hot school meals
673. I would see more beneficial to invest this money into personal support in schools, ie more SNA's
674. My child loved the pizza on a Friday until the pizza dough changed . He loved the mashed potatoes instead off the boiled ones .
675. There should be options for smaller, remote schools to opt-in to a part-time hot meals scheme where they may provide meals one or two days a week. There should also be greater flexibility for schools to provide meals based on local availability such as outsourcing from local cafés or local supermarkets. I would also love to see Organic options available for the meals for greater nutrition and to support sustainable agriculture.
676. Good variety in terms of choice but the taste could be improved as could appearance eg plain pasta swimming in starchy water

677. Please add cold food! The food is too hot for them to eat, they don't have time to eat it and it goes to waste. More options.
678. Could include more vegetables. Wouldn't class as healthy so I provide most of fruit and vegetables in the little lunch. But understand that it can be hard to provide in a big kitchen.
679. Loving the scheme
680. School time is for education. I don’t think this initiative is necessary. It takes up school time which could be used for for eg, one day a week showing children what’s healthy to eat and how to prepare it instead.
681. A permanent school building with a cafeteria would better.
682. Very beneficial to our family and encourages my child to est variety of food
683. The food is not nice.Majority of kids are complaining about it. It travels in a vehicle and kept warm in industrial ovens and the smell is disgusting
684. While the idea of launching such an ambitious programme is great, it feels like nothing was put in place within the school to get ready for such a big change. A canteen in each school, as a dedicated place to eat, cook, share a meal all together, with staff hired to cook and look after the children at a given time. The food should be fresh, changing every week, planned ahead by a dietician, cooked by chefs with local and organic ingredients when possible. Parents should be financially involved, based on their resources. Contributing 3 or 4 euros per child and per meal, if it guarantees a much healthier and public service. This is a very important last point :schools are public, managed by the government, so should be the hot lunch programme. Obviously the private companies hired to feed our children work because they make profit, it shouldn't be at school.
685. Why has it not already been rolled out in all schools??
686. All schools should have a cafeteria where meals are prepared on site with lots of variety to choose from and emphasis on social interaction and enjoyment of food.
687. The school meal scheme needs to be good quality healthy food
688. Kids are really enjoying the meals and look forward to seeing what new dishes are on the menu every week.
689. More healthy choices
690. Unfortunately the quality of the food is very poor, the choices are limited and very repetitive. The food is also not healthy on a number of levels. It’s very unfortunate
691. More of a better selection like lasagna and potato cubes and sausages and other selections
692. I think there are better ways to spend the money. I know my child won’t eat the food and I will end up sending a lunch in anyway
693. A cold food option, e.g. sandwiches, yoghurt, fruit would be ideal for my kid.
694. Keep giving Hot meals.
695. Very grateful for service thanks

696. The hot school meals is a waste of money. Government should put the money into employing more school staff to cater for the additional needs of the children.
697. There isn't enough flexibility in the scheme. Its either opt-in for everyday or opt out entirely. Its either hot meals only or no meals. Cannot pause or cancel orders if kids are absent. Cant choose to take hotmeals on somedays but not others even though orders are made 48 hrs in advance on app. Options are too limited, more sandwich and wrap options. No fruit, yogurt or cheese options. My kids are provided these options from home. Kids in other schools arent and now dont get any food until lunchtime - 1pm, whereas yhe old scheme provided fruit and sandwiches so there was always food available for these kids.
698. Would like to see maybe 3 popular meals always on the menu and then to change up 2 options to provide variety
699. I think this is such a valuable service for the children who would otherwise not receive a hot dinner. However, I worry my children are receiving too much food in a day as they also have dinner in their grandmother's who minds them after school. I also worry about the content of the food as from the bit I have sampled it seems very salty. I appreciate the wide choice available and my children get enjoyment from picking their lunch.
700. Seems to be a waste of money as there is a huge amount of waste and complaints from kids that they don't like the food, not enough variety (everything literally has pasta in it), my kids opt out 3 days a week now and want to opt out completely.
701. None, but I am very grateful for the support.
702. Allocated time to eat seems to be an issue. Good food variety.
703. A great initiative.
704. Range of foods is limited
705. The scheme was so welcome, and I really appreciated my child having a hot meal at school. And while he was enjoying tasty chicken curries and pastas, the quality suddenly dropped. Personally, I've always had an issue with the fact that the meat is sourced from abroad. I imagine for many families across the country this scheme makes an enormous difference to their children - if the food is palatable enough for them to eat it.
706. The quality just isn't good. Food is soggy, sweaty inside plastic lined boxes, vegetables are overcooked and in mush. Mashed potato is not difficult to cook correctly and make tasty, yet the offering is watery, bland mush. This is Fresh Today in Co. Wexford anyway...
707. Gourmet Fuel offer healthier meals that are properly produced
708. We are in the very early stages (week 2) therefore there is a huge novelty factor at the moment. I would like to have the chance to repeat this survey some months down the line to see how our thoughts have changed as the scheme beds in.
709. No

710. Would love a choice to pick sandwiches or fruit and yoghurt cracker. Not all kids eat the meals provided
711. My child loves the food and so far has been very happy with the service (he has only been using it a few weeks). There are children in his class who do not eat the food so there is significant waste but our family are happy with it. My child would being home any food he has no eaten but so far he has finished every meal
712. I do believe the menu should be look at by a dietation and maybe sample menus given. We are told cost to produce is such a big issue
713. Portions are very small. Overall it is very good scheme, beneficiary to all children. If some children don't eat the meals it is direct result of bad eating habits they have developed in their homes - eating unhealthy, fast foods, sweets, crisps therefore food provided through the scheme is not to their liking. I am very happy with the scheme and my child eats all the meals.
714. I think there needs to be consistency between all the providers. Some parents think they're great quality, others not. I would also appreciate more choice as a hot meal might not be required every day but choice of a cold sandwich or bagel may be good too!
715. My children did have the hot lunches in school until this year. But they asked me to cancel it. They said it was not nice.And as a parent I was concerned with the quality and nutrition they were actually getting from the hot lunches. If the food quality improved I would consider ordering them again
716. My kids' diet has deteriorated since the school meal programme started. They used to eat more pulses and vegetables but since they are not very common in the meal programme they are eating less of it. Don't get me wrong the program is great and it gives kids a hot meal in school but we could be using it to educate kids on healthy eating, local seasonal food and we are not doing that. I feel the program was a version 1 to get it started which I think it has successfully, but if we don't get a version 2 with seasonal food, more variety of food, etc, we will get another generation that has poor food culture
717. A bit more variety
718. Children don’t enjoy the meals. Food cold, greasy, sweaty
719. I would like to see healthier options included
720. Few more options but my kids are loving them and I’m delighted with it
721. The scheme is more challenging for younger children with independent eating, speed of eating and quantity given v's what they need. My oldest child in 6th class really likes having a hot meal during the day and will often take any spare one available! It helps him with concentration.
722. I think this is such an amazing scheme for all parents from all backgrounds! And definitely promotes healthy eating with children. When my child doesn’t finish her lunch in school she finishes it at home after school. I also try different meals for her to encourage her to taste new things when I see something new on the menu and if she doesn’t like it she brings it home and her little brother would eat it, so the food never goes to waste.

723. I personally see it as a waste of money and resources. Thankfully I am in a position where I can provide hot meals for my children not all as as fortunate or in a position where. Perhaps identifying those who would like it and would genuinely benefit from it would be money better spent . I also have issue with the hygiene around it - my kids eat from their desk and copies and books have ended up destroyed with curry . canteen type scenario would be best.
724. It seems that the quality has deteriorated over time.
725. My child did take part but wasn't eating the provided dinners so rather than create food waste we reverted to providing a packed lunch
726. Maybe extend to secondary school as well
727. Start scheme and incentivise for schools and local communities in a tangible way by using local produce and employing local people. Link with green schools on gardening & composting. Educate on sustainable food growing and cooking practice. Farm to Fork etc... Grow to link in with second & third level education. Look at example of Fumbally in Dublin, enterprise community based. Look at case studies in other countries where this works well to foster sense of well being, belonging and resilience in our children.
728. Quality needs to be improved, irish food is some of the best in the world and this needs to be the same for school lunches with more variety. Fruit and veg choices including choices of lunches
729. I think perhaps sandwiches wraps and rolls should be an option as a lot of kids only feel up to this at lunchtime & it would be easier to package and keep fresh !perhaps on a Friday add something like sausage rolls or wedges
730. There are not healthy options. No fish whatsoever and few vegetarian options
731. The lunchbag provides the meals in my children's school. there is an option to purchase paid extra treats in the lunchbags app, not all of which are healthy options. I find the offering of paid add-ons appalling. And not in keeping with an ethos where all children are equal, as this is only available to parents who have the funds and or desire to pay for this. In addition, the ingredients for all meals are not provided, so parents are not fully aware of the food intake of their children
732. Food is fabtastic. Slightly bigger portions would be even better.
733. I think the hot meals are a fantastic idea. My only suggestion would be to give the option of sauce on the side for some of the dinners. My children would eat the dinner if they could add their own gravy/tomato sauce to the dishes. I understand that it is additional work but would open up the option of more dinners to people.
734. I think a lot of kids are too fussy and the parents aren't encouraging the kids to eat the lunches which is then resulting in the kids telling others that the food is bad. I think there needs to be more education amongst children around the nutritional benefits of the school meals.
735. Cold food option eg bread roll, sandwich, fruit salad would be good. Better standards re heating up hot meals

736. My daughter only eats plain foods. Doesn't like sauces on pasta. She said the rice was horrible, has had the chicken tenders but the last few months they were not great. She would eat a paninni with ham, cheese and butter. Great idea the hot dinners but hard with children that are so picky.
737. It's much better than expected. My child is really happy with most of the meals. Thanks
738. There can be a lot of food waste which is worrying and they are now changing their meal options where as they were more content when they first came in. I still think they are great school initiative but needs a good balance of food and not compromise on taste
739. As above food standard is really bad hence the waste is very high which doesn’t make sense
740. I would love to have more plain options like sausages, ham, plain burgers
741. Ad Halal meet and vegetarian options
742. The only tiny issue I would have is the portions could be a little bigger
743. I think this is a wonderful scheme. My daughter who is a fussy eater gets a hot meal which she eats because she shares the experience with her friends. Previously she was eating nothing from her home lunch box.
744. It would be great to have simple and plain options for children . Example, my child doesn't like the hot school pizza but orders it sometimes just to have a side of sweetcorn. Raw carrot would be amazing, Pasta could be served plain with sauce as the option, sauce could be room temp or cold and it will warm up as put into the pasta, so all children including non meat eaters can available of sauce options. Whole-wheat pasta would be a nicer edition for kids. Overall I think a simple menu would work and might be simpler, just putting it out there. Monday's everyone gets whole-wheat pasta and peas with options 1,2 or 3 for sauces including options for veggies etc. Tuesday everyone gets brown bread slices with options of cheese, ham etc. Wednesday everyone gets soup and bread rolls , options again for variety. Fridays everyone gets chips and peas with option 1,2 or 3 for meat, veggie or vegan. I think this would encourage kids to try new things as their friends would be all eating the same but similar rather than completely different
745. The scheme is a great idea. It would be better to apply it selectively based on budget available. Higher quality food to those who need it most first then roll out further without reducing quality.
746. Unfortunately my child tells me her food was “dry” or soggy I imagine this is from being reheated and unfortunately leads to kids not eating the food
747. Portion size for junior infants same as for 6th class. It's a great opportunity but please look.to Japanese/ French or Scandinavian models for nutritional education
748. The food can be a bit soggy, then the kids won't eat it

749. Can in future can bee added more options like Lasagne, shepherds pie, Irish stew
750. I think the scheme is brilliant but I just dont like knowing there is so much food being wasted once the kids dont eat it.
751. More vegetables
752. I remember ‘food dudes’ in our school some years back to introduce fresh fruit and veg to children however a lot of it came pre chopped and bagged and didn’t taste good at all so in fact there was a lot of waste in this scheme. Therefore I would be afraid that the cost of setting schools up to facilitate hot meals, the cost of cooking, delivery and giving the meals out to children & Will they actually eat the food ?? I would just question is this actually necessary in every school and could be funds be better spent on other forms of education. Thank you
753. I would love to see an option for rolls/ sandwiches. This so something my child would eat at home for lunch and so can finish while lining up for yard for example if not enough lunch eating time left in school.
754. I wish that Minister Foley consulted the school principals prior to launching this programme as there would be far more cost effective ways of feeding our pupils and much less waste. There was no proper communication with schools about this and that is the major issue that causes initiatives to become ineffective.
755. There seems to be huge potential for food waste in general...I have heard of one company facilitating leftovers being taken home by serving ot in reusable containers but it is the minority
756. Would be good if there was an option to add fruit or veg on the side all meals as some choices do not include and it would help with encouraging my child to eat a wider variety if classmates were seen to eat more fruit/veg
757. More options can provide
758. It's fantastic to add to school it also gives the children a opportunity to try different foods
759. I think the scheme is a good idea but wonder about whether children will be given enough time to eat their meals? As it stands, my children get 5-10 minutes of eating time for their packed lunch after yard time. Also, who checks up on food hygiene, standards and nutrition over time? Will there be health inspections where ovens have been installed in schools?
760. Just more options in food selections/ change the menu. He like only 3 meals from that menu, so if menu won't change regular, he only will be choosing those 3 things over and over
761. The additives into the food are too much. The variety of food is not there and my child is eating and swapping food on a regular basis as he only likes 1 meal. He eats everything at home and the healthy eating policy at the school was much better before the hot meals came in. He’s now opting out 3 days a week as it’s not a great proving
762. Bad quality and not healthy choices for children. Healthy sandwich, fruit, yoghurt would be a much better option than a hot meal that is stodgy, lacking in real nutrients and goes in the bin.

763. Need to up quality in meals
764. Maybe a cold lunch like sandwiches or rolls would suit many children better than hot lunch and would cost a lot less to provide.
765. They need to make it more varied. In summertime hot food is not needed but a nice salad or a roll. Just a packed lunch would be sufficient. Water should also be supplied to make kids drink more.
766. Some children could have aversions to food touching other food or dont like cheese. Eg Jacket potato with beans. Curry touching rice, a roll with cheese in it. My daughter would like a roll but not with cheese
767. Soup and a sandwich would be much better for the children full of vegetables at this time of the day as I don't think children need pizza for example at 12 in the day
768. I think it’s great
769. Its been great so far
770. I sm concerned about children eating other kids meals aswell as their own.
771. I think its a great service, very positive addition to our schools and inclusive way to support families and children
772. Not enough healthy tasty vegetarian choice
773. My child is a picky eaterr, so.he doesnt really eat the lunches provided by school
774. Very grateful for the service, excellent choice and variety offered.
775. They could be larger.
776. My children tell me that the food I served piong hot, however, they 9nly have 10 minutes to eat the meal....which means they don't have time for it to cool down properly and feel pressured into eating quickly. The teacher has a timer set to countdown the 10 minutes. This is not fostering good eating habits. I am more inclined to provide some pasta and/or soup each day instead.
777. There were pizza ciabetta with a couple of different toppings them liked
778. It is a wonderful service.
779. Fresher better quality ingredients.
780. Food is tasteless an not why they like . Fruit and dairy products should be also added for kids who get good quality food at home. Mine onltly get it not to be left out.. nothing they have tried they really like.. pasta is dry cheese is hard an meat looks to be of poor quality . No ingredients listed fsy content ect . .
781. The food is very low quality and meals taste like processed ready meals not home cooked.
782. Think we need to encourage children to have more time to eat their hot child as my older child often comes home to say theu only had 5 mins to eat or need to eat quick. Or they would have a job to do for a teacher and have less time to eat. Know teachers have a lot to fit in the day but would like to see little extra time for children to eat.

783. I think it would be great if children could have more time to eat and to integrate this with learning about proper food and nutrition / table manners etc however I believe this is not possible without the school day being longer and without dedicated canteen facilities for communal eating - both of which may be un-realistic. Nonetheless I think these would be of great benefit.
784. I was made aware of school food issues .... chicken from Brazil... a disgrace.. veg not from Ireland,preservatives etc.. Im fully aware of it all.School has a healthy eating policy yet crispy cubes available on multiple days.. My daughter won't eat anything. She said it was like they cooked everything in one pot, mixed together and then put in oven for 2 hours. I really thought it was a great thing but now maybe a waste of taxpayers money. I do understand some go without hot meals and this is their only decent meal... but that doesn't mean we have to give them crispy cubes everyday. We need to teach vulnerable children healthy eating habits. too.Maybe a simpler approach.... I'm not sure what. Parents give out about not enough choice but I think that is ridiculous... my children don't get choice for lunch or dinner anyday!!. What about a big pot of spag bol one day, pasta garlic bread.. that's it. Next day something else etc.Curry and rice and naan bread , crackers and cheese fruit next. Find out what's a hit. If they don't like the sauce, just plain pasta or garlic bread etc. Maybe crispy cubes on a Friday only. Or just keep it simple soup and sandwiches or just sandwich and fruit. Most kids are use to their own families way of cooking.... go into the schools and ask the kids.. but if it's here to stay a simpler approach..even yogurts,fruit and roll...and store in fridge, take one if u want if not stays in fridge for next day.. our school has no facilities .bit of a mess really and a headache for principal/teachers. But if my daughter did like the food I don't think we would let her have alot of it. Hope this helps...it's alot of money for this service
785. The variety of sandwiches and the food offered in line with what children eat could be something to think about. Also the quality of the food e.g does it taste nice, the quality seems to have fallen since it started
786. Our school has taken ages to participate - at this stage it should be compulsory for the schools to avail of the hot food scheme. There has been a lot of discussion about the quality of food. Very thorough vetting should be happening and providers who are not providing fresh nutritious food should have their contracts finished before expiry.
787. No
788. Quality needs to improve. Perhaps there are too many options which make running the service more complex. I would prefer having just 2 options/menus per day but ensuring they have better quality and bigger portions.
789. Much appreciated for this opportunity.
790. Serious food wastage, quality is not consistent, portion sizes inadequate ie same portion size for junior infants and 6th class. A cold lunch option would be better

791. More variety in food should be bought in. I’m extremely happy with this programme. It is such a blessing.
792. Please bring back option to select a cold prepackaged sandwich as an alternate to hot meals. Please bring back option to select snacks given at small break. Please remove Oreo’s from menu on Fridays- students are bringing in their own treat and also getting these.
793. Perhaps simpler food options & food that heats up well.
794. I think getting some feedback from the parents to see which foods would they like to see being provided could be good. In our case there is no fish option which I truly think is a pity
795. Issues have been raised with the principal on an almost monthly basis by the parents association but she is unwilling to listen or address the issues raised
796. A lot of food is arriving to the kids in containers soaked in condensation making the food mushy and un-appetizing. The recipes changed about a year ago and my kids along with most of their friends don't like it now. The food can't be brought home so I don't know what they're eating or what the quality is actually like.
797. The food is processed crap and parents have a complicated opting out process .
798. Better variety and quality would be appreciated.
799. Everything else seems fine but he just like that the food is soggy from the box
800. Would love to see stew or casserole on the menu
801. I would not be happy to eat the food and very much question the nutritional value of the food. Would be much happier with a more balanced cold meal (eg sandwich, hummus and pitta, cold pasta salad) than a half eaten stodgy warm one.
802. Since the scheme started the quality has gotten worse
803. Instead of focusing on hot foods, could there not be a option for simple sandwiches and not hot food all the time. I understand its a hot meal service, but branching out to sandwiches and rolls, would create more of a range and reach fussy eaters. Also the food is just reheated, not cooked on site and to be honest doesn't look appealing as an adult, but we seem to think thats acceptable for kids. i understand there are not the facilities to cook on site, so at least in this respect, consider a sandwich and rolls, mixed fruit salad, or simple dough balls and cucumber... could all be options also. Even easier to make than hot food all the time and would create more simpler options.
804. I would prefer there to be an option of a sandwich or roll as my child due to dyspraxia will only eat limited things
805. So far, I was very happy with the service until a month ago when my children decided they did not wanted anymore as they say they did not like it.

806. Portion sizes should differ between older and younger classes. Maybe option of sauces to go with plain pasta or rice
807. Do better.
808. Quality of food is inconsistent.
809. Salads, salmon, steaks as a food option
810. Money should be funded directly to schools to build their own gardens and kitchens, staff fully trained and chefs on site. Good quality, homemade healthy food sould be a priority for all children.
811. Every child should have access to a hot meal in the school.
812. The lunch box broke a month after it was provided, new meals should be added more frequently, pizza can also be healty, after some meals my child used to fart a lot (can be caused by the spices ysed).
813. We'd love to see a few more vegetarian options made available please. There are 6 options to choose from and given the repetitions, our child tends to lose interest in that meal option then as we don't many options to rotate from.
814. Meals are generally highly processed foods. I disagree with the government outsourcing the meals to a private company, who will always be profit-driven
815. Please go back to initial standards, the kids really enjoyed the food then whilst I've had now to manage weekly complaints about the quality of the food even to the point they're asking me to stop the meals like other parents/kids have already done. By the way, I have sent feedback a few times but quality has not improved. I really don't know how you can expect kids to eat half cooked pasta... wraps are always so soggy too... and the veg pizza is now down to a bit of tomato sauce on dough... this is not promoting better healthy habits.
816. The food quality is poor and there aren't many options in terms of companies providing meals. I have one child that will eat some of the meals but the other one won't eat them anymore as her go to (pasta dishes) is usually poor quality.
817. Children need more time to eat their food. There needs to be better quality food.
818. Cold lunch were better and if possible bring them back
819. I'd like to see the uneaten food coming home so that I can assess what my child has actually eaten
820. My children used to enjoy the cold lunches. Rolls, etc. We would like the option of a cold lunch as well as a hot lunch
821. It does not seem to be an option to remove my daughter from the school meals as I signed her up originally. This means that the government is still paying for her lunch everyday even though I don't order one.
822. More fruit is needed besides apples and oranges. I hope the food supplier is taking note of orders as some of the meals are known to be not good i.e Meatballs
823. The system is being abused by the providers & principles are not wanting to take on the challenge of promoting better quality & standards for the children. Despite being offered parent support to do so.

824. I think on balance that it is a good idea but I have concerns about food waste and children going hungry if they order something they think they will like but don't have an alternative lunch in with them (has happened with my kids and we're only a week in).
825. Lunchs are good my boy doesnt like the mash or baked potatoe ,pasta very dried up. we would love to see the Burrito Wrap make a come back
826. Plain rolls without the tomato paste and maybe soup
827. I think schools shouldn’t be able to decide or delay like our school. This should be a mandatory scheme.
828. Means test school meals - ridiculous that each child gets a free hot meal. Have hot & cold sandwich option available each day
829. Disappointed
830. While I am satisfied with the running of the scheme and the quality of the food, I wonder about the cost effectiveness of the scheme... we are not in need of free meals and would consider paying for the service and from our location in an affluent area of South Co. Dublin I suspect most parents in our school are the same.
831. A nutritionally balanced sandwich would be better than a poor quality hot meal.
832. Please bring back the cold food option, ham/chicken rolls
833. It would be great if the menu choices changed on monthly basis to prevent kids getting tired of meals
834. I am happy is provided. But It will be very Good to know what ingredients and their % are added to each meal. More transparency to make sure or kids eat healthy.
835. Look at another European countries. The diet in school meal are more supervised.
836. Option to have sandwich / roll for lunch also.
837. Pizza is like cardboard is awful. Options for just veg and just meat options with hidden veg e.g. some children don't eat any veg and some children don't eat any meat so more variety. Great to have one gluten free pasta option and a few veggie options but all meat options even lasagna and Bolognese have carrots in them
838. I think it would be great to have less choices but better quality and a way more fresh and green vegetables. Unnecessary processed food (ex:Chicken goujon) could be avoided and replaced by plain chicken or real piece of fish.
839. It seems like a waste of money and food
840. More variety to reduce food fatigue
841. Better selection from the provider, less beige and more colour by adding vegetables
842. I would prefer the money spent on hot meals spent on other resources for schools. Eg more Snas or Set teachers. The amount of food dumped per day is disgraceful
843. A longer lunch break for younger students to allow them time to eat all.

844. Thank you for providing the funding for the service.
845. Children in infants and 6th Class get the exact same portion. Some teachers give children more than one dinner(adding to the obesity crisis). They are provided with a plastic fork/spoon to eat, no knife to cut meat(the chargrilled chicken could be used to play tennis). They are eating at their desks(no wipes for small children who are effectively wearing the dinners, no cloths or cleaning products for cleaning up the mess).Pasta and Rice are both white. Brocolli is cooked to death. The stew is unrecognisable as stew, thankfully the food is labelled as it is difficult to ascertain from the eye. The quality of meat is beyond poor and looks and smells unappetising. Vegetables are limited. The majority of parents are ordering the food and sending in a lunch. The food is not being eaten and is being wasted. One school bought a pig to deal with all the food waste. The amount of curricular time wasted on food distribution, eating and clean up is concerning. For little break, children are provided with ultra processed food which they can't get enough of- Belvitas(over double the sugar consumption recommended for a child for a day), white bread sticks, white crackers, yoghurt rice cakes, frubes, laughing cow cheese, raisins and the same fruit everyday- bananas, apples, satsumas and watermelon(sometimes pineapple). There's obviously political connections with the food companies. We have schools without pencils, children who require speech and language, occupational therapy but the department would rather spend the money on waste disposal of uneaten food. Personally, I feel that children who require the dinners should be given them after school. We need dedicated Speech Therapists and Occupational Therapists in our schools which would make a massive difference to our children.
846. I think if it didn’t have to be hot there’d be more cold options and my kid would like it. At the moment I have two kids. They both only like two options available.
847. Can all the companies please be regularly checked on what is related with the ingredients listed and allergens?
848. Ideally the school kids would have some involvement in the process so that they would get to learn to understand and appreciate the meals / learn more about the food, where it comes from, why it is needed, how it is prepared, etc, etc
849. I feel that if soup, sandwiches, rolls,cheese, yoghurt, fruit and crackers it would be a lot more suitable and healthy than the SLOP that is given to the kids.
850. The idea of hot lunch is good but not working in practice, children are not enjoying this food! It’s a waste of food and finances. Cold lunches would be much better received!
851. The quality is generally good. More vegetarian protein would be good. Overall, we are happy with it.
852. My child is going for ceoliac testing. Will there be meals for my child that are gluten free

853. Most of the hot meal suppliers in my area are not local and food comes premaid and needs to be heated. We would much prefer the food to be local and from local supplier and freshly prepared each day using seasonal local ingredients
854. There should be a small charge for the food.
855. Oversight of nutrition and quantity by age.
856. I think it’s a great service and the baseline quality is high. Small tweaks and maybe a little more built it options would work better
857. As mentioned, relax the rules so children can enjoy the meals as before.
858. The pasta is often stuck and undercooked. The foods The children liked were taken away. The emphasis on healthy has overridden the desire to satisfy the hunger of the children.
859. Food could be cooked a little more ice chargrilled chicken more grilled
860. Food is of poor quality. My son has a great varied diet at home and chooses food in which he is familiar with for lunch. These foods are often a very disappointing version of the foods he likes. The gammon meal is inedible with boiled potatoes barely cooked and blackened. Chicken goujons are horrendous. Pale in colour and the meat inside is very processed with likely very little chicken content. The sausage in the bangers and mash meal are disgusting. They actually resemble microwaved sausages. These a just an example and I am very disappointed in the service. I feel like the parents evening which was held before the meals programme began catfished us in a way as the food being served to our kids is nothing like what was demonstrated on that evening. I still send a full lunch with my child and it is not costing us any less in food bills.
861. Healthy food should be cooked onsite everyday. This would require a huge investment in school buildings and staffing, but a price worth paying as this is when food habits are formed.
862. Apparently the food was nice at the beginning but isnt anymore. the school is doing their best but the food that is provided to the school is not nutritious or nice. An alternative is needed
863. The introduction of a sandwich option would be much more sufficient. The waste from the hot meals is madness. Not all kids like the hot meals so a sandwich option would be great
864. The service is n absolute waste of money. The quality of the food is notbfit for consumption. My daughter brought home a few of the meal she couldnt eat and I wouldnt feed them to the cat. Absolute dried out muck
865. The meal does not cater for children with additional needs such as sensory processing disorder
866. The meals do not look appetising. My child says the food is not hot/warm. I used to order 5 days but now I only order 3 because it's wasted due to not being edible or not having time to eat it. When I'm dumping it into the food bin at home it's all congealed together and comes out in one piece. I've tasted some meals and there's no flavour or care put into providing meals in my opinion.

867. This is an amazing service. Our children love the food. It has been in our school for the past 3 years, this is year 4 and I have to say we have no complaints.
868. Washing cutlery is an issue. There is a lot of waste created with packaging. There seems to be a high salt content in the hot foods provided. Very fast food orientated or overly processed.
869. Engagement with food service provider has been very poor and school principal is not engaged with the process to drive variety and best value. Disappointed how a great government initiative is been poorly delivered on the ground. I'd suggest taking decisions away from principals
870. My children will eat a few of the meals, but I still provide them with extra lunch from home. They don't always have enough time to eat them, so food is often left over. I worry that they will end up eating the same few meals(they are slightly fussy eaters) and that they will end up leaving them, and there will be a lot of food waste.
871. I would like to see soups, stews and healthier whole food options. Chicken and potatoes with a mushed veg shape is a bit dry and I don't think the aim is for kids to just have yellow food
872. I'd be as happy without scheme. Food wastage and waste of money.
873. Sandwiches as an option would be great
874. It has relieved budgetary pressures on the household somewhat, too.
875. I think the hot school meals are a great addition to my child's primary school experience.
876. Feedback from kids what they want on the menu.
877. It was much preferable when the leftover food was brought home from school as I could see what my child had eaten/not eaten. Since January, we no longer receive the waste cartons in the lunch boxes
878. Standard of meals are poor.
879. Please make sure there is a Halal menu. And cheese suitable for vegetarian when adding pastas or parmesan.
880. It's good quality dood
881. We originally opted in. When our child came home every evening with the carton uneaten we cancelled the service. On review of the food; from pasta, fish and wedges, chicken etc both myself and my husband agreed we wouldn't eat it ourselves. On asking our son he said he didn't like it, he doesn't want dinner at lunch and he doesn't have enough time to eat it. It's important our son eats during the day to ensure he's not hungry, loses concentration and becomes food angry. He eats his packed lunch and we can easily manage healthy options together with the school food policy ie no nuts, sweets and fizzy drinks.
882. My children and I are very happy with the current meals provided, they like that they get to choose what they can have and it has been a more positive experience than I had expected.
883. More cold options sandwiches, rolls etc.

884. Hot school lunches should be realistic in what a child is going to eat but good quality food and small portions cold lunch option should also be provided if not already
885. I think the portions are too big and a cold option would be a good idea
886. Lack of variety. Still sending in a full school lunch so not seeing any benefits of the scheme!
887. Overall I'm very satisfied with the scheme but more variety on some days would be better. Some days have better options than others
888. Lots of kids don’t like the school meals programme. For the older kids the meals are too small. They complain the variety is poor and the quality of the food is poor also. Putting a kitchen in a main school and employing kitchen staff would be far wiser and save money in the long run. Employ drivers to take the hot dinners to other smaller schools, they do this in the north and it works well plus the dinners are cooked fresh each morning not cooked a few days before and then reheated at 2 in the morning.
889. Please ensure high quality food for children. Bulk produced, additives etc food may not be of highest quality
890. If there was an option of what veg is provided. Some children only like carrots or brocolli etc the veg always comes home in our house as they say they do not like it and I feel if there was an option for which veg they could get it would always be eaten.
891. Quality of food is not good
892. Would like my children to have more time to actually eat their food.
893. I don’t agree with the healthy food, as there is not a lot of variety for kids to enjoy
894. From media and anecdotal reports about existing hot school meals in schools they seem far from ideal. It sounds like a great plan in theory but the reality seems to be a different story, the meals are not good nutritionally and there is a huge amount of food wastage. The approach to the scheme needs revision.
895. This is a great resource that should be kept, however the quality of what is being served is letting the scheme down.
896. Be great if there was one an option for snacks - crackers / fruit and yogurt instead of all hot meals. I think there is a lot of wastage on the hot meals and not everybody needs them. Many thanks
897. Would love the meals to be more nutritious and balanced
898. It would be most welcome to have more healthy options and not deep fried side potatoes, it is always brought home not eaten .
899. No
900. Food quality is questionable. My children report that the food is not nice and looks nothing like the photos on the app from which we order. I wonder would the money be better spent on providing fresh fruit each day and something simple and nutritious such as soup. Children don’t need a huge hot lunch in the middle of the day- my children still eat dinner as normal each evening!

901. The food quality has drastically decreased since being first introduced. Children a have a very simple plain pallet, the menus are overly complicated and ridged. Please provide a roll/sandwich option, where they can add butter, cheese, ham etc and optional extras. Please provide a fruit option that is cut up for them and easy to eat: Apple Orange Pear Pineapple Watermelon in slices, Strawberries Raspberries Blueberries and grapes in a punnette. Please provide they a potato option only: wedges, mash, baked, air fried chips. I am happy to discuss this over the phone if you require further feedback.
902. We would like to see healthy meals with healthy vegan options, inculed salads and fruits.
903. Lack of information on the sourcing of used ingredients, it may be organic, but this means nothing if the product is sourced 1000km away in mainland EU, or worse from outside EU. It should be 100% locally sourced. Also change menus according to the seasonal produce. Amazed that the menus don't change throughout the year. Why not source locally from the school area? Reach out to the parents for contacts? Use the local producers. Brillant to have hot meals, but there are zero salads!! Amazed.
904. No I hate it
905. The food is of very poor quality. I am not happy with it. I would rather provide my child's lunch and let the money be spent on more important things at school such as extra teachers and SNAs
906. Recipes changed e g meatballs spag bol etc and kids did not like changes. The lunch bag suppliies tge school
907. I really feel, as a teacher and parent, that the money could be used more beneficially within the schooling system. The service is not necessary in our school, we could spend the money in a better way, and still facilitate giving food to those in need, which we already do in our school. 11.45 is very early to eat a hot meal, sandwiches could be a better alternative. I feel it's going to contribute to lazy parenting and negatively impact the 'family dinner' at home.
908. An option of a sandwich on more than one day of the week
909. Cold options should be available.
910. Give more halal and vegetarian options
911. Please try ensure meals can be served plain/bland, and that sauces and different elements of the meal can be served separately (even a pre divided plate/bowl would suffice- not several containers). Foods that may be considered “unhealthy” like goujons are safe foods for many autistic children as they tend to taste consistently the same, consider having them as a Friday treat option. Lastly, the reason many bland or beige foods are enjoyed/safe for autistic people is because these foods taste the same every time, they are consistent and taste doesn’t change. For example, an orange could be sweet, sour, juicy or dry etc.. Whereas a cracker tastes the same every single time. Consistency and familiarity are important, alongside plain offerings.

912. It is an absolute godsend....my wee man just loves it..tank you
913. There are complaints about food being soggy but overall she’s happy
914. Kids won't eat food but did last year. Menu changes or supplier changes made it inedible
915. Portion sizes are the same for all classes - junior infants to 6th class is This second year of hot meals in my childrens school. Last year the food was eaten by one and some meals by the other. This year with changes to the healthy eating guidelines (which I have no problem with) but neither child will eat the meals due to taste and quality and quite frankly from what I have seen coming home in lunch boxes (untouched) the quality is appalling reheated food. This is a company who supply meals to a lot of schools around the country. I would prefer if it was a local arrangement where the meals could be made fresh and delivered then to the school. Also options should be changed more frequently as children like everyone get tired of the same meals week in week out. I absolutely understand the rational behind this initiative which in theory is a brilliant idea but on the ground the food my children were getting I would never in a million years make something like it for them at home.
916. I would like to see more variety with simpler options for example.1. Cold Option like there are on half days. 2. Plain rolls, with ham or cheese or chicken etc on the side and a sachet of butter as alot of kids prefer it this way. 3. Goujons with cubes are there all the time, next week have goujons with pasta, then with rice and maybe back to cubes and so on. Thanks so much for allowing myself and others to give feedback and hopefully you might be able to implement some changes.
917. The company my child school uses is excellent and meals are served in hard plastic bowls with hard plastic cutlery that is washed and re used. The choices are excellent with a veggie option and meat option daily with baked potatoe options daily with varioustoppings for pickier children. Excellent catery company based in Co. Laois, nourish have done it right , very happy and I've even gotten to taste some of the meals , extremely happy and I'm very particular about food.
918. It’s a great initiative
919. Meals are not exactly tasty child has said food is reheated so is rock hard and sometimes not edible
920. Children with autism sensory issues ir additional needs
921. The standard of food being supplied to our school is excellent, however there is a lot of food wastage overall.
922. N/A
923. Most of the food my kids bring it home. I’ve tried changing the menu for them but they don’t eat nothing except the margarita ciabatta and the whole meal pizza or the chicken curry and plain pasta
924. It's not rocket science. We don't a choice of 20 different meals. A buffet type cold lich would even work wonders! Fruit, cheese, ham/chicken,eggs, bread!! All fresh daily!!

925. The school meals scheme needs to be reviewed. It is not sufficient to provide 'pizza and cubes' as a hot school lunch. There is little or no nutritional value in this option. Alternative options such as pasta based dishes do little for the appetite. I really feel that applying the scheme to every child nationally is a huge waste of money that could be put to good use elsewhere.in a school setting.
926. Why is there not fruit and snack part of the meal programme
927. Cold lunches would be great eg sandwiches, rolls. Maybe as an option
928. To be honest our kids liked the not hot meals they used to get better. They don’t want to eat the hot meals at all. This results with us preparing them full lunches every morning.
929. Good idea but much more action needed to educate pupils around balanced diet and local sustainability
930. It would be nice for a sandwich and fruit option to be offered
931. Sandwiches, rolls and a variety of fruit and snacks could be a much better option.
932. As I’ve worked in schools as well as being a parent, I can tell you that the food quality is absolutely appalling
933. I’d like to have a clearer sense of the nutritional value of the meals, salt and fat content et
934. Cold meal options should also be available, such as rolls, crackers and cheese etc. Not all hot meals are eaten. Snack extras cost money and my child will ask why she doesnt get them. Meal providers should just have the free meals.
935. My children really like the hot meals, it really helps me as a working parent to know they are being feed healthy meals every day and I don't have to make lunches.
936. If school can’t provide hot meal at least fruits for all the children
937. The meal provider does not ask for any feedback on what meals were enjoyed and changes are made to the menu without any parent consultation
938. It's a fantastic service for the families of the school
939. Schools and staff are doing a great job. Government are wasting money that could go towards SNAs and staffing issues. Listen to the principals and staff. Random hotmeals that NO ONE asked for is crazy.
940. The meals don't meet the government guidelines for healthy eating. There's not enough fruit and veg. A few sandwich option would be great for the kids that get a hot meal in the evening.
941. We want more variety because kids get bored quickly
942. Guidelines re nutrition not in place
943. As per box above
944. More time for children to finish they lunch. Also, not having a screen time while eating a lunch would help with time management. More healthier options and more variety of food would be welcome.
945. Portion sizes are too small for older classes

946. Disappointed that my child'd school took fish out the menu when fish is healthier than other meat meals
947. My child would like to see more of a variety in meal choice special meals for different days
948. Government has to step in and inspect the quality and materials used to make those meals ,they are ultra processed by 80%
949. No
950. For some kids, the meals are probably improving their diets, for others it’s worsening. I have the resources to prepare a fresh lunch (be it hot or cold) for my child to bring to school and, like I said, my son eats a great variety of foods, so the meals were a disservice to us and the waste was nearly absolute.
951. Would be good to give schools choice between hot and cold meal options
952. I was expecting the quality in the food to be better as sometimes the leftovers that my daughter brings home smells horrible.
953. We are vegetarian & the choice is extremely limited. I have contacted the suppliers with easy suggestions & they haven’t been taken up. It’s really disappointing.
954. Children want to reduce number of days they get food. Some food not good
955. Quality of the food varies incredibly between suppliers
956. Packing food provided in is take away style and not the best or nicest way to eat lunch
957. It is a fantastic concept but the food needs to be healthier, sourced locally and sustainably.
958. I would suggest more variety of food/meal. Or make evaluation in first part of school days which kids like and add more options if kids avoid or least food listed in school try to remove and add more options.
959. The quality is shocking. Im a chef of 19 years, its embarrassing what they are given.
960. Apart from the food safety concerns and the interruption at our school over the last two months, there’s nothing to add.
961. I don't feel this is good use of government resources & should be used in a more targeted way that benefits the schools that could make good use of this initiative.
962. Really great initiative
963. I think would help and encourage the children to eat more food if the food pack separately from the rice or sauce as it get mushy and sweaty. Sometime the food is not cook properly actually quite many time my child bring food home didn't eat,because the food is uncooked.other time the food is over cook . If you could improve the quality and package and add more different dishes. Thank you

964. It’s a great concept and I was excited when it first came to our school but the food is awful. My child is not a fussy eater but the food came back uneaten every day so I cancelled it and went back to a packed lunch that he’ll eat.
965. The first year the hot meals were nice and my children were so happy, rarely came home with any Now the taste of the food is bad, the quality of the food is not great. There's no one working to heat it up correctly and the choices aren't as good, the choices are nearly too complex and when the food is served it's slimy, stuck together and "gross". alot of children aren't adventurous in their pallet and in my opinion texture, food quality is important. Also this focus on Healthy options is. wholemeal pizza etc is wasteful a pizza at lunchtime never made anyone unhealthy - hot food into tummies gives children energy and focus.
966. While I understand the aim of this initiative and it's intentions to offer hot food to all children, it's planning and execution and limitations in choice has been terrible. A sandwich, fruit, salads, seeded or wholemeal bread sticks and dips, cups of soup would add great value to the scheme but the focus on hot food only has limited the positive effects this scheme could have. There's very little thought to presentation of the food. My child regularly comments that it looks like vomit and won't try it and I don't blame him.
967. A programme with good intentions but an overall disaster, massive waste of money due to lack of careful thought and planning, shameful.
968. The service is as good as it can get for pre-heated food. The system needs changing so that healthy eating habits are truly enabled at school. 15 minutes to eat is not longer enough and does little to support key life skills for children.
969. It's an excellent idea.
970. I think the food options need to be healthier and not so processed.
971. Maybe there could be more variety,y so has said the potatoes are very watery like a paste so proper potatoes and not processed ones would be more beneficial and enjoyed. He said most of the children in his class thought the same.
972. Time to eat fully and encouraging children to eat forst and chat later!
973. I have two children. Only one child takes the hot meals. One would love a sandwich for his lunch and this is not available.
974. My children are coeliac and my eldest child was glutened on day 2 of the hot meals in her school so we do not use them. While gluten free options are offered they are not coeliac safe and cross contamination is a big issue. I know The Coeliac Society offered training to all providers and only one availed of the offer. I would also be concerned about general food safety given the distance hot food has to travel.
975. It is a fabulous service. Thank you for all the care taken in getting the food to the pupils.

976. I do not plan to avail of the scheme. I like providing my kids' lunches each day and thus knowing that they're getting mainly fresh and homemade snacks, with a focus on whole (rather than high processed) foods. I have heard mixed reviews of the quality of lunches supplied in other schools via the scheme, and examples of a school starting out with good quality food for the first months of the arrangement, and subsequently the vendor reducing their standards once they feel they have bedded in. Notwithstanding this, I support the principles behind the scheme and hope that it does bring about improved health and learning outcomes for children who currently come to school with poor lunches.
977. Love that they also provide apples and oranges. While he could take them from home one of my kids prefers to take the ones offered in school. I guess eating with others makes hungry.My kids choose their own lunch. There is no discussion in the morning what type of sandwich and fruits/veg the like in their lunch box.It would be nice to see more vegetables in the offering. Some dishes have kale or carrots, but its mainly potatoes or pasta. An extra offering of vegetables (cold is fine) such as with fruits would be great. They only eat if friends do it too.
978. Option of more rolls /wraps etc
979. The school introduced a ‘Food dude’ scheme some years ago, providing fresh fruit and vegetables. Most of the children didn’t eat the fruit and veg and the food ended up being dumped. The children in our school are lucky - most are well fed but also probably particular. I think trying to provide meals will lead to huge food wastage. And it’s not necessary. Most of the students bring in great lunches and can afford to do so. Rolling out this scheme to all schools, without consideration of financial means and locality, is an irresponsible waste of taxpayers money. All of these schemes - including free GP visits for under sixes - should be means tested.
980. Too much put on schools and principles, government needs to provide more assistance
981. Quality of the food is poor, most days it came home to the bin so I cancelled it. It's an awful waste of money when schools need money for so much else. An on site cook catering to those that need it would be more useful. Home cooked food rather than reheated processed food would be more nourishing. Only some children need the meals
982. Would prefer this scheme to be more targeted to schools / children with need. Not needed in my child's school for the most part. The funds would be far better used for educational supports for children who require it. Also the waste produced by this scheme is upsetting. Every day new cutlery...wooden but still waste. Also food waste ia v high. Lots of packaging ....producing more waste. Ovens squeezed into old school where space is not really available.
983. Wondering why is it taking so long for our school to introduce the hot meals as promised.

984. Better nurtrition meals hot meals shoul be hot and not judt soggy lukewarm food very off putting
985. Food shouldn't be brought from a different country kept warm for hours for children to eat
986. My children are particularly fussy when it comes to food but neither like the food v much.
987. More meal options with simple ingredients
988. I hope that all dietary needs are catered for and that all kids are given the same number of options (ie that coeliacs are not left with one or two items to chose from. We would need to be 100% sure of a commitment from the hot food provider that there is no cross contamination. Thanks;.;
989. More variety would be nice.
990. The idea is a good concept but I dont think all schools need the hot lunch scheme. The scheme and providers are certainly not providing quality food for the children.
991. Sandwich was good too and children could bring home and eat it there
992. The scheme needs more nutrition lead input. A healthy meal is more important than a hot meal. Cold options should be made available. Use of local cafe/ restaurants etc would have more economic and social benefit to an area then the reheated stodge
993. Portions are bug for junior infants so there is lots of waste. Cold options like sandwiches, wraps might be more likely to be eaten than some of the hot offerings.
994. Please reconsider this tremendous waste of money. This may be beneficial to DEIS schools but not the majority of schools.
995. Perhaps adding a new choice or choices every term would add variety.
996. No
997. Hope food was healthier and tastier. I think enough with the professed food.
998. I have contacted the hot meal provider as my daughter wouldn’t eat with added vegetables. They did this no problem which has helped hugely. Sometimes I hear that the meals especially the pasta is stuck together and dry. Otherwise they seem ok
999. Portion sizes should be adjusted to class level. I find the service brilliant and my two girls love the variety of food. I love that there are so many vegetables with the meals.
1000. Why does the meal have to be hot? There can be nutritious delicious cold meals like sandwiches and salads also. It would be nice to have this option as some kids would prefer this.
1001. Quality of food is quite poor, this is main reason it is not eaten
1002. No
1003. No just happy with the food.
1004. Fresh and sugar free where possible
1005. Cold lunch option as I need to send a packed lunch daily as my children invariably do not eat the hot meal option

1006. Carbonara King is a highly popular option and is only available on Mondays. As my child does does not eat potato cubes it is very hard to select a meal that he will eat in full without taking cubes home and only eating goujons or the meat portion. I think there should be more pasta options, in particular, the carbonara available on more days than one.
1007. I look forward to the hot meals being introduced in my child school as I feel it will it down on after school snacking and at least they will have eaten a substantial hot meanin the middle of the day
1008. Having a cold option would be nice- sandwiches etc
1009. More variety to suit like sandwhiches, fruit pots, yoygurts and foods that kids enjoy for lunch time
1010. My children have recently stopped wanting the hot lunch as the standard and quality is very bad. Sometimes cold and under cooked
1011. I am so disappointed with this service
1012. I am delighted the scheme is running but the amount of choice has reduced significantly by the provider.
1013. It would be beneficial to have a cold option and to use a local supplier as as pose to a company from another county.
1014. The standard of food isn't great
1015. Will hot food options cover food allergies/intolerance? I have two children still in school, one who is lactose intolerant, and the second is both dairy and egg intolerant, so my own homemade food helps my children to 'fit in', and not feel so self conscious or left out, whilst those around them are eating their food. Thankfully allergy/intolerance food choice options has improved somewhat.
1016. I am aware that it is a very difficult task to please all children and the sun is mainly to ensure all children have a hot meal per day. My child opts out 4 days per week. Would like the children to be included in the choices. My child school has introduced a fruit bowl, this is more beneficial for them. Eating more fruit
1017. One of my children doesn't like anything on the menu. Option of Pasta with a type of tomato/red sauce would be ideal, a sandwich or bread roll. My other child eats some lunches but not many.
1018. Information about suppliers would be great in helping make decisions around the order.
1019. The quality of the food is appalling. Honestly I would only feed it to our dog. Susages that are orange inside, a cardboard box full of soggy white rice with nothing else(how does this meet any nutritional standards?), processed white rolls with something resembling grated cheese in a red sauce, I could go on, it is all gross. What adult would find this food appetitising and we expect growing children to eat it and be on form for learning after?! No fibre, no veg. From the lunchbag. I cancelled it for our 2 primary school aged children. I'm 100% happier to make them healthy lunches myself.

1020. As stated above, I feel monies could be used much more effectively than providing hot lunches for all children. DEIS schools have always targeted those children with most need and those children will always be provided for but I feel the old system of lunches/wraps/scones worked much better than hot lunches. Providing hot lunches also may take away some responsibility from parents re. the making of a dinner in the evening. Many parents will now not make an evening meal when it is being provided for their child at school. Furthermore, most parents have no idea whether their child is eating their lunch unless the uneaten lunch is sent home. This does not seem to happen in many schools. There is significant time wasting also (as well as the expense) re the delivery of lunches to classrooms, distributing them, collecting them, returning them etc. I do not think hot lunches should be provided in mainstream schools where parents are in a position to provide lunches for their children. We need to target these funds more carefully ...ASD classrooms are under resourced in most cases as is training of teachers in these classes. The Department needs to listen to teachers on the ground rather than simply going about ticking boxes. I am 29 years teaching in DEIS Band One and it angers me to see such so much money wasted when it is so badly needed in other areas.
1021. I do appreciate the hot lunch scheme its brilliant, but the only thing is if the would be a menu change every month or every 2 months maybe? I feel my son is gettinf bored of the menu, but he still eats his favourites. So all good. Thanks
1022. We tried it for a number of months when it first came in but we were disappointed with the quality of the food and the fact that there weren't many healthy food choices available. In fact having white baguette rolls with breaded chicken in at an option for healthy school meals was shocking.
1023. The quality of food from my son’s school supplier is abysmal. Aside from that children were given an empty lunchbox so that they bring home what is largely uneaten. The packaging is foil containers! In thought the rules indicates absolutely no food was to go home and surely the packaging should have to be sustainable?
1024. Takes time for child to taste test and figure out what they like.
1025. I feel money would be better spent on other services for schools e.g. providing more support for children with needs
1026. No
1027. Outside of Deis schools which should provide hot food options, the majority of children in Ireland would benefit more from increased SNA and SET hours than hot lunches
1028. Survey parents for menu choices
1029. I think portion sizes should be addresses. Our provider gives the same portions to a 5 year old in Junior Infants as they do for a 13 year old in 6th class.
1030. Meals should be checked regularly by an outside body to see how bad the quality is , schools.meals is a great idea but food supplied in very poor

1031. Good scheme and certainly saves time on lunches. However parents who can afford it should supplement it, that way it could be rolled out to more children in need of a hot meal.
1032. It would be good if there was a sandwich option instead of school meal as veg often soggy
1033. Ridiculous amount of waste
1034. As much as it is valued, a more varied menu would be great. Even just a plain cheese sandwich option would be great. Sometimes if a child isn't feeling too well etc, something simple would be nice. A hamburger for a Friday too.
1035. It's not just prices or labels or menus which Boards of Management need to be able to choose between: schools need to be able to prioritise functional nutrition, being informed by both regular parents and parents/advisors with expertise. Everything suggests companies do the minimum in checking boxes about minimum standards for nutrition - there is no actual way for BOMs to choose or solicit better or more appropriate nutrition or options for their pupils. This has effects on pupil focus, attention, comprehension and retention intellectually; and on physical condition and immune systems (and all knock-on effects). Even with initial enthusiasm, a very noticeable drop-off has occurred and has solidified in practice - pupils and parents alike are voting with their refusal of the scheme, and there is substantial waste of food and money resulting.
1036. Please please please stop this waste, give hearty lunches, with less unhealthy options.
1037. Healthier food choices needed. So many highly processed, high salt/fat foods I will not order
1038. The quality of the food has been excellent for the children.
1039. Scrap the scheme. It is wasting money and food. It tried to solve a problem that wasn't there in most schools. Money would be better spent targeting more deprived children.
1040. Many thanks to the hot meal scheme. I am very satisfied with it.
1041. I know it's very hard to please everyone and keep costs down at the same time but I do genuinely believe my children would eat more of it if had more flavor and there was more variety.
1042. Sandwich, fruit and milk would be a more practical option. Alot of the food is soggy and unappealing. Same portion size for a 4 and 13 year old. Children don't want to give the time and don't have the hunger for hot lunches during school time. So much waste with both the containers and food. Food given to pets and hens etc.Have to avail of it 5 days or no days also leading to waste. Won't cancel it because I feel we are paying for it in our taxes.Supplier doesn't seem to take much feedback from families.
1043. I think this scheme should have been targeted specifically at deis schools and schools in disadvantaged areas. The scheme could benefit from cold food options, sandwiches, rolls etc which could lead to less food waste.

1044. The food is a bit soggy by the time the children get it. My kids love the corn on the cob that comes with the pizza. If there could be more options with plain veg side, not mixed with anything else like sauce or rice that would be great.
1045. I've given a 2 because the leftover food was being sent home and there are days that I'm glad my son didn't eat it because it doesn't look very appetising. I did taste a couple of things but didn't find them very nice.
1046. Serious reservations in relation to value for money in this initiative. The majority of students in my children's classes will not eat this food. A massive waste of tax payers money. Needs to be overhauled as a matter of urgency
1047. More vegan options please
1048. The menu never seems to change throughout the year
1049. Not satisfied with Fibre in the meals .Adding more variety of vegetables in different forms will be good
1050. The lunchbag, overall nutrition not great. Options limited, many removed after initial launch.
1051. For hot lunches to succeed,there needs to be a variety of food to which children would eat . A plain food option should be available and if food is not eaten at school allow to take home . Reminder of portion control as food waste is astronomical and it is expensive
1052. I wish schools would have their kitchen and provide the meals on campus like the UK. Or at least provide better quality and quantity of food. Sometimes the food is not cooked well. Most days the quantity is very less.
1053. There is not much variety and it's boring for mine. She brings them back home most of the time. Don't get me wrong it's a fantastic initiative but not impressed by what they get.
1054. Shortcuts of meals are already being made and the hot meals are only one year in our school. Some options no longer contain gravy on dinners and Mac and cheese no longer includes sauce. Plain pasta with some cheese
1055. It is great idea, even if was just sandwich and fruit provided and I can't understand why all schools haven't been made to adopt it
1056. Not many dairy free options, the ones that are dairy free are not really healthy and my daughter doesn't like the taste of most of them. I tasted them and can't really blame her. Better to go back to giving her lunch from home, it's healthier, she eats it and less food waste every day
1057. We are getting cold lunches. Week 5 & for my house it's working well so far.
1058. We like the plan of introducing hot food scheme in our primary school, and appreciate it.
1059. The food is great. I hunt don't like the fact that a hot food is served in plastic containers, and the water in plastic bottles, and they offer katchup every day.
1060. Quality of the meals not always great

1061. One of my children is very picky. A cold lunch with a variety of snacks might suit better.
1062. Hot meals is not the answer for school attendance. Providing a breakfast club to all children is more appealing. Most of the lunches end up in the bin
1063. Our family declined it last year as it was not eaten. And I did not want to be part of the waste.
1064. all mashed potato meals are not a hit they dont like the taste. the soup used to be really popular in our house but now its not blended right they dont enjoy anymore
1065. I would prefer to see the money put into a proper school bus system. Our town is constantly congested with school traffic and both parents now work. A school bus would really help working parents. I have to get a healthy snack ready for the kids in the morning anyway, making a sandwich isn't much of a stretch.
1066. My childs primary scheme. I cancelled ours. The food was over packaged and wasn't fresh or nutrious. It would have been beneficial if there was more dialoge between the food provider, parents and children before it was rolled out. My child said at times it dirty with hairs in it and at times moldy. Plus at times out of date. Maybe fewer options on the menu but for more nutritous food, such a soup or pasta dish. Better quailty food with less packing with less packaging would be better. I hope this helps, thank you.
1067. I absolutely support the school meals programme. My mum was a school cook in the UK and I know the positive impact a well run scheme can have, but the current scheme is not providing value for money and requires unannounced inspections etc to force the suppliers to return to the standard achieved in the pilot.
1068. The quality of hot meals in other schools is shockingly bad. Children would be much better off being offered a healthy sandwich / roll/ yogurt and fruit every day.
1069. I work in schools a see huge amount of waste. As deis band 1 school I seen the benefit of cold meals and felt this was a better avenue. The hot meals are not substantial and not appetising.
1070. Availability of broken replacement lunchbox. The clip easily breaks and none available to replace it. We use cellotape.
1071. The food waste is minimum, max less than 10% about 20% of the time.
1072. Thank you for this great initiative. Our school has selected a very healthy provider but I understand not all providers are the same. I think there should be rules around ingredients and health standards across the board.
1073. I would like less meals containing pieces of peppers as I think it does not appeal to children.
1074. The food is very repetitive and they stop eating it. Great service otherwise
1075. Choice to order hot food for two or three days only. More healthy options. Kids don't like everything piled in together.

1076. Even though I love the convenience of not having to prepare the lunch in the morning, I find the menus very repetitive. And the meals aren't very balanced. It would be great if more vegetables were included, maybe a small green salad... I understand that fruit has been made available lately, but green are essential for gut health.
1077. We are extremely thankful to get hot meals served at school. I know it helps families who cannot afford lunches. It helps us to provide a hot lunch instead of cold lunches, saves us time and money. The meals come home uneaten when they haven’t been heated properly- either too cold, not cooked enough or pasta is hard for example. I understand providing the amount of meals they do this can be challenging but if that can be monitored more closely I think there would be less waste.
1078. I would like the lunches to be sent home from school so I am aware of how much my child is eating at school.
1079. I gave it a 5 as I was neither satisfied or dissatisfied as we do not avail of the meals due to my child’s food allergies.
1080. My children don’t like the food on offer by the company used so an alternative company would be beneficial as they still bring in food from home.
1081. Procurement and oversight by school management is not a practical governance structure to ensure Department guidelines are being met. Considering the cost to the exchequer of this scheme it should be managed as a public good not a private profiteering model at the expense of children's nutrition and positive food experiences.
1082. Just a bit more variety and less of the veg it’s to much in your face example the pizza puree the veg in the tomatoe base sauce and hid the veg, same with curry, also the age difference the 6th children get what a junior infant, the older children need more then one scoop of spuds with the spud dinners, and adding something different to the menu, stew, spaghetti, toastie and wedges, lasagna. I would believe a lot more children would eat it if there was more hidden veg
1083. Better options. More Veg, sustainably sourced Irish product
1084. There is a host of reasons why this scheme is not working. Firstly the quality is shocking. If we are going to do school lunches, schools should be equipped with canteens & enough time given to eat. Menus need to change seasonally, chicken curry daily for any child isn’t healthy. Less options, but better quality would work. I suggest to our school that they do baked potato’s Monday (veg, meat or beans topping) pasta Tuesday (veg, meat or cheese/plain) chilli Weds (veg, meat etc) Thurssoups & rolls (veg, chunky, Dahl etc) Friday - pizza slices. Gluten free/ vega/ halal options everyday to be included everyday. Needs to be kept simple and healthy. I send my daughter in with leftovers. For those children that actually rely on this meal to keep them satisfied it is not hitting the mark.

1085. I think the idea is good, but there is too much variability from school to school in how it is run. There doesn't seem much imagination or standards in relation to the food that is served and I think if not run better it will be a mean for the providers to make profits while leaving children with substandard nutrition. I would like to see some consultation with Irish nutritionists/cooks (eg Sarah Butler, Little Lou Cooks, Catriona Redmond) on how to make nutritious, cost effective menus that the kids will enjoy.
1086. I feel hot school meals is vital in deis schools. Making it across the board is a huge waste of good and money and would be better spent on early intervention- early assessment- ongoing provision of more SEN support and mental health therapists being made available in primary and secondary schools.
1087. We are very happy.The company which provides hot lunches in our school has a good quality lunches, very big choice of different, delicious and nutricious meals.Even snacks for extra pay if you'd like.But I heard from other people that some companys provide very bad food. That would be something to consider I presume.
1088. Money could be better spent on sen support
1089. I understand some other schools are happy with their service, but for us we are not. We send packed lunch still as do many other parents and there is a lot of food wasted.
1090. My child says the meals aren't fully cooked - ie undercooked pasta, or dishes cold in the middle. As such, he is not eating much of them.
1091. The scheme is really great. We love it. However I think resources would be better spent on SNAs. Perhaps free meals for disadvantaged kids and opt-in subsidised for the rest.
1092. Hot school meals may be of more value to some families than others.
1093. The potatoes particularly the cubes are never cooked enough. There should be more variety not so much chicken. The rice isn't nice either. My kids eat it but the choice is limited.
1094. It is a broadly positive scheme. Some issues: portions for the junior cycle are too big, adding some cold sandwiches would be good
1095. Would be better if they would do a survey on what kids like to eat.
1096. The fruit is a good idea, not sure why some cold food can't be provided. My daughter brings cheese, crackers, salami, cold pesto pasta, sweetcorn. She's not fussy-just hates the reheated/smelly/sogginess
1097. I think this is important scheme and I'm sure there are children that may not be getting hot meal at home and this gives them chance to have it and all children are treated equally.
1098. Overall happy, my child does like the hot meals. He doesn't like some foods, but likes most of them. The scheme helps save our time and lets my boy to try new dishes or varieties.
1099. I would prefer a cold meal option for my children. The hot meals I felt lacked quality.
Add an option for a wrap where no liquid can form inside the container to make the food mushy

1100. The current system has been rolled out without proper consideration of our children's future health and we will find in time they are doing more harm than good. The children are not benefiting but the companies who are providing the meals are benefiting financially- they must be laughing at their profit margins!!
1101. Maybe rotate the menus that are offered more often. My daughter loves something's but she gets tired of them after a few weeks repeating that. She tries new things too but many don't like it so maybe offer 5 dishes per day every week (some can repeat different days) and the week after change the offers. It would be ideal to do a 10 day rota
1102. I feel that the scheme is not needed in all schools, and that there is potential for a lot of waste of food here. While I support the idea of every child getting a hot meal, I think that the schools should be allowed to deploy that funding elsewhere if they so wish, as all schools are so short of funds no with the cost of heat and electricity, insurance, technology to name a few being so very high.
1103. There is so much waste. Our school uses Glanmore foods, most of the kids say they don't eat it. Lots of parents opting out. I'm not very sure about the quality of the food in particular meat. I'd love to see children have fresh soup & soda bread. The best option in my opinion would be a cook placed in the school, just like certain crèches, cooking fresh food daily.
1104. More basic food
1105. In our school the scheme started at the start of this school year. The menu has changed twice, and from our perspective, and the feedback from my children, is that that standard and quality of food has decreased since its inception, so much so that they are asking if they can bring in their own lunches instead now.
1106. in note above. Thank you for the efforts.
1107. Kindly have more Vegetarian / Vegan options example Noodles
1108. Works well for my children
1109. Hard to balance meal quality with child preferences. Unsure about portion sizes being served. Requirement in one school to bring uneaten food home made my daughter opt out completely.
1110. My child is in 5th class and if he brings food home, I make sure he eats it when he gets home to avoid waste. I think it is not appropriate that older children get the same size portion as younger children (too much for younger children). Quality varies throughout the country.
1111. More vegetarian food options would be great
1112. There is a good selection of meals to choose from and 5 different ones tried so far and all were good according to my son, but maybe some a little small in portion.
1113. Very supportive in the scheme as a whole, but I believe it should be a joint effort between Dept Social Protection, Dept Health and Dept of Environment. The health and environmental aspects could be far better. Keep the food local, home grown. Would love it to continue but with improvements.

1114.I think most children prefer a cold lunch like sandwiches, wraps, fruit etc. If the department want to fund food for schools they could provide sandwiches, fruit, yoghurt & milk which would be beneficial to every child & probably cost less.
1115.I am disappointed by the quality of the products used (e.g. chicken goujons are from chicken mince not pieces of chicken meat)
1116.I think the idea is fantastic, I really hope the service can be improved, thank you for gathering feedback for that!
1117.We're delighted with it
1118.I think that the Manu should be do it by nutritionist and full proteins that every child needs, minimum half of the proteins.
1119.The standard and quality of the food is horrendous.
1120.The containers being used are also extremely wasteful. Granted I have recycled ours to hold small lego sets, but not everyone is going to do that.
1121."The providers are trying too hard to produce elaborate meals which are not being eaten. Less is more when it comes to giving a child a square meal.
Source of plastic waste must be addressed."
1122.Provide proper nourishing food , food is completely different to that advertised.
1123.The scheme will only be as successful as the chefs and distributors allow it to be.I've heard v mixed reviews and one of my children in particular is a fussy eater eg won't touch pasta or any sauces.I still have bad memories of the old school milk scheme and "warm" milk being given to us as the school couldn't keep it cold enough!
1124.I feel trapped in continuing with the service as I dont want to opt out and sacrifice the programme in the school. I would be very happy to provide lunches myself and I do think the schools meals is a waste of tax payers money. Of course some schools/students do need it but the majority do not.
1125.Portions seem small and children in Junior infants aged 4 and 5 get the same size portion as the 12 and 13 year olds in 6th class, this is a huge issue.
1126.My children eat all of the food provided but I know that some pick and choose things from the lunch and there is food waste at the end of day
1127.We only have it in the school 3 days today. So not enough experience really to properly reply to this survey. So far my kids are happy with it. I do think it took too long to be put in place in our school as many other local schools already had it in place long before us.
1128.Portion sizes are small. Food is bland which is fine for picky children but not for those who are used to nourishing, flavoured food. The older children have the same portion sizes at the younger children, they should get larger portions.
1129.More variety needed, they seem to be tired of the sane options. More veg in meals are needed to meet guidelines. Fruit available every day is needed, instead of occasional apple or orange if they are lucky

1130. More variety needed. A lot of kids either not participating, only participating on days where the food they like is on the menu or not eating the full meal. Our child is often still very hungry after having the hot lunch so still needs lunch and dinner when coming home
1131. All is ok, maybe sometimes more different options of food but all is delicious. My little girl love it. Thank you for that.
1132. "I feel there is a lot of waste in the packaging.
Opting out of the hot food was difficult which I feel led to more waste.
When I tried to contact the provider directly I got no response, which is frustrating "
1133. Please add some chicken wings variety. THANKS
1134. For my girl, who eats everything, they are great. For my boy, who is a picky eater, they are wasteful. We don't opt in every day, just twice a week.
1135. Could older children portions be bigger please?
1136. The quality is terrible. My kids usually just bring them home not eaten because they taste horrible. It’s such a waste of money. And they said they constantly get mouldy fruit sent to the classes too. I didn’t believe them until one of them brought home a mouldy Apple. Great service being run there, send the kids half gone off fruit to eat. Should be ashamed of yourselves. It’s absolute slop food. And every year they change half the recipes when they kids like them, barely anything they eat now. My kids say half the class just order the same thing over and over again. That’s not healthy or good to be eating pizza rolls 5 days a week. What kind of service is that?
1137. It would be interesting if this scheme could be combined with "filled with fun" lessons/activities so that children understand the importance of healthy eating, nutrition etc.
1138. It appears to be a poorly thought out and executed scheme only allowing for external companies to profit, with little thought for nutritional needs or food quality.
1139. I understand the idea for it but my children complain a lot about the dinner's on offer and would love to have the option of the free sandwiches etc which were provided by The Lunchbag before the hot meals started. I still make dinner at home everyday for my children.
1140. The cold food options had better uptake in my opinion. The hot food should je reduced to 2 or 3 options which vwry by the day and quality improved. The food is genuinely extremely poor at my child's school.
1141. Would prefer if there was the option for cold rolls or sandwiches
1142. I think its a great scheme, i hope it stays or some version of it remains.
1143. My child liked it at the start but felt that the quality decreased once it started.
1144. If the hot school meals are introduced I would hope that they are balanced meals, including protein and vegetables. Many of the examples of the meals I've seen and heard of experience from parents where the meals are available in their schools the meals are not balanced or healthy.

1145. The fruit bowl in the classroom is great. There are some meals that my child would eat if they weren't covered in gravy, for example the bangers & mash.
1146. Even a sandwich would be better than the lunches provided
1147. More variety in halal food
1148. In geral children trying and eating some of hot meals through out the week. There is no option available to not have gravy or other sauce or item. Meal comes as one mixed mess in the box for example, mash, cabbage, ham, gravy. This doessnt look appealing to eat.
1149. Waste is huge issue
1150. Would like to see unused meals donated to charity
1151. My child has 10 minutes to eat their lunch every day. This is not enough time for a child to have a meal and socialise with their peers. This also results in food waste and my child comes home hungry. I understand this is not hot food's responsibility, but this is a concern that needs to be highlighted. Overall, we're happy with hot meals in school.
1152. Increase the quality of the ingredients and add the option of organic yogurts fruit nuts seeds using nature's sweeteners like honey.
1153. Fantastic help for working parents and also helps to introduce different meals child wouldn't try otherwise
1154. More thought and consideration needs to be given to the environmental impact of the proposed scheme resulting from food and packaging waste.
1155. I think it's a great service and I'm very appreciative of it because in theory it has so many benefits for children and parents but I would like to get some sort of feedback on what and how much my child eats. He is only 5 and I suspect some days he eats none of it at all so I'm concerned about waste. Also, because I don't know what he's eating I still give him a packed lunch every day so I'm not actually saving any time or money by him availing of the free hot meals.
1156. The quality of the food is poor. Vegetables are limited. There are very little options beyond chicken. There are zero pescetarian options availsble.
1157. "I would prefer to see more healthy variety and better quality of the food. For example pasta is full of oil or butter as we had to wash school bag because it leacked that much it was puted in. Also pizza it looks like it just a bread with a little bit of tomato sos, dried and with no taste at all etc. There is a lot of money spend on this service and I feel sorry for the food waste that is been made every day by throwing the food to the bin."
1158. The food is very poor
1159. My children love the school meals but often will not order what they want because of an addition that they dont like, ideally you could ask for no corn in the box with the pizza etc
1160. Some time baked food served burn
1161. No at the moment

1162. "I believe that there should be an opt out option for the school meals as May of the children don’t eat the food provided. This would bring about cost savings to the Dept, less food waste, environmental improvements through less packaging or preparation of foods."
1163. My kids so happy with hot meals served. Thank you so much
1164. It would be great to see more tasty vegetarian options using fresh foods. Important not to introduce and processed meat replacements however. However on the whole it's a great service and we are very happy with it.
1165. My child is autistic with sensory issues and the school meals are perfectly appropriate to his needs. It’s a great help that is participating in improving his relationship to food.
1166. No
1167. More choices on menu.
1168. Not enough options for gluten free children
1169. Schoolls have kitchens with canteens and facilites to cook the food in bulk and fresh without relying on outsorced companies. This will increase veriety and freshness of food provided to the kids and improve waste control and food brought back home.
1170. Listen ti what the kids want, not what we think they want.
1171. No
1172. It's a fantastic facility for our kids. The variety of food is incredible and we are extremely lucky to have this service in our school.
1173. The idea of it is fantastic, for all kids especially disadvantaged kids but the options and appeal of it are not great. Carambola are the provider for our school. I think more options, sandwiches / rolls would be amazing.
1174. I’d like children to be encouraged, at the very least, to try the food offered and to be exposed to more healthy options—such as vegetables, fruit, and legumes—and fewer unhealthy choices. My child comes home every day having eaten very little of the food provided (around 90% remains in the lunch box). This results in significant food waste, and I am concerned because my child has lost weight since starting school.
1175. "I would like there to be different options as in ham/cheese sandwich.
Its either some sort of chicken or pasta based options. Chicken curry, chicken goujons.. pasta pesto, pasta meatballs, pasta bolonaise etc...
One day you can choose sausage and mash. "
1176. My child has got a turn against all the hot food options. Just this morning he has asked me to turn off the calendar for next week. I feel if there was an option to order cold food, bread rolls etc this might help. My child seemed to like this option more when it was offered prior to the introduction of the hot meals.
1177. I think the programme is great, my only issue is I wish the sauces were blended for children with texture issues (like onions, peppers etc) finding "chunks" in their food, which for me would increase the likelyhood of finished the meal. Otherwise it's great!

1178. Please consider those kids that are fussy eaters. Moat parents would prefer there child had some safe foods to eat rather than nothing at all. Also kids should be consulted on ingredient changes and ask for review before making a permanent change. No point offering lunches they won't eat. I would also like to get the box sent home every day so I can see what is been eaten. And make suggestions/reviews based on that. Our children cannot be served food that is not parent approved
1179. Please switch up the menu more often.My kids dont bother any more to select their meals weekly because they know that the menu has not changed.
1180. The meals could do with a bit more flavour. The meals are dry a lot of the time. Potatoes are usually too hard. Optional sauces would be great.
1181. The quality and range of food on offer needs to be improved. Food made a day or two in advance sitting in a sauce or gravy and warmed up is not appealing to my child, who typically eats a varied and well balanced diet . A more local supplier, using fresh local ingredients would be of more benefit to my child and to our local economy. Currently we have cancelled hot school lunches and have reverted back to making school lunches at home.
1182. I advise the hot meal providers to change their menu regularly so children not to get bored
1183. As mentioned above, we are very happy with the hot lunch scheme. For the most part the food is Hugh quality, nutritious and a good variety, with compostable packaging. Some poorer quality providers are giving the scheme a bad name, and it is being dragged through the media unfairly.
1184. The scheme is well meaning and will definitely help children who otherwise would not get a hot meal or a balanced healthy meal in a day. However it is not necessary for every child- most children will still get regular meals and have no family issues. Would a method to evaluate children / areas be a better use of funds, with schools that don’t “need” this service supported in other ways - funds for other initiatives such as sport, facilities, etc... overall we should pay our teachers more and to retain talent in Ireland - is that not a better use of some of these funds? It is baffling in a country like Ireland that schools rely so heavily on parent support and donations from local business etc for small initiatives that should be funded as standard by the country.
1185. I gave a neutral answer because my school literally just started the program this week so not enough time to assess and out of 4 meals (2 days, 2 kids) 3 were approved by the kids. However, I do know that when we brought in this company on a paid-for basis a few years ago the food quality went from satisfactory to very much less than and we didn't continue purchasing. I just hope they keep the quality up with the government scheme, otherwise, what is the point.

1186. sometimes when my child has brought the lunch home the boxs have a smell and as for the mac and cheese it is an easy single on hard pasta. I really think they need to sit and rethink about the tender that was given to the company as talking between my family, friends and even in general the hot meal scheme has wasted their money with Glanmore Foods as they are'nt delivering
1187. Would prefer if less processed for some options only
1188. I understand that there are many factors to creating a menu. However I would like to see more of a selection if at all possible. Thank you.
1189. It is difficult to get this right, but it is extrememly wasteful to see the amount of food not eaten when my children were ordering hot lunches. A large number of children in my school don't get the hot lunches now.
1190. Feedback from other school s is the quality of food is not good so I would be slow to agree to my child eating substandard food. Also there seems to be a lot of waste reported from these school with children not eating the food so it gets thrown away. I would also like to be able to just give the hot food some days as I feel the home prepared food is far superior to what they are getting in other schools
1191. "It would be helpful to have cold lunch options during the last term when the weather is warmer.
It would be helpful to have two portion size options, current size is not enough for the older children. "
1192. It really depends on the quality of the food to see if it’s beneficial or not. I would love this if the food was good quality and healthy recipes that improve veg intake at lunch time. If the food was poor quality, not healthy or didn’t include veg there would be no point in this and would add further work
1193. "I think hot meals should be provided to all Schools, may not always be about money but parents working full time paying taxes and endless bills also deserve some advantages"
1194. yes, the food needs to be of good nutritional content. i have heard from other schools that the food is not very healthy and this is not acceptable our kids need healthy food
1195. I think the HSMP is a great initiative, but supplier quality needs to be regulated to ensure that the highest quality products are being used
1196. I think the scheme is brilliant & has been great for my children (& me). They did change the food a bit I presume to try make it healthier & unfortunately some children went off certain things then as described it as “not as nice” or bland leading to more food waste which kind of defeated the purpose. I think a better balance with more options would be great especially for fussy eaters. Thank you
1197. Scoil Phádraig Naofa, Rochestown, Cork
1198. I would be worried about the quality of food the children would be getting and I think I’d prefer to keep sending lunches myself even if it is time consuming
1199. It needs to be healthy food !

1200. I think that the options for children who prefer plain foods was limited, with an over reliance on unhealthy/processed options.
1201. Options for children are somewhat limited and my children don't enjoy the meals. They liked the sausage and chicken goujon baguettes when they were available but they have been removed.
1202. To be honest, I have picky eaters and they may not touch the food that is produced. Secondly our school is one where the demographic is very well off and so the need for hot lunches from a financial perspective is not necessary. I work with children with disabilities and so have contact with a large number of schools and children from a different demographic. I feel that finances and energies should go to schools with mixed and lower socio economic background. Thirdly Irish schools were generally not built sustain such provision of food. And finally I would worry about what the quality of food would be over time.
1203. Kids have reported wedges can be hard @times& chicken not tasting as good as before.
1204. "our provider only changes the menu every school term. Think it should be changed every month to give more variety as my child usually get the same items week after week and they get fed up of the same thing if they are eating it constantly.
Also I think the government should be encouraging/providing the small milk cartons for children. It would be good for calcium."
1205. Na
1206. As a teacher in a DEIS Band 1 school and a parent of children attending a school where the parent population experience very little poverty or unemployment issues by comparison, if any, I would be wholly against the Hot Meals scheme being rolled out in my own children's school. I believe the government should have a far more targeted approach to tackling the very real issue of children experiencing poverty and food shortage. To supply Hot Meals in a school where the vast majority of the cohort are so-called "middle-class" seems to me to be an enormous waste of precious resources, resources that would be of far greater benefit to the children in the area I work in. The staff and management on the ground in such schools are in position to distribute resources among the school community, targeting the children who are in real need rather than a blanket supply of food to children who have no need of it. Hot meals in a school where they are not needed are a complete waste of money, not to mention food and packaging waste arising from it.
1207. I would love if it was introduced to Scoil Phadraig Naofa in Rochestown Cork. I have a picky eater but who used to eat whatever is given to her in pre-school so I'm hoping for the same plus it will encourage her to try new foods.
1208. The food options are not child friendly. The plain dishes are tasteless with rubbery chicken and there is little thought put into how children eat. Seperate vegs so kids can remove or not be seen. Also too much plastic.

1209. The food is tasteless and if not eaten at school by that afternoon you can smell it's not right and after my son got ill I stopped him from eating it immediately.
1210. We'd like see local food producers be included. Cork has so amazing fresh dairy, meat & veg. farmers. I don't know if this is reflected in the options.
1211. A cold option would be better, sandwiches, fruit, juice
1212. I have read about some schools having hot foot with so many preservatives and unhealthy ingredients! And huge amount of waste of food also kids picking plain foods which aren't offering them much nutrition.
1213. Don’t think scheme is working very well
1214. The principle doesn’t seem interested in this for our children
1215. We get sandwiches in our infant school and it works perfectly for our family
1216. More variety
1217. This needs to be important and a top priority for our school which I don’t feel it is. Why does the PA have to do this? Shouldn’t it be from the school itself?
1218. "A lot of the food is of poor quality even though it’s supposed to be healthy"
1219. Very poor quality of the food, often over cooked or burnt or cold.
1220. I have heard there is massive food waste and I don't believe the providers ensure satisfactory nutritional quality to a high level and it is just more feasible to feed your own children the food that they want.
1221. Might improve or help children to eat more veg if seeing friends eating them
1222. The school is provisioned by 'the lunch bag' who have been fantastic with regards to meal options and delivery. Two very happy kids.
1223. We’re the only school in our area without hot meals! SPN Rochestown
1224. My son generally doesn't eat any of the food. I try to vary what he orders but it tends to just come home
1225. "I would like to feel confident that the option are clean and healthy meals -
Not processed food
Less sugar
Highly nutritious "
1226. I would only be interested in this scheme if it were guaranteed that the use of ultra processed foods and seed oils was minimised.
1227. Really look forward to this being rolled out to my child’s school asap.
1228. More choice would be helpful
1229. If there were options for meals to have sauce on the side or no sauce, children might eat more
1230. More variety, and food cooked properly
1231. I acknowledge the benefit to children /families the scheme provides, even if it isn’t helpful for children with Arfid

1232. There needs to be more food that children will eat. Why no plain food option why has most of the food got spices on it. Why can sauce no be served separately. If a child's didn't like a sauce there full meal is ruined because the sauce is put all over it. Can we think about the children on the spectrum that find it hard to eat foods like that. Most just want easy plain food.
1233. it would be great if there will be more Halal friendly option in the menu.
1234. I’m really hoping this will be rolled out to our school soon
1235. As a teacher in a school the food waste is criminal. We need money in so many areas and this is money down the drain.
1236. My kids love butter on spuds and I know unless I give them wee sachets they wouldn't eat spuds . Or I give them tomato sauce sachets also
1237. This scheme has been a disaster. Either it is implemented or it isn’t. The fact that some schools have it and other don’t is completely unfair. I also resent the school having the ability it dictate what our children are eating. That should surely be decided by the parents. I’m worried about children with sensory issues and fussy eaters not being catered to. Thanks for reading
1238. I would like the food to be part of the education process. Where eating well is encouraged. Real food, not overly processed food products.
1239. Sandwich and roll options would be a good option aswell as the hot choices.
1240. I think there should be more information provided. Hot meals are served at big break but nothing is mentioned about small break, only to not give big snacks so that kids are hungry for big break. I only found out from my son that there was apples and oranges provided. I'm not sure if that will always be the case and if it was provided by the lunch bad or did the school provide them just in case parents don't send anything in for small break.
1241. No
1242. This would be such a positive thing if it happened.
1243. Patents must speak with child. Cancel food if they don’t like. Or there should be a choice or size. You get child get the same size as 6th class. . Option of small or reg size . Ingredients should be listed. Sandwich/wraps offered on Sept /April may / June . No need for hot food.
1244. No
1245. I dont have enough information to know what type of food would be availble to know if it woild be a healthy choice.
1246. No ultra processed foods should be provided.
1247. My child will only eat the plain pasta - rest of meals are not great ....
1248. Feel like it has been very unfair that my children's school has still not received hot school meals. The school has had no communication with us on why we haven't.
1249. More variety needed and menu changed from time to time

1250. "Not sure why we have to order so far in advance
As I previously my child has issues with chicken when it’s wet (her words) pizza base burnt
A lot of spicy things on menu which she won’t try at all
I have addressed this with the company as to the burnt food "
1251. Need a non halal option
1252. I think it's a great idea.
1253. It's a great initiative but very poor quality and inconsistent amount of food
1254. There needs to be healthier options - more fruit options, more sandwich filler options etc
1255. "Portion sizes are the same for junior infants up to sixth class. Older pupils could do with a larger portion size.
Our local provider is excellent and we have been informed the food is cooked fresh every day."
1256. All is great happy with the service. Also I can add that its really saves time in the morning what to give to kids for lunch. So we are happy with the service.
1257. "My child has coeliac disease
So I would need to be sure there is good ,safe options "
1258. As a working parent, I welcome the hot food scheme as it saves me so much time in the morning. My children enjoy it, so I've no issues there. I suppose I am concerned with food waste, but these are things that can be ironed out with time.
1259. I don’t understand the focus on HOT meals. Many schools do not have facilities for that. I will not let my kids participate if the meals are served on plastic ware or disposable packaging. The Dept should contract with providers who can deliver healthy food in a sustainable way - who can remove and clean and reuse non-plastic crockery and cutlery and should be open to providing cold food for schools that don’t have the facilities to avoid waste.
1260. Just introduce lighter lunch options as kids are limited for time to eat so by your current menu being dinners its not really practical to the school going child.
1261. I am very grateful for this scheme and I know the child enjoys the food and it helps the learning by keeping them fueled. Thanks a million.
1262. I think it is a great service.
1263. "The choices are full of processed foods (Ham, chicken, Turkey) , now and then my son gets a rotten fruit. Everyday sandwich.
It would be more effective and waste less if the meal , using real and healthy food, could be made in the school, also I wonder if it attends the food safety protocols once the meal are received early in the morning and keep them in a basket without refrigeration.
I will cancel the order and sending my son lunches every day, so I will make sure he is having a variety of good choices. "

1264. need variety in food. I would suggest adding lasagna, broccoli, fish (e.g. fish in breadcrumbs)
1265. Money could be spent elsewhere
1266. As a teacher and a parent, the expenditure on hot school lunches whilst an advantage to some parents and those children who will eat it is ultimately not an effective use of money. The assigned budget could be used in many other areas of education, reducing class sizes , creating more SET teaching roles and implementing legislation/ guidelines on the ever increasing use of screens and devices for children from as young as age 1.
1267. I think the cold lunches are better for my kids as we have a hot dinner every night so hot lunches are not needed
1268. I think it would be supportive, a change from homemade sandwiches
1269. I feel the food hot or cold should be sourced locally. I feel strongly that some schools NEED this service...others dont. Money should be directed elsewhere
1270. Hot meals are good but mash too hard and kittle to no gravy/sauce so hard for young kids to eat. Can't mash the potatoes etc themselves. Half roast baby bowl type option would be ideal
1271. I think it is a great service and my child really enjoys the food
1272. "Our school has introduced only cold meals, not hot. Hot would be preferable but they do not have the equipment to manage that thus far.
Also, Glanmore is owned by Compass group which has links to questionable global organisations like BlackRock that have links to e.g the Israeli military. I think it would be preferable if Irish owned businesses could be better supported as part of this initiative."
1273. Portions are the same size versus a small child in junior infants vs a child becoming a teenager in 6th class this is the feedback that came back from my child
1274. Maybe more food options., my daughter is always asking if theres any chicken strips . More halal options.
1275. Food quality is simply poor with questionable levels of nutrition - no internal promotion of healthy eating align with food on offer.
1276. Its a great initiative which I think should be maintained and funded. Using local products and offering real healthy options would be progress but im happy with it
1277. Very happy with the scheme and think it’s a positive step for Ireland. This service has been provided in the UK for many years with great success and benefits.
1278. A more cost effective solution would be to create contracts with local businesses providing meat,veg and mash, simple pasta dishes and soup with rolls. Almost all schools are near local food businesses. Food would be more nutritious, fresh and tasty.
1279. Previous company was excellent now using Fresh today and the quality is desperate my kids eat hardly any of it. Such a waste. Always ate the other food company Glan more. No option for just sandwich or crackers. No fresh fruit delivery as promised and no daily water either rip off.

1280. Menu needs to change more regularly
1281. some different sandwiches
1282. It is an unnecessary service for schools that our not disadvantaged. The food waste is enormous. I am a teacher in a school where the service is provided and I see first hand how many lunches are thrown out every day as they cannot be reheated. I would much rather see the funds be used for educational and wellbeing purposes in our schools.
1283. No delighted with service thank you
1284. To me it seems like the provider is trying to accommodate multiple different religious dietary requirements and does not then have space on the menu to offer choices that children would actually eat.
1285. Not all schools are getting a packed lunch option i.e sandwiches, fruit or snacks. Just low quality hot food
1286. The choice of food is very poor. My child wants to bring his own choice of food to school going forward.
1287. Keep the sauces to 1 side , not every child likes sauces . Which means there are no choices
1288. "My school gets the meals from the “The Lunch Bag”.
In the beginning the food was good and tasty but as the weeks went by the standard dropped drastically.
I think it woukd be much better if all schools could get a local restaurant/ cafe to supply food because then the food might be of a better standard "
1289. As a mother with a daughter with coeliac maybe a wider range of gluten free foods could be available as unlike the regular hot lunches they dont have much of an option
1290. It would be great if school provides Fresh and Healthy food for kids.
1291. Put the money to better use than producing waste. This wasteful and bit nutritious
1292. My preference would have been to use a local business to supply the food.
1293. I think the government needs to be made aware that there are issues with the quality of the food that's being delivered to schools. If children won't eat it, then it will be a failed scheme not fit for purpose, when it could be great.
1294. No
1295. There isn't a lot of variety, and the options don't change by term. For the amount of money thats allocated per meal that's costing the government they aren't getting enough variety, or vegetables. It's too heavily dependent on white pasta which doesn't have much nutritional value and is cheap. I think the scheme is good but may loose its appeal very soon. Thanks
1296. I think the initiative is a really positive one to ensure all children have a hot lunch daily particularly children from disadvantaged families however I am aware of the huge amount of money and time that goes into this and know how much schools are struggling financially in other areas.

1297. My child is not eating the lunch.. he is in first class so don’t know if it’s a case he is just used to his own lunches
1298. My son was in a different school last year and they used a different provider. The food last year was of better quality and nicer choices. It’s ok this year, however not as good as the provider last year. It’s a shame it’s not consistent in all schools
1299. I think the scheme should branch out from hot meals. It makes sense to include salads and soups which would increase variety and nutritional value.
1300. My children are restricted eaters . O don’t feel they gain anything from what they get it is not a nutritional choice, rather no other option. but if they wernt I would not be happy with the nutritional value of the dinners provided
1301. We have cold lunch option which is great
1302. Really grateful for the hot lunches scheme and appreciate that it is especially brilliant for low income families
1303. I put my daughters meals on holiday this week to test packed lunches. More than likely I will request that she leave scheme after this week. It's disappointing as there is great potential in it. There is a company in knock beside our town which I've heard is better. But the food is brought in from.lunch bag in tipperary for the school due to a contract.
1304. Add little big bigger selection of meals
1305. Not at present
1306. Lunches should be appropriate to the child's age
1307. needs more healthy options, I think fruit should be provided daily.
1308. The cold lunch service is also excellent so happy if this is still an option too.
1309. It may help to mix the menu up every quarter
1310. I think that for the majority the food would not be eaten. It would be an expensive waste. It is also highly likely it would follow the English model where to get the majority of children to eat the food the nourishment of the food would decline and we would slide to a situation where unhealthy options (chips etc) were being served. A more prudent way to roll this out would be to deliver it to DEIS schools if in demand unless there is a compelling argument otherwise
1311. I would prefer to see a wider variety of fruit and vegetables included - or is a much more natural wadi of introducing these to children than for example the food dudes programme
1312. Really appreciate providing Halal food ,,, if not all !!! The chicken option. Thanks
1313. Selection of sandwiches for plain eaters