

British Berry Growers launches National Children's Breakfast Charter

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Widespread concern among parents about poor-quality school breakfasts and children starting their day hungry has been laid bare by new research.

Despite 78 per cent of parents agreeing that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, 8 in 10 worry their children are not getting a nutritious breakfast at school.

A further 56 per cent of parents feel the government is not doing enough to support healthy eating choices, according to the research from British Berry Growers, the industry body representing 95 per cent of berries sold in the UK.

Following the research, British Berry Growers has launched the National Children's Breakfast Charter, calling on the government to mandate minimum nutritional standards for free school meals, especially breakfasts.

The organisation is urging people to write to their MPs to encourage them to support the National Children's Breakfast Charter.

The Charter follows the government's roll-out of a school breakfast pilot in April, which saw 750 schools provide free daily breakfast clubs, and the recent extension of the free school meals programme. All children in families receiving Universal Credit are now eligible for free school meals.

Two-thirds (68 per cent) of parents support government action to provide healthy, free school meals for all children, while an overwhelming 96 per cent believe schools should be doing more to ensure children are served fruit during breakfast.

The Charter, written in partnership with leading nutritionist Rhiannon Lambert, outlines how policy change and practical reform can help ensure every child starts their day with the nutrition they need to thrive.

British Berry Grower's chairman, Nick Marston, said: "School breakfasts are a critical safety net for young people, especially in more deprived areas. But the breakfasts offered should be nutrient-rich and include fresh produce like berries.

"We support the government funding contribution for breakfast clubs, and their efforts to expand the free school meals programme. We urge further expansion and the use of minimum levels of nutritional quality to ensure children are getting the healthy food they need and deserve, especially at breakfast.

"At British Berry Growers, we're committed to being part of the solution. But we know real change requires all of us: government, schools, industry, and families working together.

"We hope that the Charter sparks dialogue, drives action, and helps every child start their day with the energy and nourishment they deserve."

The research also found that, whether eating at home or school, children typically fall short of the recommended five-a-day fruit and veg target on four or more days each week.

Parents also reported that their children miss breakfast nearly seven times a month, while 88 per cent are worried about how much sugar their children are consuming.

Rhiannon Lambert commented: "Breakfast is widely acknowledged as a critical part of a healthy diet, yet it remains one of the most frequently overlooked meals, particularly among children and adolescents.

"A nutritious breakfast sets the tone for the day, yet too many children in the UK are missing out. Improving breakfast habits isn't solely a matter of individual choice; it requires coordinated action across government, education, industry, and the home environment. We need to raise the breakfast bar, together."