

# The **FOOD, MOOD & HEALTH** game



## St Helen's Primary School and Food For Thought.

Board games make food education more engaging.

Food education can be embedded across the school curriculum – from cooking in home economics to exploring world foods in modern languages, as well as exploring food & drink careers and considering how food affects health and wellbeing. With a third of 10-11 year olds overweight, and over half feeling affected by negative body image, it's more important than ever to get young people talking about their physical and emotional health.





## Food For Thought

We recently worked with Food For Thought, a programme created by Education Scotland, Scottish Government and Business in the Community in Scotland. The programme aims to embed food education into schools, providing opportunities for high quality, progressive learning experiences. In addition, schools work in collaboration with local businesses receiving relevant expertise which adds value to their food education.

We visited St Helen's Primary School in Condorrat, North Lanarkshire with Vivian Maeda, BITC Scotland's Food For Thought programme manager, to show pupils and teachers how they can use the Food, Mood and Health Game to get young people talking about food, and its effect on their health and wellbeing.

## The Food, Mood and Health Game

The Food Mood and Health Game is an educational board game for children and young people, developed with specialist dietitians and health promotion specialists at NHS Highland

and Highland Council. The game explores the impact that food choices and media influence can have on our physical and emotional health. It contains questions, scenarios and picture activities designed to stimulate relaxed, pressure-free conversations about potentially tricky topics including:

- Healthy eating
- Body image
- Media influence
- Emotional health

The informal atmosphere created by playing a game helps children feel comfortable and confident to share opinions and ideas, helping them to learn from each other.

The game is simple enough to be managed by players themselves, but it's useful to have a teacher or staff member present to help guide the discussions. A game can be played by up to 12 players and is suitable for young people aged 10+ years old.



## Fun and games at St Helen's Primary

We spent a day at St Helen's Primary School running game sessions with P6&7 classes, to showcase the game and how schools can use it to help children talk about the influence of food and the media on their physical & emotional health.

Each class was divided into groups, and each group played the game for around 45 minutes. The pupils thoroughly enjoyed the experience, with everyone getting involved and lots of (often noisy!) useful discussions about healthy eating, body image and food emerged during the game.

Some questions that provoked really detailed and interesting discussions included picture activities around airbrushing, and questions around the issue of most food advertising showing unhealthy foods. Pupils were interested and engaged throughout the game, and many didn't want to stop playing!

## Extending opportunities for learning

The Food, Mood and Health Game can provide a standalone educational experience, and it can also be included as part of wider projects around food and health.

To extend the learning opportunity after playing, we asked pupils to demonstrate what they'd learned by creating campaign posters which showed a key message about health and wellbeing that they wanted to pass on to other pupils in the school.

Lots of fantastic posters were created and were later displayed around the school. Some important messages pupils wanted to pass to their peers included:

- "You're beautiful! Photoshopped images give young kids unrealistic images of what they should look like."
- "The healthy option always wins!"
- "More adverts for healthy food keeps you in a good mood!"





## What did people think?

*"This game is great! Where can I get one to play at home?"*

Primary 6 pupil.

*"The Food, Mood and Health game was a great tool to initiate discussions around healthy eating, food, mood and body image with children. Children openly talked about key issues which mattered to them. We then empowered them to create their own campaign and shared their learning with the other children in the school. Campaigns made by children for the children are more powerful as they take ownership and they believe in that campaign. It was a great session and I would recommend that other schools play this game."*

Vivian Maeda, BITC Scotland's Food For Thought programme manager.

## More information

To learn more or purchase the Food, Mood and Health Game visit [www.foodmoodandhealth.co.uk](http://www.foodmoodandhealth.co.uk)

Follow the game on Twitter @FoodMoodGame