

A Handbook for Lunchtime Supervisors

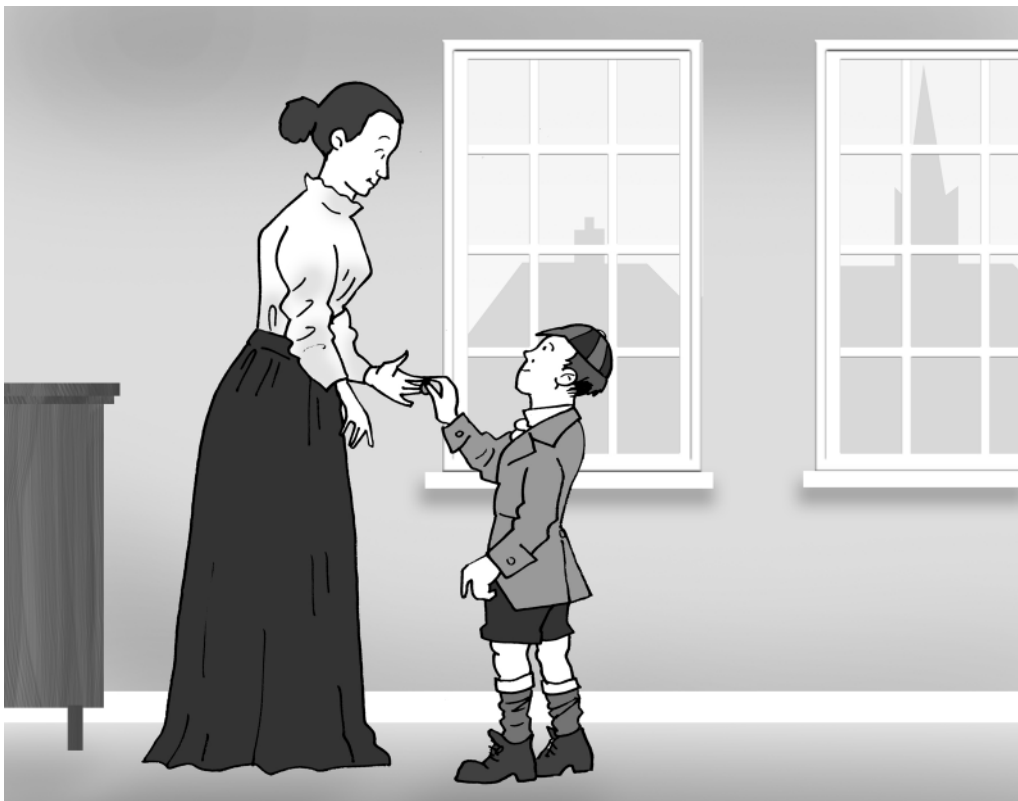
and their Managers

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Introduction

A brief history of the lunchtime supervisor

In 1906 Parliament was successfully persuaded that hungry children had trouble learning, and the Provision of School Meals Act came into force, permitting local authorities to provide school meals. By 1939, less than 50 per cent of local authorities were providing this service for which families paid 2d (1p) for a meal unless entitled to free lunches. For many years teachers were required as part of their duties to supervise children at lunchtime. In 1968, following a long struggle, teachers won the right to have their own lunchtime break, although many continued to supervise lunchtime on a voluntary basis in return for a free school meal. Lunchtime supervisors were employed by schools prior to 1968, although their numbers and importance increased dramatically over the next few decades.



The role of the lunchtime supervisor

Schools organise the supervision of lunchtime in a variety of ways. The majority employ supervisors specifically to work for a short period in the middle of each day. Some schools require their teaching assistants to cover lunchtime duties, whilst others use a mixture of teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisors. Many of the issues outlined in this book are also relevant for teaching assistants undertaking lunchtime duties.

As LTSs (as I will refer to you from now on), you have an important part to play in the success of the school day. Anyone who works in school will know that if the lunchtime goes well, teaching staff and children benefit and the afternoon is likely to run smoothly. When the lunchtime break goes wrong, picking up the pieces can be time consuming, disruptive and stressful.

LTSs are usually required to supervise children for approximately an hour and a quarter per day, to ensure that they have lunch, and the opportunity to play and let off steam. You are also involved in many important aspects of children's school experience including their eating, playing, friendship groups, behaviour and safety.

Staff who feel valued at work are more likely to develop higher self-esteem and motivation. This has not always been the case for LTSs and throughout this book ways to include and support you will be explored.

From a management point of view

Managers will be aware that the lunchtime break is now being given greater importance. Ofsted inspections include an assessment of the behaviour of the pupils during lunchtime, and many schools accept they must put in the resources to ensure this part of the day is successful.

Until recently, relatively little has been written by the government about the role of the LTS. In September 2005, as part of the behaviour and attendance pilot, a primary national strategy professional development pack was produced entitled *Playtimes and Lunchtimes* (DfES 2005a). This examines the contribution that well-managed playtimes and lunchtimes can make to children's social, emotional and behavioural development. It also puts playtimes and lunchtimes into the context of a whole school behaviour policy, promotes practical strategies, and considers the needs of staff who supervise this part of the school day.

Very often head teachers express genuine concern about the difficulties LTSs face. They voice the desire to have an empowered and skilled team of staff who use their initiative to constructively manage behaviour so that problems do not escalate or spill into the classroom. To achieve this, many head teachers now recognise that LTSs need to be provided with training and support.

What is in this book?

This book is for primary school lunchtime supervisors and their managers. It explores the necessary support, training and skills that LTSs require to do their job well, and looks at whole school practices that can contribute to happy lunchtimes and lunchtime staff. It includes examples of excellent practice developed in a range of primary schools, and provides case studies and exercises to highlight how difficulties and pitfalls can be overcome.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part is for LTSs, although it is relevant for managers too. It comprises ten chapters described below, plus one shorter appendix focusing on LTSs' future learning and career development. The second part of the book is particularly relevant for those who line manage LTSs and for senior managers responsible for the lunchtime break. It provides notes and good practice guidelines on each of the chapters (notes on Chapters 4 and 5 have been amalgamated due to the overlap in subject matter).

Also included in each chapter are activities which LTSs can do alone or with other members of the staff team. Managers may wish to use these activities in training sessions or meetings to develop their team's knowledge and skills. LTSs will need to feel comfortable enough to explore issues honestly and openly.

The chapters in the book are set out as follows:

Part 1 is for lunchtime supervisors to read:

- Chapter 1 explores the LTS's role and responsibilities within primary schools.
- Chapter 2 discusses the development of communication systems within the school to ensure relevant information is appropriately shared between LTSs and relevant others.
- Chapter 3 focuses on how LTSs can build positive relationships with children.
- Chapter 4 tackles ways LTSs can promote positive behaviour in the playground and in the dining room.
- Chapter 5 looks at managing challenging behaviour at lunchtime, and how this can be part of the whole school behaviour plan.
- Chapter 6 explores the problem of bullying at lunchtime.
- Chapter 7 is about the importance of play, and how to organise and initiate playground activities.
- Chapter 8 focuses on how to manage wet play.
- Chapter 9 looks at keeping children safe at lunchtime.
- Chapter 10 discusses the role of the LTS in relation to child protection.
- The appendix outlines further learning and career development for LTSs.

Part 2 provides managers' notes, divided by chapters. These are provided to help managers to fulfil their responsibilities, to support LTSs effectively, and help them prepare training sessions.