School Lunchtime Supervisor

Introduction

School lunchtime supervisors look after children during their lunch breaks, when they’re eating and in the playground. They are responsible for safety, good behaviour and helping any children in difficulties. Lunchtime supervisors work in primary, secondary and special schools.

Also known as

- Midday Supervisor
- Lunchtime Supervisor
- Lunchtime Assistant

Work Activities

As a School Lunchtime Supervisor, you will make sure children are safe and well behaved during lunchtimes. You supervise children eating their lunch in a canteen or dining room.

You could be supervising children eating school meals or packed lunches. While accepting that there will be noise as children let off steam after being in lessons, you must deal with bad behaviour and calm quarrels. You might use a system for discipline, such as handing out yellow and red cards, and let a Teacher know of any problems at the end of lunchtime.

Particularly in primary schools, School Lunchtime Supervisors also encourage social interaction and good behaviour, such as sharing. You might use a reward system, such as handing out smiley face badges. Primary school Lunchtime Supervisors gently encourage children to eat their lunches and to try unfamiliar, healthy foods. You cut up food and might show primary pupils how to clear up and put things in the right bins or recycling points.

In some schools, you help to set up dining tables and chairs, and clear up afterwards.

If the weather is good, children might be able to eat outside. This could mean that you need to bring out, set up and clear away picnic tables and chairs.

You are often also responsible for children in the playground, or indoors if the weather’s very bad (some School Lunchtime Supervisors only have dining room responsibilities). You keep an eye on the children as they play, make sure they are safe and deal with bad behaviour. You might talk to a duty Teacher about any particular problems, so the Teacher can follow up any issues with the children involved after lunchtime ends.

Supervisors comfort children who are upset, for example, because of bullying or having fallen over. You deal with problems such as cuts, bruises and grazes. Some School Lunchtime Supervisors have first aid training to deal with more serious issues. Otherwise, you might take injured children to the school office for treatment. In an emergency, you make sure that someone calls an ambulance.

You might take out and set up toys, games or sports equipment. In primary schools, you sometimes get involved in activities, for example, explaining rules or setting up teams. This is to encourage learning and development through structured play.

Lunchtime Supervisors are part of a team. You might work with other School Lunchtime Supervisors, including a Team Leader, Teaching Assistants and duty Teachers. Good communication with Teachers is very important, to let them know about any problems or issues you have dealt with, such as children who still need to be comforted in the afternoon.

Supervisors check on any strangers entering the school premises, directing visitors to reception and reporting anybody acting suspiciously to other staff.

School Lunchtime Supervisors might wear aprons, coloured bibs or other uniforms. The work can be noisy, and those with playground duties must be prepared to work outside in different types of weather (although, you’ll supervise children indoors if the weather’s very cold, windy, wet or hot).
There will usually be regular team meetings outside of lunch times, to discuss issues such as changes to lunch times, safety concerns and any particular problems an individual child might be experiencing.

Being able to read, write and speak Welsh may be an advantage when you're looking for work in Wales.

**Personal Qualities and Skills**

To become a School Lunchtime Supervisor, you'll need:

- a strong sense of responsibility for children's safety
- good listening skills and the ability to comfort children who are upset
- teamwork skills to work with other Supervisors, Teachers and Teaching Assistants
- the ability to maintain order and deal with bad behaviour, with a firm but fair approach
- willingness to work outside (this isn't always essential depending on the job)
- an awareness of religious/cultural differences, and the needs of disabled children

First aid skills are very useful.

**Pay and Opportunities**

**Pay**

The pay rate below is approximate.

- Starting: £17,500

**Hours of Work**

School Lunchtime Supervisors work during school lunch breaks, around five to ten hours a week. This is usually between 11:30 am and 1:30 pm. You might also take part in regular, paid team meetings outside lunch times.

**Where could I work?**

Employers include primary, secondary and special schools throughout the UK. Employers are mainly local authorities; privately-run schools also employ School Lunchtime Supervisors.

**Where are vacancies advertised?**

Vacancies are advertised in local newspapers, at Jobcentre Plus and on the Find a Job website, on job boards, and on local authority websites.

**Entry Routes and Training**

**Entry**

You don't need any qualifications to become a School Lunchtime Supervisor. Some local authorities only take on people aged at least 18.

**Training**

You'll have on-the-job training led by experienced staff. You might also go on a first aid course.

**Progression**

Small schools might have only one School Lunchtime Supervisor, making progression difficult. However, most have a team of Supervisors, so you could be able to progress to a Senior Supervisor position.
This job could help you develop some of the knowledge and skills you would need as a Teaching Assistant.

**Work Experience**

Experience of working with children in another role is very useful. For example, a Primary School Lunchtime Supervisor might have developed useful skills and knowledge as a Playworker or by working in a nursery.

**Rehabilitation of Offenders Act**

This career is an exception to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, so you must tell an employer about any spent or unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings, if they ask you to. This is different from other careers, where you only have to tell them about any unspent convictions if you are asked to.

**Qualifications**

You don't need any qualifications to become a School Lunchtime Supervisor.

**Adult Opportunities**

**Age limits**

Some local authorities only take on people aged at least 18.

**Experience**

Experience of working with children in another role is very useful. For example, a primary school lunchtime supervisor might have developed useful skills and knowledge as a playworker or by working in a nursery.

**Further Information**

**Contacts**

- **Apprenticeships: Get In. Go Far**
  National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)
  Tel: 0800 015 0400
  Email: nationalhelpdesk@findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk
  Website: [www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk)

- **LGjobs**
  Local government vacancies
  Website: [www.lgjobs.com](http://www.lgjobs.com)

- **myjobscotland: Scottish local government vacancies**
  Scottish enquiries
  Email: myjobscotland@cosla.gov.uk
  Website: [www.myjobscotland.gov.uk](http://www.myjobscotland.gov.uk)

- **Careers Wales - Welsh Apprenticeships**
  Tel: 0800 028 4844
  Website: [ams.careerswales.com/](http://ams.careerswales.com/)

**Related Careers**

- Nursery Nurse
- NVQ Assessor
- History Teacher
- Geography Teacher
- Modern Foreign Languages Teacher
- Teaching Assistant
- Music Teacher
- English Teacher
- Maths Teacher
• Science Teacher
• Education Welfare Officer
• Playworker
• Special Educational Needs Teacher
• Art and Design Teacher
• Design and Technology Teacher
• Early Years Teacher
• Physical Education Teacher
• Primary Teacher
• Secondary Teacher
• Training Manager
• Higher Education (HE) Lecturer
• School Business Manager
• Teacher of English as a Foreign Language
• Lecturer
• Teacher
• Welsh Teacher
• Nursery Assistant
• Headteacher