

Edinburgh School wins Healthyliving Plus award



St George's School for Girls is one of only two schools in Edinburgh to be awarded the NHS Scotland Healthyliving Plus award recognising the school's commitment to providing and supporting healthy eating in schools.

The school was awarded the standard version of this award over two years ago by demonstrating that a wide range (at least 50%) of the school's food across the entire menu could be described as 'healthy choices'. The school recently became eligible to apply for the more prestigious advanced 'plus' version, after the two year minimum threshold had been met.

The advanced award requires a greater obligation to healthier eating with the school committing to providing a higher number of healthy eating choices on menus. This includes cooking with more approved healthy ingredients and using cooking methods that keep fat, salt, additives and sugar to a minimum level. Vegetables, milk and fresh water have also to be made available at all meal times.

"The school has been able to do this", says James Ferguson, St George's Food Services Director, "by using healthy cooking practices to produce food that is freshly cooked from scratch on the premises using recipes we have adapted.

"Ingredients are sourced locally directly from producers and suppliers with an emphasis on using seasonal vegetables and fruit. All our food is oven baked using our Rational self-cooking centres (ovens to you and me!).

"The ovens allow us to use less added fat than traditional cooking methods. We still produce home made oven chips and

potato wedges but these are cooked in the ovens. We do not use deep fat fryers and never have! The advanced cooking technology reduces cooking times and lets us produce a higher proportion of the food from start to finish during a meal sitting.

“This does not mean that we don’t produce home made puddings such as chocolate brownies and apple crumble and custard. We just adapt the recipes to make them healthier.”

Anne Everest, Head of St George’s, says:

“We are delighted that the school has once again been recognised for the quality of its food and its commitment to providing healthy school meals. This recent award follows closely on the heels of last year’s Catering in Scotland Excellence Award where we were one of three short listed finalists.

“Educating children in healthy eating habits plays an increasingly important part in today’s society. We believe there is a connection between a healthy diet and the ability to feel and perform better. Our lunch menus are looked at over 700 times a month on the school website so this gives us an indication of their significance among parents and our girls. The nutritional value of our food is an important element of the school’s ethos and benefits the whole school community.”