

Using the MSC eco-label in schools

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What is the MSC?

The MSC is a registered charity seeking to find solutions to the global problem of overfishing. Our key mechanism for doing this is a certification programme for sustainable fisheries. Fisheries that pass this assessment can use the MSC eco-label (right) on products. This gives consumers a simple way to identify sustainable seafood.



Fish & Kids – sustainable seafood into schools

Fish & Kids is the MSC's project to encourage schools and restaurants in England to serve sustainable seafood (i.e. MSC labelled seafood). It involves promoting sustainable seafood product diversity by working with the foodservice industry. There is also another part of the project which involves raising awareness of the eco-label – an education pack and website have been produced for use in classrooms.

The project will give kids, teachers, parents and caterers the opportunity to find out why choosing sustainable seafood is vital for the future of fish, fishing communities and the environment.

What is happening in Surrey schools?

Surrey County Council is participating in a trial of the Fish & Kids project. Sustainable fish fingers are the only fish fingers to be served in Surrey primary schools at the moment. You can check this by looking on the Approved Buying List (ABL) which shows only one fish finger option - 'Fish Finger MSC 25g'. On the bags of fish fingers you receive from Brakes, you will be able to find the 'blue fish tick' MSC eco-label pictured top right.



Children will also have the chance to learn about sustainable seafood in classrooms because we are writing an education pack and developing a website full of fun and games for the kids, and teaching resources for the teachers (though this won't happen until May 2006). Surrey is special because it is the first Local Education Authority anywhere in England that will be serving sustainable fish fingers, and teaching about sustainability in the oceans.

What does this mean for you?

Ordering system

To make sure that the fish fingers served are sustainable there are several checks in the ordering system:

- The Approved Buying List only has the MSC fish finger on it.
- Brakes will not provide an alternative fish finger product.
- If Brakes runs out of MSC fish fingers, you will be provided with another sustainable MSC fish option, or a non-fish alternative.

External audit

To test that only sustainable fish fingers are served in all Surrey primary schools, there may be an audit in your kitchen from an external company approved by Brakes. The visit will be pre-booked. The audit will be a simple check to see that only MSC fish fingers are being served. If you are selected for the audit then you can use the audit checklist below to prepare for it. It won't take long.

The internal audits that you already carry out may be extended to include a few self-checks on the MSC fish fingers. There will be more details on this at a later date.



MSC external audit checklist

The auditor may want to see:

- Invoices/delivery notes
- Monthly opening and closing stock records
- Where you keep the MSC fish fingers
- The Approved Buying List you use to order food

The auditor might ask you:

- Where do you get fish products from?
- How you place orders?
- How do you check and record deliveries?
- How are MSC products kept separate from non-MSC products?
- What you do with the MSC ecolabel?
- What do you say if someone asks what the MSC label means?