



National Free Breakfast Club Scheme St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School

School Context

Our Catholic primary school opened in September 2022 and has grown rapidly. At the start of the national free breakfast club trial in April 2025, we had 370 children on roll. As a two-form entry school still establishing systems and routines, we have become accustomed in our first two years to embracing new challenges and responding proactively to the needs of our community. This mindset was a key reason why we were keen to take part in the trial project.

As a Catholic school, our decision was also rooted in our commitment to Catholic Social Teaching, particularly the principles of supporting the most vulnerable, promoting dignity and serving the common good. We recognised that a free breakfast club could play an important role in addressing potential barriers to learning, while also supporting families in a practical and meaningful way.

Implementation and Early Approach

We began with a simple and sustainable model. Our breakfast offer included

- Toast
- Cereal
- Fruit
- Water

This ensured it was easy to prepare, nutritious and appealing to children. Initial uptake was strong, with approximately 70 children attending daily (19%). This confirmed an immediate need within our community and gave us confidence to build and expand the provision over time.

Staffing was a key early consideration. A survey of existing staff and parents indicated limited interest in supporting the club. In response, we explored alternative workforce solutions. We established a partnership with a local secondary school and offered paid roles to Year 12 and Year 13 students. This proved highly successful: -

- Over 35 students expressed interest
- We appointed a bank of 13 students to support across the week
- Students brought energy, reliability, and positive role modelling for our younger children.

We used some of the initial set up funding for items such as:-

- 6x8slice toasters
- Fridge-freezer
- Serving Tables



Development and Growth

Over time, attendance increased steadily week by week. By March 2026, the school roll had grown to 420 children. Daily breakfast club attendance exceeded 130 children (31% of the school population). This growth reflected both increasing awareness among families and the club's positive reputation within the school community.

To support this expansion, we refined our systems:-

- We introduced weekly pre-booking for parents to better manage numbers and staffing
- Appointed a dedicated Breakfast Club Lead to oversee daily operations
- Strengthened coordination between the club and the school's Business Manager to ensure financial and organisational sustainability

Impact on Children and Families

The breakfast club has had a clear and positive impact:

- Children arrive settled, ready to learn and with improved punctuality.
- The provision supports working families with reliable, free childcare.
- Children benefit from a calm, social start to the day, strengthening relationships across year groups.
- The involvement of older student staff has also added value, providing children with aspirational role models and creating a purposeful employment opportunity for local young people.

Key Lessons Learned

- Start simple: A basic, well-managed food offer can be highly effective
- Think creatively about staffing: Partnerships with local secondary schools can provide a sustainable and mutually beneficial workforce
- Build gradually: Allow provision to grow in response to demand rather than overextending initially
- Establish clear systems early: Pre-booking and designated leadership are essential as numbers increase

Next Steps

Following the success of the trial, we are now exploring how the breakfast club can act as a foundation for wider wraparound care. The strong uptake and positive community response give us confidence in expanding this offer further.

This experience has demonstrated that a well-planned breakfast club can have a significant impact on both children's readiness to learn and wider family support, even in a relatively new and rapidly growing school.

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