



**NOMINATION GUIDE
FOR THE
2026/27 NATIONAL SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMME
BEST SCHOOLS AND DISTRICTS AWARDS**

RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE IN THE NUTRITION PROGRAMME



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

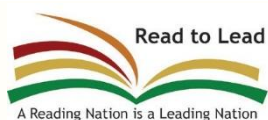


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LIST OF ACRONYMS

NSNP	-	National School Nutrition Programme
SDG	-	Sustainable Development Goal
LSEN	-	Learners with special educational needs
NPO	-	Non-Profit Organisation
VFH	-	Volunteer Food Handlers
MRR	-	Monitoring, Response and Reporting
SLA	-	Service Level Agreement
CoA	-	Certificate of Acceptability
KPI	-	Key Performance Indicator
QLTC	-	Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign
CSTL	-	Care Support for teaching and learning
PED	-	Provincial Education Department

1. INTRODUCTION

The National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) was introduced in 1994 by the government as part of the Reconstruction and Development Programme of the newly established democratic Republic of South Africa. As a key poverty alleviation strategy, the NSNP plays a vital role in improving access to education by providing learners with nutritious meals that enhance their learning capacity. According to the South African Food-Based Dietary Guidelines, a nutritious meal includes a protein, starch, and a vegetable or fruit. The programme primarily targets learners in quintile 1 to 3 public ordinary and special schools, with provisions also extended to selected learners in quintile 4 and 5 schools.

To recognise excellence in the implementation of the NSNP, the NSNP Best Schools and District Awards were launched during the 2009/10 financial year. These awards celebrate outstanding commitment, innovation and effective practices in delivering the programme across schools and districts. They honour the contributions of School Management Teams, Educators, Food Handlers and School Governing Bodies who play a pivotal role in the programme's success.

Every year, each Provincial Education Department (PED) nominates a School and a District for national adjudication. An independent panel appointed by the Department of Basic Education oversees the selection process. Adjudication is based on key criteria, including compliance with policies and procedures, food safety and hygiene, quality of meals, food garden initiatives and nutrition education efforts within schools.

The NSNP Best Schools and Districts Awards serve as one of the Department's ways of recognising and encouraging the dedication of Schools and Districts. They also provide a platform to share best practices and inspire continuous improvement. The Department extends its gratitude to all Schools and Districts that have participated in previous years and once again invites all eligible Schools and Districts to take part in the 2026/27 NSNP Awards competition.

2. THE OBJECTIVE OF THE MINISTRY OF BASIC EDUCATION THROUGH THE NSNP AWARDS

- 2.1 To recognise and acknowledges the dedication of key role players such the School Management Teams, Educators, Volunteer Food Handlers and School Governing Bodies for their daily contribution to the programme.
- 2.2 To promote transparency and accountability in the implementation of the NSNP or utilisation of the NSNP grant/ used for the intended purposes.
- 2.3 To encourage Best Practice in schools.
- 2.4 To improve the wellbeing of learners; highlight the initiatives that remove barriers for the disadvantaged group.
- 2.5 To afford South African, the opportunity to publicly say thank you to all outstanding teams in schools
- 2.6 To work towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 3, Good health and wellbeing of learners).

3. CATEGORIES OF THE AWARDS

The Awards have three (3) categories viz:

- a. Best Schools
 - i. Award description: The award recognises excellence in the daily provision of nutritious meals to learners.
 - ii. Scope: This award targets Primary and Secondary schools in quintile 1 to 3, as well as identified schools of learners with special educational needs (LSEN) that participate in the NSNP.
- b. Best Farm Schools
 - i. Award description: The award recognises excellence in the daily provision of nutritious meals to learners.
 - ii. Scope: This award targets Farm schools that participate in the NSNP.
- c. Best Districts
 - i. Award description: The award recognises excellence in how the District monitor and support schools in implementing the Programme.
 - ii. Scope: This award targets all Education Districts

4. GENERAL CRITERIA, QUESTIONS AND SCORES

4.1 The successful **Quintile 1 -3 Schools** must meet the following criteria and provide evidence:

Criteria	Evidence required and questions	Max Score
Nutritious Meals Served on Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provision of nutritious meals daily (attach two (2) monitoring tools or the back page and color coding of the two (2) tools that prove a school is green, menu and a picture of the meals served)• Learners eating in a classroom/dining hall under supervision of the educator (attach pictures/videos)	5
NSNP Administration <i>(Record Keeping and Management Practices)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monthly reporting packs for January, February and March 2026.• Stock control record for January, February and March 2026.• Record of kitchen equipment and utensils.• Minutes of the meeting held by the NSNP Committee.	5
Hygiene and Safety practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learners handwashing.• Kitchen clean.• Provision of the protective clothing for the FHs.• Gas cylinders stored outside in a lockable cage.• Fire extinguisher available and serviced.• Food stored properly.	4
Nutrition Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How does the school promote Nutrition Education in school communities to improve the healthy eating habits and lifestyles of learners and parents i.e. advocacy campaigns?	4
School Food Garden	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How is the food garden maintained throughout the year?• Who is involved to ensure that the garden is well maintained?• How is the harvest utilised? (provide evidence)	4

Internal and external Stakeholders' participation for the successfully implementation of the NSNP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership with Business/NPOs/Government Departments and Others (Indicate their involvement and attach Memorandum of Agreement if available). 	4
Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiatives to improve the programme implementation. 	4

4.2 The successful **Farm Schools** must meet the following criteria and provide evidence:

Criteria	Evidence required and questions	Max Score
Nutritious Meals Served on Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of nutritious meals daily (attach two (2) monitoring tools or the back page and color coding of the two (2) tools that prove a school is green, menu and a picture of the meals served). Learners eating in a classroom/dining hall under supervision of the educator (attach pictures/videos). 	5
NSNP Administration (Record Keeping and Management Practices)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly reporting packs for January, February and March 2026. Stock control record for January, February and March 2026. Record of kitchen equipment and utensils. Minutes of the meeting held by the NSNP Committee. 	5
Hygiene and Safety practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners handwashing. Kitchen clean. Provision of the protective clothing for the Food Handlers. Gas cylinders stored outside in a lockable cage. Fire extinguisher available and serviced. Food stored properly. 	4
Nutrition Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does the school promote Nutrition Education in school communities to improve the healthy eating habits and lifestyles of learners and parents i.e. advocacy campaigns? 	4
School Food Garden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How is the food garden maintained throughout the year? Who is involved to ensure that the garden is well maintained? How is the harvest utilised? (provide evidence) 	4
Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiatives to improve the programme implementation. 	4

4.3 The successful **District** must meet the following criteria and provide evidence:

Criteria	Evidence required and questions	Max Score
Monitoring and support plan for schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2025/26 Annual Monitoring Plan (Target) and number of visits conducted (Actual). Monitoring, Response and Reporting (MRR) Quarterly Dashboard (4x quarterly summaries Key Performance Indicator (KPI) and visits). Monitoring Service provider performance (<i>copy of the Service Level Agreement (SLA) or written communication with Service Provider and Schools to show intervention</i>). 	5
Provide quality reports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All quarterly reports (2025/26) submitted to provincial office 	5

	and date of submission i.e. sent email and copy of the report.	
Workshops conducted for programme implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a list of the workshops conducted by the District in 2025/26 and attendance registers. 	4
Partnership initiative and collaboration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a report indicating the name of the partner and their contribution to the programme. 	4
Provide strategic leadership for the success implementation of the NSNP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide risk Management document to minimise incidences of food poisoning outbreaks in schools. • Provide risk Management document to address non-feeding in the programme. • Provide the names of the members for the Food Safety Committee and attendance register of meetings held. 	4
Data management system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide completed checklists of schools visited in 2025/26 for kitchens assessment. • Provide a list of school kitchens with Certificate of Acceptability (CoA). 	4
Promotion of Nutrition Education in schools.	Provide reports on the activities undertaken in 2025/26 to disseminate information.	4
Innovation.	Provide a description on the initiatives implemented to improve the programme implementation.	4

5. NOMINATION GUIDE

5.1. Schools

Use the following as guidelines for your motivation (maximum one-page A4 attachment):

- i. Explain in your own words and in English, the reasons why your school should be considered a winner of the NSNP Best School Awards.
- ii. Describe how your school goes above and beyond when executing its role and responsibilities in the implementation of the NSNP.
- iii. Describe how the school engages other community structures to improve the programme.
- iv. Promotion of the NSNP through the Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC) as well as the Care Support for teaching and learning (CSTL) Programmes.

5.2. Districts

Use the following as guidelines for your motivation (maximum one-page A4 attachment):

- i. Explain in your own words, and in English, the reasons why your district should be considered a winner of the NSNP Best District Awards.
- ii. Describe how your district goes above and beyond when executing its role and responsibilities in the implementation of the NSNP in schools.

- iii. Promotion of the NSNP through the Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC) as well as the Care Support for teaching and learning (CSTL) Programmes.

6. RULES FOR THE COMPETITION

6.1 School Category

- i. All finalists that participated 5 year ago (2021/22 - 2025/26) are not eligible to enter the competition.
- ii. Nomination forms must be completed correctly and in detail.
- iii. Nomination forms must be accompanied by the portfolio of evidence in the form of a file and/or saved on a USB as per index:
 - a) Nomination Form and motivation.
 - b) Success in adherence to general guidelines of the NSNP.
 - c) NSNP Administration.
 - d) Stakeholders' participation.
 - e) Hygiene and Safety.
 - f) Nutrition Education.
 - g) Innovation.

The portfolio of evidence may be accompanied by a video clip, not more than 15 minutes.

6.2 District Category

- i. Districts that participated 5 year ago (2021/22 - 2025/26) are not eligible to enter the competition.
- ii. Nomination forms must be completed correctly and in detail with as much information as possible to assist the evaluation process.
- iii. All forms must be accompanied by the portfolio of evidence in the form of a file with pictures and/or saved on a USB as per index:
 - a) Nomination Form and Motivation.
 - b) Monitoring and support plan for schools.
 - c) Quality reports at all levels.
 - d) Workshops conducted.
 - e) Partnership initiative and collaboration.
 - f) Strategic leadership for the success implementation of the NSNP.
 - g) Data management system.
 - h) Nutrition Education in schools.
 - i) Innovation.

7. PRIZES

- 7.1 Prizes for the school Awards: The Department of Basic Education will award all the nominees **participating** in the national level with catering equipment and certificates.
- 7.2 Prizes for the district category: The Department of Basic Education will award position 1,2 and 3 with office equipment.

7.3 Position 1, 2 and 3 in the Schools and Districts category will receive trophies.

7.4 Tiger Brands Foundation will build a kitchen for the winning school.

8. ENTRIES

8.1 Completed entry/nomination forms for schools must be delivered to the nearest district/ circuit office of the Department of Education by **31 July 2026**.

8.2 **Adjudication at the districts/circuits and provincial level will be undertaken by an Independent Committee.**

8.3 Adjudication for all districts to be scheduled from **03 August 2026 to 14 August 2026**.

8.4 Each district must submit district entry and one school per category to Provincial Education Department by **21 August 2026**.

8.5 Independent panel to visit/verify winning district and schools from **31 August 2026 to 18 September 2026**.

8.6 Provincial adjudication by independent panel to be held **22 September 2026 and 23 September 2026**.

8.7 **To prepare winning district and schools before submission to national from 27 September 30 September 2026.**

8.8 Closing date of all provincial entries (Schools and Districts) at National Office, Pretoria is on **02 October 2026**.

8.9 Provincial entries (Schools and Districts) submitted after the closing date will not be considered.

8.10 National Adjudication will take place on **13 -14 October 2026**.

8.11 Provinces, Districts and Schools can communicate with DBE for any clarity on the awards.

8.12 Provinces should only submit their winning Schools and District to DBE (Only one school per category and one district) after adjudication process.

8.13 DEDs and PEDs to submit score sheets and minutes of the adjudication for both district and provincial levels.

8.14 **Provincial and district BSA celebration/ceremony 08 to 13 March 2027.**

9. GENERAL MATTERS

9.1. All materials submitted must be in English.

9.2. All the materials that has been submitted for the Awards will not be returned to the schools.

9.3. Late submission will not be considered.

10. CHECKLIST

Required document	Included?	
Nomination form signed by the principal and SGB chairperson	Yes	No
File arranged as per index	Yes	No
Report/Minutes/Attendance register for the adjudication committee at Provincial level	Yes	No
Score sheet	Yes	No

FOR ENQUIRIES PLEASE CONTACT:

Provincial contacts:

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Programme Manager: Sustainable Food Production in School

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Monitor: John-Taolo-Gaetsewe

Ms Samatha Owies-060 525 6294

Monitor: Namakwa

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Monitor: Pixley-Ka-Seme

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