

EAT THEM TO DEFEAT THEM SEASON 8 2026

STARTS
2ND MARCH
2026



PROGRAMME
GUIDE

VEGPOWER

A close-up photograph of a young girl with curly, light brown hair. She is smiling and has a slice of orange carrot in her mouth. She is wearing a pink patterned top. In the foreground, a wooden surface is covered with several thin, round slices of carrots.

80%

**OF OUR CHILDREN ARE
NOT EATING ENOUGH
VEGETABLES**

with a third eating less than one portion of vegetables a day. Perhaps most alarming is that 50% of parents say they have given up even trying.

With the support of schools across the UK we are turning this around using creativity and fun to inspire kids to veggie loving habits they will keep for life, and in turn share with their children.

Find out more:
EatThemToDefeatThem.com

SEASON 8: VEG HUNTERS

Eat Them to Defeat Them is back for an eighth blockbuster year with an exciting new feature called **Veg Hunters** featuring **The Great Veg Vote**. This guide is here to help you get the most from the programme and to shape it to suit your school.

Choose Your Own Adventure

We listened to your feedback, and made the programme modular and even more flexible.

- **The Main Event:** The classic Eat Them to Defeat Them campaign kicks off anytime from **2nd March**.
- **Your Rules:** Run a veg day, a veg week, or a full-blown term of veg action.
- **Ramadan Friendly:** If pupils in your school observe Ramadan then you can launch the crunchy adventures after it finishes on **19th March**.
- **The Great Veg Vote** is a new feature to better engage and educate the older children. You can run this at any time from **12th January**.

If you're new to Eat Them to Defeat Them we suggest you start with the overview of the programme on page 6, if you're a seasoned hand you can head to page 10 for what's new this year.

Don't miss updates for schools participating in Eat Them To Defeat Them 2026,
[**Click here to register**](#)

The Big Carrot (and we mean £1,000)

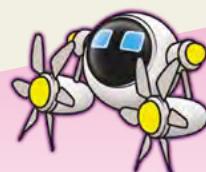
You're invited to enter **The Eat Them to Defeat Them Schools' Challenge**. The top prize? **£1,000** in unrestricted funding for your school (see page 12).

We hope you love the programme as much as a kid loves a crunchy carrot stick. We can't wait to hear your feedback!



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Gold Winner
IPA EFFECTIVENESS
AWARDS



President's Prize for
Behavioural Change
IPA EFFECTIVENESS AWARDS



Gold Winner
EFFIE AWARDS

VEGPOWER

Sainsbury's

EAT THEM TO DEFEAT THEM



“ I owe endless thanks to the people behind the #EatThemToDefeatThem campaign. My daughter's vegetable intake has increased tenfold! She loves telling us about all of the vegetables she's defeating, and how she's saving us all! ”

JUST ONE OF MILLIONS OF PARENTS

Ever wished you could convince kids that they actually want to eat veggies? Well, back in 2018 Veg Power launched this awesome campaign called Eat Them to Defeat Them, which basically turns eating your veggies into an epic adventure.

Forget boring old "five-a-day" lectures! This award-winning programme uses fun to get kids excited about vegetables. Think of it as a superhero mission where the veggies are the villains, and every bite is a victory!

Over the last seven years we've had £20m of advertising and nearly 6,000 schools with a whopping 1.8m different children taking part. They're learning about veggies in the classroom, doing fun activities, taste testing yummy snacks, and even taking home cool reward charts and stickers.

And guess what? It's actually working! Parents are saying their kids are gobbling up more veggies than ever before. It turns out that while children might not want to be "healthy eaters", they absolutely love being a veggie-conquering hero.



£20m
ADVERTISING
donated
to our
campaigns



1.8m
children
have taken part
in schools



5,799 SCHOOLS
HAVE
TAKEN
PART



82%
PARENTS
of children who took part said they
ATE MORE VEGETABLES



60%
OF PARENTS
REPORTED A LASTING CHANGE IN
THEIR CHILDRENS' DIET



89% schools
report that children
ate
more
veg



62% PARENTS
of children who took part in schools
said they also
ATE
MORE
VEG



74% schools
report children more
likely to finish veg &
REDUCE
WASTE



87% of children
want to
do it
again



91% SCHOOLS
want to run it
AGAIN NEXT YEAR



THE BASICS



If you're new to Eat Them to Defeat Them here's an introduction, if you're an old hand you could skip to the next page.

Most of our kids don't eat enough vegetables.

We're Veg Power and we're on a mission to fix it. Our research showed that kids just don't respond to conventional messages around good health, and we needed something they would find both fun and engaging.

So we created a campaign that rethought how we talk about vegetables. We put kids and adults on the same side and we made vegetables fun. This year is the eighth year, and each year we create a new theme to keep it fresh and engaging, for Season 8 it is Veg Hunters.

The excitement starts in schools. We supply you with a box or two of printed resources. This includes mission packs, decorations for the lunch area, participation stickers to support children to try something new, and posters to put up in reception.

As well as the physical resources you have free access to our online resources packed full of lesson plans, teaching resources, craft projects and more. Our team includes a retired primary head, a registered nutritionist as well as specialists on behaviour change, child psychology and children's entertainment.

Above all the whole thing is modular, we provide resources and creative ideas, and you can shape the programme to suit your school. There are only two things we ask that you do - send the Mission Packs home and complete our feedback survey please, the rest is up to you.

WHY ARE YOU MAKING VEG SCARY?

We're not, it is subtler than that and carefully crafted by behavioural experts. Eat Them to Defeat Them is fun, it's a story, a game. We don't use words like kill and there is no implied threat to people or property. Children understand it is a ruse to get them to eat veg, but they play along because it's fun. Here's the secret, most children don't actually dislike veg, our society has just conditioned them to think they don't - this programme reboots that thinking.

Extending it into homes

The positive energy in schools encourages kids to try something new, but to make lasting changes, we need the support of parents and carers to reinforce those behaviours at home.

So we supply a Mission Pack and Sticker Sheet for each child for you to send home in school bags. These packs help parents to repeat, reward and normalise new vegetable consumption habits. To support them we give them access to our online portal packed full of expert tips and advice. We supply you with posters for receptions and a digital flyer to send to your families so they can get the most from it.

Over a million different children have enjoyed Eat Them to Defeat Them in their school, with some only taking part once and others having taken part as many as seven times.

Eat Them to Defeat Them has proven that it helps most families, including those on the lowest income and those with children who are most resistant to vegetables, including many children with autism and other special education needs.

IT REALLY WORKS!

Children love it because it makes adults play. To get the best results keep it fun, play along, use the catchphrases, steer the children towards defeating by eating rather than anything more violent or "war-like" and don't burst the bubble by mentioning nutrition. Above all, don't create any pressure for any children to eat anything.

For the full impact report go to Vegpower.org.uk/insight

If you'd like to understand more about this approach:

EatThemToDefeatThem.com/families/scary-veg/

YOUR PLANNER



A step-by-step guide to the Eat Them to Defeat Them programme

PLANNING

JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2026

- Liaise with your caterers and plan your Schools' Challenge entry (SEE PAGE 12)
- Select your Veg Hunter Champions and run the Great Veg Vote (SEE PAGE 10 & 11)
- Plan your assembly & classroom activities (SEE PAGE 10)
- Send early notice to families (SEE PAGE 16)



PREPARATION

LATE FEBRUARY 2026

- Expect delivery of a box or two of assets
- Give stickers to lunchtime team (SEE PAGE 13)
- Give decoration kit to caterers or lunchtime team (SEE PAGE 13)
- Send Prepare for Victory to families (SEE PAGE 16)
- Finalise the Great Veg Vote (SEE PAGE 11)



WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

- Mission packs and sticker sheets
- Participation stickers
- Decorations
- Great Veg Vote wallcharts
- Reception posters



EATTHEMTODEFEATTHEM.COM

Downloads, feedback and more.

Don't forget to register to find out about future projects.



LAUNCH

2ND MARCH 2026

- Send home the Mission Packs & Sticker Sheets (SEE PAGE 14)
- Colour in and put up the A1 Great Veg Vote Wall Chart (SEE PAGE 11)
- Remind families (SEE PAGE 16)
- Stick up posters in reception and decorations in the lunch hall (SEE PAGE 10, 15 & 16)



LIVE

2ND MARCH - END OF TERM

- Hand out participation stickers (SEE PAGE 13)
- Look out for update emails from us
- Have fun! Post and share your veg victories on social media (SEE PAGE 17)



FINALLY

BY THE
END OF TERM

- Please feedback your thoughts and experiences (SEE PAGE 17)
- Don't forget to enter the Schools' Challenge (SEE PAGE 12)



LOVE VEGGIES!

For the last seven years, Eat Them to Defeat Them has been focused on improving children's vegetable consumption. Alarmingly 80% of children fall short of the recommended consumption levels and a third of kids are eating less than a portion per day. Poor dietary health not only impacts many aspects of children's health in the short and long term, but a proper balanced diet has been proven to improve concentration, sustain energy and improve behaviour creating the right conditions for getting the most from their education.

Our programme has proved that children who take part repeatedly on average eat 60% more veg than those who don't.

This year we'll focus on these five core veg. They are affordable, accessible, reasonably easy to like and generally already on the menu in schools.



VEG HUNTERS WE NEED YOU! NEW

In response to feedback from schools we are creating a new role for the older children to keep them engaged. Veg Hunter Champions will aim to give them a sense of ownership, support them to understand why vegetable consumption is important and the role of a programme like Eat Them to Defeat Them.

You can appoint Yr5-6/P6-7, or Y2 in Infant or members of any eco-warriors, school council or other group to lead in your school as Veg Hunter Champions.

Your Champions can collaborate with caterers to plan amazing veg tasting events or themes and can lead the pupils in decorating the school to reflect your veg vote.

TIMINGS

We will provide everything you need for this activity available from 12th January, though you could work this element into any part of Spring 1, or even Spring 2 (or skip it entirely). If you are not planning to run Veg Hunters and The Great Veg Vote we suggest you use our alternative assembly when the full programme starts from 2nd March.

CHAMPIONS

1. Plan & manage Eat Them to Defeat Them in your school.
2. Learn about why we eat a rainbow of vegetables.
3. Run the Great Veg Vote, see page 11.
4. Coordinate veg tasting events or theme meals with your caterers.
5. Plan and manage decorations for your lunch area.
6. Make sure families are aware of the programme.
7. Make your entry to the Schools' Challenge.
8. Download, colour-in and wear their Veg Hunter Champion badges.

Please remember: These are just suggestions, it is all up to you to use the ideas and resources we have provided as suits your school.

RESOURCES

Head to EatThemToDefeatThem.com/schools to find our library of classroom resources created by our education team including:

- Veg Hunters campaign planner
- Introduction to Veg Hunter lesson plans for KS1 & KS2
- Eat The Rainbow - lesson plan for KS1 & KS2
- KS1 Eat the Rainbow plate proforma worksheet
- Veg Hunter assembly
- Non-Veg Hunters assembly
- Downloadable & colour in decorations
- Downloadable & colour in Veg Hunter badges

THE GREAT VEG VOTE ✓ NEW

What's your school's favourite veg?

Which do your pupils need to eat more off?

Your Veg Hunter Champions can run a vote to identify how much your school likes each of our five featured vegetables. We're asking the children which of these vegetables they enjoy and eat regularly, they can choose as many as they wish or none at all.

As always, we have designed this to be flexible. You can run the Great Veg Vote at any time from 12th January, or not at all. It can be as simple or as rich and engaging as you wish.

HERE'S A FEW IDEAS:

- 1 You can just do a simple vote in class or assembly with either a show of hands or better still use our voting form.
- 2 You can have a vote assembly and challenge advocates from your Veg Hunter Champions to explain what's great about each move before children vote in class.
- 3 Learn why we eat a rainbow of vegetables with our lesson plans.
- 4 Upload your results online to join the national tally. Go to EatThemToDefeatThem.com/the-great-veg-vote it only takes a few minutes.
- 5 Add your school results to the A1 Great Veg Vote wallchart we'll send to you with your other physical resources before half term.

- 6 We'll be sharing those results with a fun short video you can play in class or assembly towards the end of term.
- 7 Post your schools' favourite on social media or other parents & carer channels, we've created some graphics to help.
- 8 Identify which veg your school needs to eat more of and work with your caterers to have a theme-day or tasting event with those veg.
- 9 Decorate your school lunch space with the download and colour-in decorations available online. You could decorate the theme day, or each child could decorate their favourite or the veg they pledge to try.
- 10 You can even rerun the vote at the end of term to see what difference Eat Them to Defeat Them has made.



RESOURCES

- Great Veg Vote - Lesson plan and instructions for KS1 & KS2
- Great Veg Vote - voting form
- Great Veg Vote - online submission
- Eat the Rainbow KS1 plate proforma worksheet
- Eat The Rainbow - lesson plan for KS1 & KS2
- Veg Hunter assembly



For the last six years we have run Eat Them to Defeat Them Caterers' Challenge kindly sponsored by Tilda to recognise outstanding work done by school caterers to bring Eat Them to Defeat Them to life.

We are evolving our Caterers' Challenge into the **Eat Them to Defeat Them Schools' Challenge**. We are looking to recognise and reward a whole school approach. A celebration of schools, pupils and caterers working together to improve children's diet. Please note we are in contact with most caterers and will brief them, please ask your caterers to contact hello@vegpower.org.uk if they need more information.

How To Win!

Our judges will be looking for schools and caterers working together; a whole school approach. We hope to see pupil engagement and leadership delivering Eat Them to Defeat Them across the school and wider community.

This might include The Great Veg Vote, assemblies, lunchtime themes or tasting tables, amazing school decorations, strong extension to your parents & carers and, of course, your own ideas and imagination.

Don't forget, it's all about having fun, eating loads of veg and remember to take photos.

Enter online from 2nd March

EATTHEMTODEFEATTHEM.COM

PRIZES

GOLD

- £1,000 unrestricted funding.
- £500 to your catering team.
- Trophy & certificate.

SILVER

- £500 unrestricted funding.
- £250 to your catering team.
- Certificate.

BRONZE

- 5 x £100 unrestricted funding.
- Certificate.



SPONSORED BY

Tilda
FOODSERVICE



STICKERS & DECORATIONS



The resources sent to your schools include rolls of participation stickers, one design for each of the five vegetables and enough for one of each per child. You'll also find a set of cut-out decorations for your lunch space, plus you can download and create your own decorations (see page 10). The veg stickers are essential to the experience. They serve two purposes. Firstly, the caterers and school team can give the kids stickers to reward them for trying the vegetables. Kids love stickers. For kids who are not sure, then no pressure, a sniff or a lick of the veg will do.

The second feature is to project that back to parents and carers. These stickers effectively say, "I tried vegetables today". We'll be advising parents to acknowledge and praise (ideally joining in the fun theme of the campaign) and then, critically, repeating that veg at home, rewarding the child using their mission pack and sticker sheet. We move from sample at school, to repeat at home, then reward in order to normalise that veg in the child's diet.

**These stickers effectively say,
"I tried vegetables today"**

To maximise impact, praise the children when you hand out the stickers with lines such as "did you defeat them?". There are five designs and we have supplied enough for each child to get one of each design.



IMPORTANT

MISSION PACKS

These are the most important components of this programme as they take the programme from a great event once a year in school to a lasting and significant change in the children's diet at home - where most meals are eaten and lifetime habits are formed.

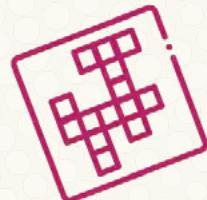
You should receive enough Mission Packs and Sticker Sheets for each child to take one of each home. Please put them in school bags from 2nd March and let parents & carers know they are coming.

DO THEY GET USED?

Parents & carers can use these packs to repeat, reward and normalise new behaviour. 82% of parents report that they used and enjoyed these packs you send home.

Of those 42% put them on the fridge, 43% put them on the kitchen wall, 59% say they fully complete them and a further 39% say they partially complete them.

82%
OF PARENTS
say their family used their
REWARD CHART



DO THEY WORK?

91% of those children report they enjoyed it. 87% of parents report their child ate more veg because of it, with 85% saying children were more likely to finish their veg and 82% saying their child ate a wider variety of veg as a result.



87% OF PARENTS who used the chart said their child **ate more veg** because of it



GET CRAFTY

Our website is packed full of craft projects and activities. Head to EatThemToDefeatThem.com/schools/arts-crafts



DECORATIONS

Let the children embrace the veg invasion with our huge range of downloadable and colour in decorations. There's vegetables, fun posters and even individual letters for creating your own messages.



ARTS & CRAFTS

We have cut-out and colour-in vegetables to support sensory education or to just colour in for fun. We also have vegetable facemasks and crowns the children always love.

Ask the children to colour in the veg, being as creative as possible. Show them photos of veg with unusual colours such as purple carrots, multicolour Mexican corn or black tomatoes.

They can even use different media, such as a collage with shiny paper for peppers, scrunched up tissue paper for broccoli, pieces of string for stripes on a carrot, or textured card for the sweetcorn. When all the veg has been decorated, use it to make a display in school and share on social media with the hashtag #EatThemToDefeatThem.



ENGAGING FAMILIES

Turning first tastes into lasting habits

How can we turn the excitement of Eat Them to Defeat Them, and that all important first taste of a new vegetable you'll deliver in schools, into lasting improvements in the children's diet?

Eat Them to Defeat Them makes a lasting change because we extend the programme from schools into homes. The Mission Packs help parents and carers to turn those new experiences into lasting good habits and our online expert tips and advice will help them succeed.

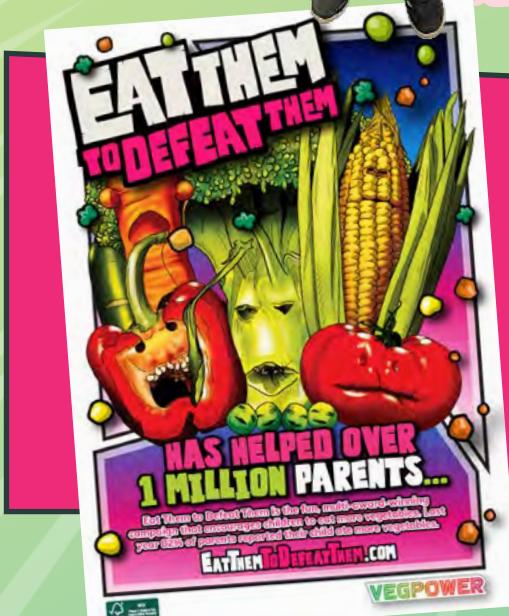
Please make sure you send the packs home.



PREPARE FOR VICTORY

It is essential to the success of the campaign to engage your parents and carers. Here's how you can help:

- 1 **As soon as possible...** Let them know it's coming and direct them to EatThemToDefeatThem.com which has a dedicated section and short video to inform and support families.
- 2 **Early February...** Head to our website to download and send out this handy digital flyer to help them get the most from Eat Them to Defeat Them. This flyer has been designed to work on mobile phones.
- 3 **Week of 2nd March...** put up the reception posters and remind parents to look out for the Mission Packs in school bags.



RECEPTION POSTERS

We will send you a pack of three A4 posters to put up in reception, the school gate or other areas where parents and carers congregate. Please get them up in good time so they join in too.

POINT YOUR FAMILIES TO
EatThemToDefeatThem.com/families



FEEDBACK

Veg Power is a not-for-profit alliance of companies, organisations, celebrities, schools and parents united by a common goal: to get our kids eating more delicious, healthy veg.

Our mission is no easy task but if we all rally together, we believe it is possible. We need your feedback. Please guide us with your experience and insight, and please lend your voice on social media to inspire and support each other.

Until the end of April we'll have an online survey. Everybody is welcome to tell us what they think. You, your colleagues, the catering team and support crew, as well as parents and carers. Whether you love it or hate it we want to hear from you, as it's your feedback that will help us improve.

FIND OUR ONLINE SURVEY:

EATTHEMTODEFEATTHEM.COM

**NEED
HELP?**

If you do need help, please first check this guide and then head to our website. There you'll find resources you can download, guides and blogs that might answer your questions and if that fails please contact us: hello@vegpower.org.uk

**SHARE
YOUR VICTORIES**

Social media has such an important role. We don't expect and would not encourage your kids to be active on the adult social media platforms, but parents, carers, teachers, caterers and others are. On social media we can inspire each other with ideas, amaze people with your wonderful school and support each other with our likes and shares. This is where our alliance comes together.

Please share the fun at your school with the hashtag

#EATTHEMTODEFEATTHEM

Find us:
@VegPowerUK



MORE

VEGPOWER

Veg Power is a not for profit alliance dedicated to improving children's diets by making healthy, sustainable eating irresistible. Eat Them to Defeat Them is our flagship programme but we do so much more in schools.



GROWING TO LOVE

We want kids to love vegetables. One of the best ways to develop that love is through growing your own.

Growing to love...tomatoes is our growing project for primary & special schools. We supply everything you need from seeds and soil to lesson plans and how-to videos. 30,000 children took part in 2025.

>Returns April 2026

Funded by local authorities and local veg growers

SUPPORTING NEURODIVERSITY

To support families with children in mainstream education who currently receive very little support on diet, Veg Power will be working with our expert advisors to create a Supporting Neurodiversity booklet from April 2026.

From April 2026

Funded by local authorities and academies



ATTACK THE SNACK

Children love snacks — who doesn't? The problem is that many of the snacks children eat are high in fat, sugar, and salt, and lack the essential micronutrients they really need. Our new programme is designed to change that by encouraging children to snack on more fruit and veg, more often.

Always available

100% free

ATTACK THE SNACK



LOVE YOUR LUNCHBOXES

Our Shaun the Sheep themed lunchbox planner with supporting expert advice from registered nutritionist Catherine Lippe will be available from February.



From February 2026

100% free

THE BIG BEAN BOOST

We need to eat more beans. Beans, pulses and lentils are little powerhouses of goodness. They're good for our health, good for the planet and pretty good news for stretched family budgets. We have a new National Lottery funded programme to get the UK eating more beans, including a new fully-funded three-year programme for primary and special schools.



Returns October 2026

National Lottery funded

ALWAYS 100% FREE FOR SCHOOLS

To find out more and register your interest: vegpower.org.uk/schools

Don't miss updates on our new programmes, register for our newsletter at: vegpower.org.uk/support-us