

FOOD AND NUTRITION POLICY

March 2026

We consider equality implications before and at the time that we develop policy and take decisions, not as an afterthought, and we keep them under review on a continuing basis. All policies are approved by the governing board and reviewed annually.



But the plans of the Lord stand firm for ever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.

*Psalm 33:11
New International Version*

(For Children Aged 3–5 and Whole-School Provision)

1. Introduction

This policy sets out our school’s approach to providing healthy, balanced and nutritious food for all children. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework requires that: “Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, these must be healthy, balanced and nutritious.” From September 2025, early years providers must have regard to the Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance (May 2025), meaning we must take the guidance into account and follow it unless there is good reason not to. This policy applies to all food and drink provided in school and to food brought from home.

2. Aims

We aim to:

- Provide healthy, balanced and nutritious food throughout the school day.
- Support children’s growth, development and long-term health.
- Promote positive eating habits and reduce health inequalities.
- Create a safe, inclusive food environment that meets cultural, medical and dietary needs.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers to support healthy eating at home and school.

The guidance highlights that providing healthy food helps prevent obesity and supports good oral health.

3. Scope

This policy covers:

- Early Years Foundation Stage (children aged 3–5)
- School meals
- Snacks
- Drinks
- Packed lunches
- Celebrations and special events
- Food-based activities
- Management of allergies, intolerances and special diets
- Food safety and hygiene

4. Principles for Food Provision

4.1 Healthy, Balanced Meals

Meals and snacks will be planned using the EYFS food and drink guidelines (Table 2). These include:

- Providing at least one portion of fruit or vegetables at each main meal.
- Providing a portion of starchy food at each meal.
- Providing a portion of protein at lunch.

- Providing three portions of dairy or fortified alternatives daily (including those eaten at home).
- Avoiding foods high in saturated fat, salt and sugar.
- Offering only water and milk as drinks.

The guidance states that children should eat a “balanced diet containing a wide variety of foods.”

4.2 Drinks

Only the following drinks will be provided:

- Fresh drinking water (available all day)
- Plain whole or semi-skimmed milk (or unsweetened fortified non-dairy alternatives)

Sugary drinks, fruit juice, squash and smoothies are not permitted.

4.3 Portion Sizes

Portion sizes will be appropriate for age and appetite. The guidance notes that: “A portion size for a child aged 1 to 5 is generally smaller than an adult portion.”

We:

- Start with small servings and allow children to ask for more
- Do not pressure children to finish food
- Do not use rewards for eating

4.4 Mealtime Environment

We aim to create a calm, social and positive eating environment. Children eat together to encourage social interaction and willingness to try new foods.

5. Menu Planning

Menus will:

- Follow the EYFS food and drink guidelines
- Include a variety of foods, tastes, textures and colours
- Be planned weekly
- Be reviewed regularly for nutritional balance
- Be updated seasonally
- Be shared with parents, including allergen information

The guidance emphasises the importance of planning weekly menus to ensure variety and balance.

6. Food Brought from Home

Parents are encouraged to follow the school’s healthy eating expectations. Food from home must:

- Align with the healthy options offered in school
- Be labelled with the child’s name
- Be checked for allergens on arrival

- Be prepared safely to avoid choking risks

We do not reheat food brought from home.

7. Celebrations and Special Events

To avoid excessive sugar intake, we encourage alternatives to cakes and sweets, such as:

- Fruit platters
- Non-food treats (stickers, bubbles)

Any food shared must be checked for allergens.

8. Managing Allergies, Intolerances and Special Diets

8.1 Identification and Documentation

We gather allergy and dietary information before a child starts. The guidance states: "You must find out if a child has any food allergies before they are admitted into your setting." All children with allergies have an Allergy Action Plan.

8.2 Staff Training

All staff must understand:

- Each child's dietary requirements
- How to avoid cross-contamination
- Symptoms of allergic reactions
- Emergency procedures, including use of auto-injectors

8.3 Food Preparation

We prevent cross-contamination by:

- Storing allergen-containing foods separately
- Using colour-coded equipment
- Labelling children's cups/plates where needed
- Supervising mealtimes closely

9. Cultural and Religious Dietary Needs

We respect all cultural and religious food practices. The guidance highlights the importance of "open communication with parents and/or carers" to ensure food meets children's needs.

Menus will include culturally diverse dishes.

10. Food Safety and Hygiene

We follow Food Standards Agency guidance on:

- Safe storage
- Avoiding choking hazards
- Hygiene in preparation
- Allergen management

- Safe handling of food from home

Staff are trained in food hygiene appropriate to their role.

11. Learning About Food

We provide opportunities for children to:

- Prepare simple foods
- Grow fruits, vegetables and herbs
- Explore food through sensory play
- Learn about healthy eating and where food comes from

Activities follow allergy and hygiene procedures.

12. Sustainability and Cost-Effective Practice

We promote sustainability by:

- Reducing food waste
- Using seasonal produce
- Cooking from scratch
- Using value-range ingredients where nutritionally appropriate
- Growing food on site where possible

The guidance includes a section on “Cost-effective healthy food.”

13. Partnership with Parents and Carers

We maintain open communication about:

- Menus and allergens
- Children’s eating patterns
- Cultural and dietary needs
- Packed lunch expectations

The guidance emphasises that “working alongside parents and/or carers is essential.”

14. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if:

- National guidance changes
- There are significant changes to provision
- Feedback from parents, staff or governors indicates a need.