

**Whole School Food Healthy Eating Policy**

**St. John's Catholic Primary School & Nursery**



## **1. Purpose of Food and Drink / Healthy Eating Policy**

This policy has been written to give clear guidance to staff, outside visitors, parent and carers, and pupils about the provision of food during the school day and our approach to the positive promotion of healthy eating and supporting good oral health. Good food provision in schools has been shown to lead not only to healthier children, but to improved attainment. Provision is supported by sharing and embedding key evidence-based messages with the whole school community at every opportunity through the continuous development of a healthy school food culture.

## **2. Food and Drink Provision Throughout the Day**

### **2.1 Food Standards for Schools, maintained nurseries and nursery units attached to schools**

The school food standards are mandatory for all maintained schools and intend to help children develop healthy eating habits and ensure they obtain the energy and nutrition they need across the whole school day. This includes food provided between 8am and 6pm which would include breakfast, mid-morning snack, lunch, tuck shops and after school clubs. All academies and free schools are also expected to comply with these standards, and since 2014 is an explicit requirement within funding agreements.

The food and drink offer is adapted to suit the needs of younger children, including those in reception and nursery to ensure food is prepared safely and is adapted to meet energy and nutritional needs as per the requirements of the EYFS framework and as required in legislation. We use the Eat Better Start Better framework to adapt our offer, including nature and frequency of snacks, lunch and drinks provision to support our youngest children.

For more information please refer to:

- The DFE Standards for School Food in England (updated 2023)
- The DFE School Food Standards – Resources for schools (updated 2024)
- The School Food Plan – this plan provides the background, original evidence-base and rationale for the updated standards, and offers a range of resources including recipes ideas, portion sizes and learning from others

- The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework – highlights the requirements to support younger children (nursery and reception)
- The DFE Help for Early Year Providers - Resources for Early Years (2024) – a range of resources to support children's wellbeing and enrichment including nutrition, oral health, food safety and food education
- The Eat Better Start Better framework – is used in conjunction with Food Safety advice to adapt food provision to be suitable for children aged under 5 years, including nursery age

## **2.2 Breakfast**

Breakfast is an important meal which contributes towards energy requirements and is an opportunity to provide essential vitamins and minerals. We offer healthy foods selecting lower sugar, fat and salt options and fruit/vegetable is always made available. We only offer healthy drinks including plain milk and tap water. Our menu is compliant with the school food standards, and we do not offer any foods that are restricted across the whole school day/week such as meat products or pastry.

## **2.3 Snacks**

Snacks can play an important part of the diet of children and young people and can contribute positively towards a balanced diet. Snacks provide an opportunity to have 1 of your 5-a-day, as well as include other important nutrients in the diet.

As part of the School Food Standards, schools are only able to provide fruit, vegetables, nuts and seeds as a snack. Dried fruit is not offered as a snack and is only offered at mealtimes within a meal/dessert. The Government's school fruit and vegetable scheme entitles all children in KS1 to one piece of fruit and / or vegetable per day. Younger children are offered a more nutrient-dense snack offer in line with their higher energy and nutrient needs, until the end of the Autumn term of reception. Nursery age children are typically offered 1 snacks per day.

## **2.4 School Lunches**

The school lunches meet the statutory school food standards. The offer is compliant with the school food standards, where certain foods/drinks are

required, restricted or forbidden. In London, all primary school pupils are currently entitled to free school meals.

Our lunch menu is advertised on our website. The food offer is adapted to be suitable for nursery age children. We use the Eat Better Start Better framework in conjunction with Food Safety guidance to make reasonable adjustments.

## **2.5 After School Clubs**

We ensure our food offer supports healthy habits and is compliant with the school food standards. Our menus are available on our website. The after school provision does not include any restricted or forbidden foods/drinks and aims to support children in developing healthy habits.

All children aged in reception and younger accessing after school club will always be offered appropriate food provision. This may be a tea offer for nursery-age, which is compliant with the Eat Better Start Better requirements.

## **2.6 Drinks**

Water is available for all pupils throughout the day, free of charge. Pupils are able to refill water bottles easily and are actively encouraged to drink water regularly throughout the day. Nursery age children may use an open cup.

Lower fat milk is available for pupils at least once a day in addition to before and after school clubs. This is free of charge for pupil premium and reception children.

Other than milk provision once per day, as required by the School Food Standards, we are currently operating as a 'water only' school for all pupils of reception age and older, using this toolkit.

Children in reception and nursery are offered plain milk and water only.

## **3. Special Dietary Requirements and Promoting Inclusivity**

St. John's Catholic Primary School does everything possible to accommodate pupils' specialist dietary requirements including allergies, intolerances, religious or cultural practices and any medical conditions. We work closely with parents/carers to

manage any risks. We ask parents/carers, staff and any visitors not to bring nuts on site. However, we cannot declare our site as 'nut free'

Staff have completed the following training to enable them to manage food allergies, intolerances and dietary requirements:

- Paediatric First Aid
- Adrenaline / anaphylactic shock (Epi Pen) training

Neurodivergent children are supported at mealtimes. This includes understanding how their specific needs and experiences influence their eating behaviours. Working closely with family members, key workers and other relevant stakeholders, reasonable adjustments are made to support pupils to eat and drink well.

#### **4. Food Hygiene and Safety**

We ensure food safety at all stages of food preparation and storage, including:

- Adequate facilities, suitable equipment, risk assessments and hazards identified.
- Staff are trained (e.g. relevant staff hold Level 2 food safety certification).
- Additional food safety measures for younger children aged under 5 years are understood and adhered to.
- Clean, functional hand washing facilities are provided for all pupils and staff to use.

#### **5. Ethos, Environment and Healthy Living Promotion**

Good quality eating environments significantly increase the uptake of school food. Our dining area offers a clean, sociable environment that is welcoming, promotes social interaction amongst pupils and promotes healthy eating habits.

Pupils are able to sit at tables with their peers and are given sufficient time to eat their lunch. Sitting with peers supports pupils to enjoy and eat food together.

Staff understand the importance of being a good role model to support pupils in developing healthy habits, catering staff utilise 'guided choice' communication techniques, to support the development of healthy habits including the promotion of 5-a-day, and encourage pupils to eat a broader range of healthy foods from different

food groups e.g. 'would you like carrots or peas', avoiding vegetables being offered as an option e.g. 'would you like some vegetables?'. Healthy drink choices are the most accessible and are presented attractively and at eye level close to service area.

We endeavour to promote sustainable catering practices, by selecting high quality ingredients that meet standards for animal welfare, sustainability and minimising environmental impact, using seasonal and locally produced products where possible, and minimising food waste and the use of single use packaging.

## **6. Menu Development and Consultation**

Our school engages with key stakeholders before implementing any menu changes and to promote good uptake of school meals. These include pupils, parents/carers, staff, caterers, governors, partners

We use the following measures to gather feedback: sending out surveys

- Offering regular tasting sessions
- Addressing cultural, religious and special dietary needs.
- School Council a group that represents our pupils

## **7. Food and Drink brought into School and Parent Engagement**

### **Packed lunches**

We encourage parents to provide healthy and well-balanced packed lunches. For nursery age children, we use the guide from First Steps Nutrition Trust.

While parents may choose to provide packed lunches, we encourage healthy choices that align with school meals.

- Sweets, fizzy drinks, and high-sugar snacks should be avoided
- Parents are regularly informed of healthy packed lunch ideas.

We encourage parents to provide healthy and well-balanced packed lunches. For nursery age children, we use the guide from First Steps Nutrition Trust.

## **8. Birthdays and Special Occasions**

### **Celebrations and Rewards**

- We encourage non-food rewards where possible (e.g., stickers, certificates).

- When food is used for celebrations or rewards, healthier options are promoted.
- As an alternative to treats, children are welcome to bring in a favourite book to share with the class, which can be read during story time or shown to their peers.

This helps us to celebrate in a safe, inclusive, and meaningful.

## **10. Cooking and Food Education in the Curriculum**

Teaching pupils how to cook is an important part of our whole school approach to health and wellbeing. It captivates and stimulates pupil's interest and enjoyment of food, builds self-confidence in food preparation and provides the opportunity to share and embed consistent evidence-based messages.

The school follows the National Curriculum which states that healthy eating, nutrition and cooking must be taught in Science, Design and Technology (D&T), and Health Education. We deliver a spiral curriculum building on pupil's knowledge and skills and learning is assessed throughout. Activities are adapted in line with the EYFS for younger children.

## **10. Monitoring and Evaluation**

We will use the following processes and methods to achieve the continuous development of a healthy school food culture.

- Pupil feedback-School council) on the quality and enjoyment of school food and overall lunchtime experience.
- Conduct regular reviews of the current catering contract (including breakfast and after school provision) and ensure the specification is appropriate and that the terms are being met – where they are not being met, establish what improvement action will be taken.
- Audit packed lunches to ensure they meet our policy and guidelines.
- Review healthy eating, including cooking skills and food education, within the school curriculum to ensure the quality of teaching and learning e.g. pupil/lesson observations, written or verbal assessment, peer and self-evaluation, learning walks and pupil progress meetings.

## **11. Policy Review**

Policy Implementation Date:

Next Review Date:

Signed:

Date: