



St Mary's C.E. Primary School

Healthy Eating Policy

Approved by governors: August 2024

Date of next review: 2026

“Everything is possible for one who believes.” Mark 9:23

Dream, believe, achieve.

Healthy Eating Policy

Introduction

St. Mary's is committed to helping its pupils to gain a knowledge and understanding of how to keep themselves healthy. The school is aware that a nutritious diet has a significant role in the development of a young person, and it is aware of its impact on behaviour and learning. This policy contributes to the school's wider commitment to promote staff and pupils physical and emotional wellbeing within the curriculum and beyond it.

Aims

The school aims to provide an environment in which pupils can make informed choices about their diet so that they are well-nourished and develop healthy eating habits. They will do this by:

- Ensuring food provision in the school acknowledges the ethical and medical requirements of staff and pupils e.g. religious, medical and allergenic needs.
- Monitoring healthy choices, including packed lunches and break time snacks.
- Ensuring that pupils have regular access to drinking water throughout the school day.
- Providing a pleasant environment where pupils can eat with their friends.
- Increasing their knowledge and awareness of food issues including what constitutes a healthy diet, hygienic food preparation and hygienic storage.
- Using a range of opportunities to promote healthy eating.
- Offering pupils, the opportunity of developing their understanding of health and nutrition through extra-curricular activities (participation in sport.)
- Ensuring consistent messages regarding healthy eating are reinforced throughout the school day.

School lunches

Provision of food in school

Catering is provided by ABM catering LTD. Their mission is to use nutritious ingredients to fuel young minds encouraging children to flourish. We work with families who are eligible for free school meals to encourage them to take this up. In Key Stage One, we also encourage children to take up the offer of universal free school meals for EYFS and Key Stage One. ABM ensure that school meals are creative, flexible and nutritious. They produce quality, fresh, locally sourced seasonal meals. All meals must be ordered 24 hours in advance via parent mail.

Menus

Menus work on a three-week rotation and change three times a year. Menus are displayed on our website and on Parent mail, as well as paper copies being available in the school reception. In addition to the daily hot and cold meal choices, pupils are encouraged to visit the self-serve salad cart from which they can help themselves to a variety of fresh salad items and bread.

Packed lunches

Pupils and parents/carers are responsible for providing a packed lunch container where food items can be stored securely and appropriately until the lunchtime period. Pupils are encouraged to bring packed lunches in a reusable container, rather than disposable plastic bags and bottles.

Pupil's packed lunches should provide balanced nutrition and match the appetite and tastes of the child. As children grow, they need plenty of starchy foods to fill them up and provide them with energy. Nutritious meals packed with fibre, protein, carbohydrates and vitamins will help children's growing bones and give them a healthy dose of brain power for the afternoon of lessons. These along with fruit and/or vegetables should form the main part of a child's lunch. We ask parents to be mindful of the nutritional information displayed on any packaging.

Packed lunches cannot include fizzy, sugary drinks (including Prime) or juices such as orange, smoothies or flavoured milk. Chewing gum is not permitted and we ask that snacks such as crisps, chocolate bars and biscuits are kept to a minimum and used as a small treat.

We do have children and adults with nut and shellfish allergies so ask that parents are mindful of this when packing lunches and snacks.

This is communicated in our new starter information pack and a reminder is sent at the beginning of each year. If a child does bring in nuts or shellfish, a member of SLT will call home to advise the family. An alternative food may be provided if necessary.

Monitoring packed lunches

To promote healthy eating, we will regularly monitor the content of packed lunches and involve pupils and staff. We will talk to parents and carers where necessary and offer advice and guidance on bringing healthy packed lunches. If the children consistently bring packed lunches that do not adhere to these guidelines a letter will be sent home with a copy of this policy.

Dining hall

At St. Mary's we try to make the dining environment as pleasant, calm and enjoyable as possible. Lunch time supervisors are on hand to encourage all children, both those having school dinners and those having packed lunches, to eat well; they are encouraged to 'try' all the foods chosen and praise is given for this.

Children will be encouraged to develop good eating skills and table manners at lunchtime and will be given plenty of time to eat. This will be achieved by:

- Entering and leaving the dining hall in an orderly way, to show respect for those who are eating.
- Sitting freely with their friends regardless of whether they are a packed lunch or a school dinner.
- Eating school dinners and packed lunches together.
- Promoting the correct use of cutlery.
- Being encouraged to try a variety of foods at lunchtimes and to develop a balanced diet.
- Saying please and thank you.
- Parents/carers advised if their child is not eating well.
- Use of lunchtime awards for behaviour and healthy eating.

Whilst the dining staff strive to keep the noise level down in the dining hall and to encourage the children to finish their meals in the time allocated, the children are encouraged to enjoy talking to their friends on the table while eating.

Water

During school mealtimes, children are asked to drink water, low sugar squash or milk. If children bring in a sugary drink, they will be asked to take it home and we talk to parents and carers about this.

Water bottles are kept in the classroom and children are encouraged to drink more after physical exercise and on hot days. Water is available on the tables at lunch times. Pupils are permitted to drink water during lessons (at appropriate moments) and encouraged to fill their water bottles as necessary.

Snacks

We encourage children to have a snack at morning breaktime to support concentration and as a way of eating 5 portions of fruit or vegetables per day. Only healthy snacks are allowed at breaktime. Fizzy drinks, sweets, crisps and chocolate biscuits are not allowed.

All KS1 and EYFS children have a mid-morning snack of fruit and vegetables as part of the 'School fruit and vegetable scheme.' Milk is provided for children under five and is available at cost for those over five.

To ensure consistency across the school. KS2 are encouraged to bring in fruit (dried or fresh) or vegetables for playtime.

Small Treats

As a school, we recognise the importance of attaining a balance between enjoyment and health in relation to food and understand that there are seasonal and special occasions when food contributes to a sense of celebration and sharing. During special events like curriculum launch activities, end of term parties, fundraising cake sales and PTFA events, foods other than fruit or vegetables may be encouraged, but staff will remind the children that this is an occasional treat and not everyday food. Please do not feel obliged to send in birthday sweets.

Before and after school provision

Pupils will have access to a healthy range of breakfast and after school foods. Water is available every day in these sessions.

Healthy eating in the curriculum

Education about Healthy Eating and the importance of an active, healthy lifestyle is taught explicitly across the whole school through the Science Design Technology, PSHE and PE aspects of the curriculum. All pupils have the opportunity to learn about where our food comes from and how we might choose to make ethical or environmental choices when growing or purchasing food. Pupils also develop skills and experience in preparing food safely as well as cooking a range of snacks and meals. Immersing children in activities with food from a young age not only broadens their willingness to try new foods but also helps provide a foundation of skills and knowledge from which they can make wise food choices for life.

Special dietary requirements

The school recognises that some pupils may require special diets that do not allow for the standards to be met exactly. In this case, parents and carers are urged to be responsible in ensuring that packed lunches are as healthy as possible. For these reasons all pupils are also not permitted to swap food items.

We are a nut and shellfish aware school. We ask that parents refrain from providing food products that may contain nuts or shellfish.

Children with allergies will have an individual medical plan and staff are trained regularly to recognise and manage allergic reactions.

The school aims to provide food in accordance with pupils' religious beliefs and cultural practises wherever possible. Options are always available on the menu for vegetarians and vegans.

The school's catering team are made aware of any food allergies or intolerances. They ensure that the school is doing the utmost to support children with these needs.

Partnership with parents

The school is aware that the primary care role in children's healthy eating education lies with parents and carers. However, the school has a very important role to play and should lead by example by educating the children on healthy eating through the curriculum and promoting healthy eating throughout the environment. We inform parents and carers about healthy eating through the school website and newsletters. Menus are also available from the school office as well as the website and the Parent mail app. The partnership of home and school is critical in shaping how children and young people behave, particularly where health is concerned. Parents can ask school for support on this matter and referrals can be made to outside agencies.