

New Town Primary School

Food at School Policy



Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to

- recognise the important part that a healthy diet plays in a child's wellbeing and their ability to learn and achieve effectively
- inform families of our expectations around providing a healthy diet for their children
- raise awareness about allergies to all our school community and ensure we provide a safe learning environment for all
- give assurance to those in our school community with severe allergies that we take the management of these seriously

We believe that the school, in partnership with parents and carers can make a major contribution to improving children's health by increasing their knowledge and understanding of food so helping them to make healthy food choices.

The policy applies to all staff, pupils, parents, governors and partner agencies working within school.

National Guidance

This policy has been written to reflect the School Food Standards that were revised in January 2015. It has also been written to reflect the 'Eatwell Plate Model of Healthy Eating' and supports key outcomes of the 'School Food Plan'. The policy supports Ofsted's commitments to assess pupils' knowledge of how to keep themselves healthy and our school's ethos of healthy eating.

Break time snacks

All Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 children are provided with daily fruit or vegetables as part of the Government scheme to eat at break time.

Any snacks that are brought from home should also be restricted to fruit or vegetables, unless recommended by a doctor on medical grounds (e.g. dietary need, diabetes etc.)

Milk

Our school provides a mandatory milk scheme for all pupils, in accordance with Government guidelines. The scheme provides a carton of semi skimmed milk every day for children under 5.

Water

Clean drinking water will be available for all pupils throughout the day and pupils will be encouraged to drink water at frequent intervals. All packed lunch pupils have access to water at lunch time meaning there is no need for an additional drink to be brought as part of a packed lunch. Pupils are encouraged to bring a water bottle every day that they can refill as necessary. Bottles go home at the end of every day to be washed and returned.

No drinks other than water should be brought into school by pupils.

School lunches including packed lunches

At New Town all school meals will be prepared following the government nutritional guidelines. As stated in the 'Public Health Report', published in 2014, by Public Health England and the NAHT "A whole school approach to healthy school meals, universally implemented for all pupils, has shown improvements in academic attainment at key stages 1 and 2, especially for pupils with lower prior attainment".

We will provide 'Universal Free School Meals' for children in Foundation Stage Two and Key Stage One and encourage parents to take up this offer. We are committed to providing food which is compliant with all national guidelines. The school will endeavour, wherever possible, to accommodate pupils' specialist dietary requirements, including allergies, intolerances, religious or cultural practices.

Staff will work with children to provide a clean, safe, attractive and appropriate dining area. We believe that lunchtimes should foster the caring, friendly ethos that governs everything that we do. Children are encouraged to be independent during the meal by using cutlery correctly and displaying good table manners, and clear up after themselves at the end by tidying their plates and cutlery away.

Some families prefer to provide a packed lunch and we are aiming for our packed lunches to be as healthy as they can be. NHS packed lunch guidance supports parents to make informed choices and has resources to ensure packed lunches are healthy (www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes)

Packed lunches provided for school trips as part of our 'Free School Meal' provision comply with 'National Food Standards'.

Any meals taken as part of on or off school site residentials will provide a balanced and healthy approach to meals and where possible we will look to use off site providers that comply with the 'National Food Standards'.

Food provision at any breakfast or after school clubs are compliant with the 'National School Food Standards'. Relevant staff have basic food hygiene and preparation certification.

Curriculum

Food, its production and preparation is an important part of the curriculum for all pupils and is taught across the curriculum through Science, PE and Design and Technology. We teach the importance of healthy eating and nutrition through our Life Skills curriculum.

Events and Celebrations

We want to give children the opportunity to celebrate their birthdays but to promote healthy eating choices we would ask that parents and carers do not send in birthday cakes, chocolates or sweets. If your child would like to gift their class something as it's their birthday please consider something such as a special reading book or some colouring books for use in any free time.

At special times of the year such as Christmas and at the end of the school year or term, classes may have events in which food is provided. We will provide a balance between treat foods and healthy choices at these times.

Staff will never use food as a reward or incentive for children to behave well.

Nut-allergy awareness

We aim to be as nut-free as we possibly can at school and staff will never knowingly allow nuts onto the school site. It is impossible to provide an absolute guarantee that no nuts will be brought onto the premises, but we will strive to minimise this as much as we can.

We ask that all members of the school community manage the day to day application of this policy in the following ways:

- Parents and carers should never send food to school that contains nuts in the ingredients list. This includes all types of nuts, peanut butter, nutella, cereal/chocolate bars which contain actual nuts and any other food containing nuts in the ingredients list.
- Staff will be alert to any obvious signs of nuts being brought in, but they will not be expected to inspect all food brought into school.
- Children that do bring in food that does contain nuts or nut products will have the food taken away from them and removed from the school site at the earliest opportunity. This will be done sensitively: we recognise that many children will not have packed their own lunchboxes. We will look to provide a suitable alternative, or request parents provide something if this leaves the child short of food. Parents will always be spoken to, to ensure they are clear about the expectations around nuts at school. Staff are expected to log this on our internal safeguarding system in order to alert senior leaders.
- Children will be asked NOT to share food.
- Children will be encouraged to wash hands before eating.
- Many staff are trained in understanding and dealing with severe allergic reactions and will use this training as the need arises.
- The school dinner providers will ensure all cooked food is nut-free.

We know an increasing amount of food items now carry phrases on the packaging such as 'may contain nuts/ traces of nuts', or 'has been produced in a factory which may contain nuts'. As long as the ingredients list does not specifically contain nuts, these foods are allowed in school.

Monitoring

We consult regularly with caterers, pupils, parents / carers and involve them in reviewing school meals. The results are used to evaluate the impact of the food policy and to further improve school meals.

Promotion

The policy will be promoted by:

- Staff being informed and provided with training opportunities.
- Children being informed and regularly reminded of the expectations via teachers and support staff.
- Publication of this policy on the school website.
- Issue of the policy in the new admission packs.

Date of approval by Local Governing Body: October 2024

Reviewed annually