Food & Snack Policy

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We are a rights respecting school. All our policies and procedures are written and reviewed to ensure that children's rights, as detailed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, are respected and promoted and this policy ensures:

Article 3 The best of the interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

Article 12 Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child's day-to-day home life.

Article 24 Every child has the right to the best possible health. Governments must provide good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food, and a clean environment and education on health and well-being so that children can stay healthy. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

For more information on the convention and the rights of each child visit: http://www.unicef.org.uk/.

Inclusion Policy Statement

At St Ann's Church of England Primary School, we are committed to overcoming all barriers to learning and raising standards in every aspect of school life.

We aim to promote inclusivity as an integral aspect of our school development, permeating all our policies to enhance the learning and participation of all our pupils.

We celebrate differences and recognise the importance of equality, ensuring that our practises reflect the principles outlined in the Equality Act 2010. We are dedicated to fostering an environment that respects and values the protected characteristics of all individuals, including race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and religion.

Our school acknowledges and values the varied life experiences and needs of our children. We strive to create a learning environment where the teaching, learning, achievements, attitudes, and well-being of each child matter.

We are committed to ensuring that our school practises align with our inclusive aims by utilising resources within the school and the local community. We actively respond to diversity and nurture an understanding of differences among our staff and pupils.

Our accessibility plan is designed to ensure that all pupils have equitable access to educational opportunities and facilities, promoting a culture of inclusion and participation.

The school strives to establish inclusive values by maintaining high expectations for all pupils, valuing every child, and fostering a shared philosophy among staff, governors, and parents alike. Together, we work to create a supportive and inclusive school community where every pupil can thrive.

1. Aims

At St Ann's Church of England Primary School, we recognise that a healthy, balanced diet contributes to children's physical health, emotional wellbeing, concentration, learning and readiness to achieve.

Our policy aims to:

- Promote the importance of a healthy lifestyle and balanced diet.
- Encourage children to develop healthy eating habits that will support them throughout their lives.
- Ensure that food and drink provided or consumed in school promote the health and wellbeing of pupils, staff and visitors.
- Provide consistent, age-appropriate nutrition education across the curriculum, enabling pupils to make informed choices about food and health.
- Ensure that school meals, snacks and drinks meet the relevant statutory requirements and current nutritional guidance.
- Work in partnership with families and the wider school community to promote healthy eating.
- Respect pupils' individual dietary, medical, cultural and religious needs.
- Provide a positive, inclusive and safe environment in which pupils can enjoy food and develop independence.

2. Policy background and statutory framework

This policy reflects the Department for Education's School Food Standards, the Eatwell Guide, relevant food safety and allergy guidance, and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework and nutrition guidance.

The School Food Standards are a statutory requirement for state-funded schools in England. They apply to school lunches and to food and drink provided to pupils at other times during the school day, including breakfast and after-school provision, subject to the applicable requirements and exemptions.

The school prepares its own meals on site and is responsible for ensuring that the food and drink it provides meets the relevant standards.

The policy has been developed with regard to the needs of pupils and the school community. It is available to staff, parents, carers and other interested parties through the school office and school website.

The policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if required by changes to legislation, government guidance or school practice.

The school will monitor changes to the School Food Standards and review its menus and arrangements as necessary.

3. What is healthy eating?

A healthy, balanced diet provides the energy and nutrients needed for growth, development, learning and general wellbeing.

The Eatwell Guide provides a framework for understanding a balanced diet. It encourages a varied diet containing:

- Plenty of fruit and vegetables.
- Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates, with wholegrain varieties where appropriate.
- Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other sources of protein.
- Dairy foods and suitable alternatives.
- Small amounts of foods high in fat, salt and sugar.

Children's nutritional needs vary according to their age, development, activity levels and individual circumstances. We recognise that food choices are also influenced by cultural, religious, medical and family circumstances.

Our approach is to promote balance, variety and enjoyment rather than labelling individual foods or pupils' eating habits negatively.

4. School food provision

4.1 School meals

St Ann's prepares school meals on site. Menus are planned to provide pupils with varied, appealing and nutritious meals that meet the School Food Standards and take account of the needs of primary-aged children.

Menus will:

- Provide a suitable balance of starchy carbohydrates, protein, vegetables or salad, and other appropriate food groups.
- Include a variety of fruit and vegetables across the week.
- Offer a range of protein sources, including appropriate meat-free choices.
- Include appropriate dairy foods or alternatives.
- Use healthier cooking methods where practicable.
- Limit foods and drinks high in fat, saturated fat, salt and free sugars in accordance with the applicable standards.
- Provide appropriate portion sizes for pupils' ages.
- Offer suitable choices for pupils with identified dietary requirements.
- Encourage children to try a range of foods and develop positive attitudes towards healthy eating.

Menus and recipes will be reviewed regularly to ensure that the school continues to meet the applicable standards. The school will retain appropriate evidence of its compliance.

Information about school meal charges, where applicable, is available from the school office.

4.2 Free school meals

All pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to universal infant free school meals.

Eligible pupils in other year groups may also receive free school meals in accordance with current government guidance. Parents and carers who would like further information about eligibility or applications should contact the school office.

The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils can access the food provision to which they are entitled.

4.3 Early Years and Key Stage 1 provision

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are offered a daily piece of fruit or vegetable through the school's provision.

Milk is also provided in accordance with the school's arrangements and applicable requirements.

Food and drink offered to children in the EYFS will be healthy, balanced and nutritious. The school will have regard to the current EYFS nutrition guidance when planning provision for children aged five and under.

4.4 Before- and after-school provision

The school's before- and after-school club, BASE, follows this policy.

Food and drink provided through BASE will be appropriate for children's ages and nutritional needs and will comply with applicable food standards. Snacks will include suitable options such as fruit, vegetables, toast and other appropriate foods.

Menus and snack provision will be reviewed to ensure that they support the school's approach to healthy eating and safe food preparation.

5. Special diets, food allergies and intolerances

The school recognises its responsibility to protect pupils with food allergies, intolerances and other medically required dietary needs.

Parents and carers must inform the school of any relevant allergies, intolerances, medical dietary requirements or changes to a child's needs. This information must be provided on admission and updated whenever necessary.

The school will:

- Record relevant information and share it with staff who need to know.
- Ensure that kitchen staff are informed of pupils' identified dietary needs.
- Work with parents and carers to agree appropriate arrangements.
- Make reasonable adjustments to support pupils' medical, cultural and religious dietary requirements.
- Follow individual healthcare plans and allergy management arrangements where required.
- Ensure that appropriate procedures are in place for recognising and responding to allergic reactions.
- Provide relevant staff training and maintain appropriate emergency arrangements.

The school is **nut-aware**. Because of the serious risks associated with nut allergies, nut-based products, including products such as Nutella, must not be brought into school. Families must follow any additional instructions issued by the school to protect pupils with specific allergies.

Although these measures reduce risk, the school cannot guarantee that the environment is entirely free from all traces of allergens.

Parents and carers will be informed in advance of planned food-related activities where appropriate. Dietary requirements will also be gathered and considered when planning school trips and residential visits.

6. Food hygiene and safety

The school will follow applicable food hygiene legislation and safe food handling procedures when storing, preparing and serving food.

Staff involved in food preparation will receive appropriate training for their responsibilities. Food preparation and serving areas, equipment and utensils will be maintained and cleaned appropriately.

The school will ensure that:

- Food is stored at appropriate temperatures and handled safely.
- Allergens are identified and managed appropriately.
- Cross-contamination risks are considered and controlled.
- Food is prepared and served in a hygienic environment.
- Relevant food safety procedures and records are maintained.
- Children wash their hands before handling or eating food.
- Children are encouraged to follow good hygiene practices throughout the school day.

7. Choking and gagging prevention

The school takes a proactive approach to reducing the risk of choking and supporting safe mealtimes. This is particularly important for younger children and pupils whose developmental or medical needs may affect eating and swallowing.

Staff will follow current food safety advice and age-appropriate preparation guidance.

Measures will include:

- Cutting small, round foods, such as grapes and cherry tomatoes, lengthways and into quarters where appropriate.
- Cutting hard fruit and vegetables into suitable shapes and sizes, and softening them when necessary.
- Removing stones, pips and bones where appropriate.
- Cutting sausages and similar foods into safe shapes and sizes, removing skins where necessary and considering healthier alternatives.
- Preparing bread and other foods in ways that reduce the risk of choking for younger children.
- Ensuring that food is appropriate to the child's age, developmental stage and individual needs.

- Encouraging children to sit down while eating and to eat at an appropriate pace.
- Reminding children not to run, play or talk with food in their mouths.
- Providing suitable supervision during meals and snacks.

Rolling snack is not permitted in the Early Years setting.

Staff will receive appropriate training in responding to choking incidents. Any pupil with identified swallowing difficulties or an increased risk of choking will be supported through appropriate risk assessments and, where necessary, an individual healthcare plan.

Parents and carers are asked to prepare packed lunches and snacks with the same safety considerations in mind.

These measures will be reviewed in line with current guidance and the needs of individual pupils.

8. Packed lunches

Parents and carers are encouraged to provide balanced packed lunches that support their child's health, energy levels and learning.

A balanced packed lunch might include:

- Wholemeal bread, wraps, pitta bread, pasta or another starchy food.
- A source of protein, such as chicken, egg, cheese, beans or tuna.
- Vegetables or salad.
- Fresh fruit.
- Yoghurt or another suitable dairy food.
- Water as the main drink.

Other suitable foods may be included to provide variety and meet individual dietary needs.

Parents and carers are encouraged to:

- Include a variety of foods across the week.
- Choose wholegrain options where appropriate.
- Limit confectionery, crisps and foods high in salt, saturated fat and free sugars.
- Avoid sugary drinks.
- Consider appropriate portion sizes and the age of their child.
- Follow the school's nut-aware requirements.
- Prepare foods in a way that reduces choking risks.

Packed lunches are stored on designated trolleys. As refrigerated storage is not available for pupils' packed lunches, parents and carers should use insulated lunch bags and suitable ice packs where necessary to keep perishable foods at a safe temperature.

The school will provide a suitable, supervised environment for pupils to eat their packed lunches.

9. Snacks

To promote healthy eating, pupils may bring only **fruit, vegetables or toast** for consumption during morning or afternoon breaktimes.

The school provides a toast option to purchase, in accordance with current school arrangements.

Snacks brought from home must comply with the school's nut-aware requirements and should be prepared safely for the child's age and needs.

Staff will reinforce positive messages about healthy snacks through everyday practice and curriculum learning.

10. Drinks and hydration

Access to drinking water is essential for children's health, concentration and wellbeing.

Pupils are encouraged to bring a clearly labelled, reusable water bottle to school each day. Water bottles should be taken home daily, washed and refilled.

Children may access their water bottles during the school day in accordance with classroom routines. Free drinking water is also available from the school's water fountain.

Water is the preferred drink throughout the school day. Sugary drinks are discouraged, and parents and carers are encouraged to choose water for packed lunches.

Any additional drinks provided by the school will be appropriate to pupils' ages and dietary needs and will comply with applicable standards.

11. The dining environment and positive mealtimes

We aim to make eating at school a pleasant, sociable and positive experience.

School meals and packed lunches are eaten in the school hall. Staff supervise pupils and promote good manners, independence and consideration for others.

Children are encouraged to:

- Sit safely while eating.
- Wash their hands before meals.
- Use appropriate table manners.
- Take sufficient time to eat.
- Try unfamiliar foods when they feel comfortable doing so.
- Develop independence in managing their meals.
- Respect the choices and dietary needs of others.
- Clear away their belongings and leave the dining area tidy.

Staff will encourage pupils to eat an appropriate amount of their meal without using pressure, shame or punishment. Children's appetites vary, and staff will be sensitive to individual needs.

Where staff have an ongoing concern about a child's eating, appetite or ability to access meals, they will communicate this to the appropriate member of staff and, where necessary, discuss the concern with parents or carers.

In keeping with our Christian ethos, pupils have the opportunity to say grace collectively before eating. This is approached respectfully and inclusively.

12. Food brought into school for celebrations and events

We recognise that food can be an important part of celebrations, cultural traditions, religious occasions and community events.

Parents and carers are discouraged from bringing chocolates, sweets or cakes into school to celebrate individual birthdays. Alternative ways of celebrating, such as a card or class recognition, are encouraged.

Where food is brought into school for a planned event, staff will consider allergies, dietary requirements, food hygiene and the age of the children involved.

The school may make appropriate arrangements for special occasions, including religious or cultural celebrations, Christmas parties and fundraising activities, in accordance with applicable statutory exemptions and school procedures.

The school's nut-aware requirements and allergy management arrangements continue to apply.

13. School trips and residential visits

The school promotes healthy eating and safe food practices during educational visits.

Food and drink provided by the school during the school day will meet applicable requirements, including those relating to school trips.

The school will:

- Gather information about pupils' dietary requirements and allergies.
- Plan suitable food and drink provision.
- Ensure that pupils have access to drinking water.
- Consider safe storage and preparation of packed lunches.
- Provide appropriate supervision during meals and snacks.
- Follow individual healthcare plans and relevant risk assessments.

Where food is provided by an external residential accommodation provider, the school will gather relevant information about the arrangements and communicate pupils' dietary needs in advance. Applicable statutory requirements and exemptions will be considered.

Parents and carers will be informed of any food pupils are required to bring from home.

14. Rewards and behaviour

Food will not routinely be used as a reward for achievement, effort or behaviour.

Staff will use praise, encouragement, responsibilities, recognition and other appropriate non-food rewards to celebrate pupils' successes.

This approach supports positive relationships with food and avoids presenting particular foods as rewards or treats for good behaviour.

Please refer to the school's Relationships and Behaviour Policy for further information.

15. Curriculum and nutrition education

Healthy eating and healthy lifestyles are taught through relevant areas of the curriculum, including Science, PSHE, PE and Design and Technology.

Pupils will have opportunities to learn about:

- The importance of a varied and balanced diet.
- The role of different food groups in growth, energy and health.
- The importance of hydration and physical activity.
- Food hygiene and safe food preparation.
- Where food comes from and how it is produced.
- Making informed food choices.
- The relationship between physical health and emotional wellbeing.

Learning will be age-appropriate and will help pupils develop practical knowledge and skills that they can apply in everyday life.

Teachers may use visitors, workshops and other resources to enrich learning. These activities will complement, rather than replace, planned teaching.

Healthy eating messages will be reinforced through the wider life of the school, including mealtimes, school displays, events and communication with families.

16. Roles and responsibilities

The School Committee is responsible for overseeing the school's approach to food provision and ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place to meet statutory requirements.

The Headteacher and senior leaders are responsible for implementing this policy, overseeing food provision and ensuring that staff understand their responsibilities.

Staff involved in food preparation and service are responsible for following food safety procedures, providing appropriate food and supporting pupils' dietary needs.

Teachers and other staff are responsible for promoting healthy eating, supervising pupils appropriately and following relevant allergy, medical and choking prevention procedures.

Parents and carers are asked to support the policy by providing suitable packed lunches and snacks, sharing accurate information about dietary needs and following the school's food safety requirements.

Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy habits, make informed choices, follow safe eating practices and respect the needs of others.

17. Monitoring and review

The school will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this policy through:

- Regular review of menus and food provision against the applicable School Food Standards.
- Consideration of food safety, allergy management and dietary arrangements.
- Feedback from pupils, parents, carers and staff where appropriate.
- Review of incidents and concerns relating to food safety or mealtimes.
- Monitoring of curriculum provision and healthy eating messages.
- Review of relevant statutory guidance and changes to legislation.

The policy will be reviewed every three years, or earlier if required. The school will also review its arrangements when updated School Food Standards come into force.