



Thameside Primary School: Food Policy

Approved by Governors: April 2023

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Policy reviewed by:	Lydia D'Arcy (PSCHE LEAD)
Key Changes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Removed ready to learn breakfast club - Reception children are encouraged to be independent from the beginning of the year – page 6 - Inclusive food for staff lunches – page 9 - Inclusion of section on allergens



Introduction, including rationale.

At Thameside Primary School, we recognise the important part that a healthy diet plays in a child's wellbeing, and their ability to learn and achieve effectively. 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 and helping them to make healthy food choices.

Thameside Primary School is a Rights Respecting School. School policies will respect the UN Convention on the rights of the child. This Whole School Food policy links to

Article 24: Children have the right to good quality health care, safe drinking water, nutritious food and a clean and safe environment so they will stay healthy.

This policy was written initially in 2010 to ensure that national and local guidelines for healthier eating in schools are followed. It was reviewed in 2016 to reflect the School Food Standards and then again in 2019.

For the January 2020 policy review, all parents were given the opportunity to share their views on packed lunches, birthday food and restrictions on food in school. There were responses from 42 parents and carers. Pupils were also consulted via the school council.

Aim

The main aims of our school food policy are:

1. To provide a range of healthy food choices throughout the school day and in line with the mandatory School Food Standards.
2. To promote knowledge and a positive attitude towards healthy food choices to support the health and wellbeing of pupils, staff and visitors to our school.

Application

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

This policy covers the areas of:

- Break time snacks, including those brought from home
- Milk
- Water
- School dinners
- Free school meal entitlement
- Packed lunches
- Dining environment
- Teaching
- Breakfast club and aftercare
- Specific dietary requirements
- Rainbow room food provision
- Birthdays
- Christmas parties
- Annual reviews
- Staff food



Break time snacks

All Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 pupils have access daily to a free piece of fruit or vegetable. This should be eaten during the morning at some point. Pupils should be encouraged to eat the fruit, or at least to try it if it is new. As trialled in Foundation Stage, staff are encouraged to incorporate the practice of mindful eating into this to complement skills learnt on Inside Out days and to instil positive eating habits from a young age.

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

Milk

Children under the age of 5 are provided with free semi-skimmed milk. From the term of their fifth birthday onwards this ceases.

Water provision

Filtered water is provided for all staff, pupils and visitors to the school. Water machines are located in the library, activity area, conference room, Donald Block and Wallace Block, as well as the staffroom.

Reusable water bottles are available for sale at the school office at a cost of £1.50. Children may provide their own water bottle, but these should have a sports cap to prevent spillage. Pupils should fill them up with fresh water at the beginning of each day and empty them before going home. Pupils are able to refill the bottles on request, at a suitable break in the lesson or classroom activity. All water bottles must be named. Unnamed bottles left in school at the end of each term will be thrown away.

It is recommended that no drinks other than water should be brought into school by pupils, unless recommended by a doctor for medical needs. This is due to the high incidence of tooth decay in children in Reading.

Water bottles are kept in the classroom for easy access. Children are encouraged not to take drinks during teaching inputs to minimise disruption of lessons but are free to have drinks at all other times. Staff should ensure that pupils have access to water after physical activity. Extra water should be taken on during hot weather.

All pupils must have a drink at lunchtime. Children having school dinners will be given a beaker of water, and this can be provided to children who do not have a drink in their packed lunch.

School dinners

Caterlink provide our school meals through the Reading Borough Council contract. Menus should be displayed on the parent's notice boards outside the school. They are also displayed via digital signage in the school office and are on the school website. Menus are also available on request from the school office. For further information, please refer to the Caterlink website.



Free school meal entitlement

Universal Free School Meals:

Children in Reception and Key Stage 1 are eligible for Universal Free School Meals which are free to parents and provided to all children regardless of parental income and all parents are encouraged to take up this entitlement.

Free School Meals:

If parents are in receipt of income support or universal free credit, their child may be eligible for Free School Meals which can generate an additional pupil premium allowance for the school. Being eligible for FSM means that children are also entitled to receive free school meals across KS2 and the school can also support parents/carers with payments for trips, for example. Free School Meals do require parents on low income to actively complete paperwork to register their entitlement and help can be given with the paperwork if required. Please contact the admin team if you have questions regarding eligibility for Free School Meals.

Packed lunches

Some families prefer to provide a packed lunch and we are aiming for our packed lunches to be as healthy as they can be. If children have a packed lunch, we would recommend basing it on the Eatwell Guide (Appendix 1).

A balanced packed lunch should contain:

- Starchy foods - these are bread, rice, potatoes and pasta, and others.
- Protein foods - these are meat, fish, eggs, beans and others.
- A dairy item - this could be cheese or yoghurt.
- Vegetables or salad, and a portion of fruit.

For suggestions on how to make healthier packed lunches, please refer to the following:

<https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes>

The following foods must not be included in lunchboxes:

- Nuts and peanuts - there are a number of children in school for whom contact with nuts and peanuts has serious implications and require prompt medical treatment.
- Sweets – these contain high levels of fat and sugar and contribute to dental problems.
- 'Fizzy' drinks or energy drinks.

Parents will be advised of this during induction meetings. If a pupil is found to have these items in their lunchbox, they will be removed and returned to parents/carers at the end of the school day. If a pupil does



not appear to have enough in their lunchbox, they should make their class teacher aware who will, if required, inform the Headteacher.

The impact of single-use plastic on the environment is of significant concern to many pupils and we would encourage parents to limit the use of products containing it. As well as reducing the impact of plastic on the environment, portioning food into reusable containers can be more cost effective. For example, consider buying a large packet of raisins or other dried fruit rather than individual packets. Sandwiches can be packaged into a Tupperware container rather than spending money on cling film or other single use alternatives.

Lunchboxes are kept inside for health and safety reasons.

If parents/guardians have concerns about the amount their child(ren) are eating at lunchtimes, they should speak to their child's class teacher who will do their best to suggest a workable solution.

Dining environment

Research shows that pupils' surroundings have an impact on their sense of wellbeing. Staff will work with children to provide a clean, safe and appropriate dining area. We believe that lunchtimes should foster the caring, friendly ethos that governs everything that we do. Queuing should be kept to a minimum and supervised. To do this, children will remain on the playground until their class is called.

The dining room should be a pleasant environment for the children to eat in, with noise levels kept to a reasonable limit. Children should be encouraged to find their own space once they have collected their meal and should sit in mixed ages. The older children can act as role models for the younger children. Children should be encouraged to talk to those children around them on the same table.

At the beginning of the school year, Year 6 children will act as 'buddies' to the new Foundation Stage children. They should collect them from their classroom, take them to the hall and get them used to the dining routine. They should then take them out to play. Foundation Stage staff will support children to carry their own tray to their table.

Reception children will remain in the hall until at least 12:15pm to discourage rushing through their meal in order to go out to play. It is hoped that by encouraging children to spend sufficient time eating whilst in Reception, good habits will be formed which will continue in later years. This will help to reduce food waste and prevent poor concentration in afternoon lessons due to hunger.

Children are encouraged to be independent during the meal and to clear up after themselves at the end by tidying their plates and cutlery away. Children should be taught and reminded to use table manners. Often they will need to be shown how to hold and use cutlery. Reminders and encouragement should be given so that this use becomes habitual.

When children begin to finish, they should be sent out to play with lunchtime support staff waiting to receive them. Children should not be kept waiting in the hall. Lunchtime support staff should use the rotas provided. Lunchtime support staff will receive ongoing training.

Lunchtime staff will monitor who has collected their school dinner. If any children have not had their lunch, this will be raised with their teacher who will clarify if the child is in school that day. If they are in school but have not eaten, they will be located and taken to the hall or other suitable space, alongside a friend of their choosing, to have their lunch.



Some children, particularly those with sensory needs, can find it difficult to eat in the hall or on the playground. For this reason, some pupils are invited to attend positive play, mini positive play or reflection. This provides them with an alternative place to eat their lunch where there is less noise and fewer children, enabling them to feel safe and calm. This can also be a safe place for children who have a difficult relationship with food and eating, for many different reasons, including medical.

Teaching

Food - including healthy food, nutrients, and food technology - are taught as part of the Thameside Primary School curriculum. This may be taught in PSCHE, Science, Design and Technology, and sometimes during PE. Hygiene and the safe handling of food are taught explicitly during these lessons.

Healthy eating is also taught as part of the enhanced curriculum. This may be through enrichment activities. Caterlink also provide workshops and cookery lessons involving healthy eating.

Please see the relevant subject schemes for further information about the curriculum.

Breakfast club and aftercare

Food provision at our breakfast club and aftercare is compliant with the National School Food Standards. Relevant staff hold basic food hygiene and preparation certification.

Breakfast is an important meal and should make up a quarter of a child's energy requirements. It should provide some essential vitamins and minerals. Children at breakfast club will be able to choose from a selection of cereals and toast, alongside other healthy options. Fruit juice, semi-skimmed milk and water will be available at all times.

Children at aftercare will be provided with a healthy snack when they first arrive. Later in the evening, they will have a choice from a hot or cold buffet. This will always include a selection of fruit and vegetables alongside other nutritional elements, for example pasta.

All food provided at breakfast club and aftercare will be chosen with regard to their nutritional content, with low salt and sugar content. Labels on food products provided will be mainly 'green' with minimal 'amber' labels. Please visit <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/how-to-read-food-labels/> for more information about the traffic light food labelling system.

Specific dietary requirements

Some pupils will require a specific diet which may not follow aspects of the food policy. These will be discussed on a 1:1 basis with parents/carers and will take account of medical advice.

Allergens (Source: Thameside Medical Conditions Policy)

Around 2-5% of children in the UK live with a food allergy, and most school classrooms will have at least one allergic pupil. These young people are at risk of anaphylaxis, a potentially life-threatening reaction which



requires an immediate emergency response. 20% of serious allergic reactions to food happen whilst a child is at school, and these can happen in someone with no prior history of food allergy. It is essential that staff recognise the signs of an allergic reaction, and are able to manage it safely and effectively.

<p>Airway:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Swollen tongue• Difficulty swallowing/speaking• Throat tightness• Change in voice (hoarse or croaky sounds) <p>Breathing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficult or noisy breathing• Chest tightness• Persistent cough• Wheeze (whistling noise due to a narrowed airway) <p>Circulation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feeling dizzy or faint• Collapse• Babies and young children may suddenly become floppy and pale• Loss of consciousness (unresponsive)	<p>Action to be taken</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Position is important –lie the person flat with legs raised (or sit them up if having breathing problems)• Give adrenaline – WITHOUT DELAY – if an AAI is available• Bring the AAI to the person having anaphylaxis, and not the other way round. Avoid standing or moving someone having anaphylaxis• Call an ambulance (999) and tell the operator it is anaphylaxis• Stay with the person until medical help arrives• If symptoms do not improve within five minutes of a first dose of adrenaline, give a second dose using another AAI• A person who has a serious allergic reaction and/ or is given adrenaline should always be taken to hospital for further observation and treatment• Sometimes anaphylaxis symptoms can recur after the first episode has been treated. This is called a biphasic reaction.
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Source: <https://www.allergyuk.org/>

This school uses Healthcare Plans and / or Alert Notices to inform the appropriate staff (including supply teachers and support staff) of pupils in their care who may need emergency help. For children with severe enough allergies to require an adrenaline auto injector, the school will follow the guidance from the Department of Health on their use in school:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/645476/Adrenaline_auto_injectors_in_schools.pdf

At the start of the school year when communication is sent out about Healthcare Plans (including medical alerts, allergy alerts and purple medication forms).

Rainbow Room food provision

Snacks on offer in the Rainbow Room may vary to those set out in this policy. It will always include fruit but this will be alongside other nutritious, low calorie options. This is to encourage and enhance communication skills, and to provide a sensory diet. Options available will depend on advice given by an Occupational Therapist and may require children to eat at various points through the day.



Birthdays

Pupils often like to bring in small treats to share with their friends on their birthday. This is often a lollipop or small bag of sweets.

Parents were last consulted on this aspect of food in schools in December 2019. There were more than 40 responses. Here are some examples of the responses:

- “There are too many children so kids are having sweets too often”
- “I’d prefer it not to be food. Due to child allergies he often misses out or I have to be ready to swap it.”
- “I think there’s room for alternatives like balloons or even just singing to the pupil before they go home - do parents need to bring sweets in?!”
- “I think it’s a nice idea, they want to celebrate their birthday with their peers.”
- “It is so sporadic that it does NOT matter.”

Pupils were also consulted on this (via the school council). They expressed concerns about many children being left out due to dietary restrictions (e.g. gelatine) and felt that it was unfair at times. They agreed that they would like to have some sort of celebration of their birthday but that it did not have to be food.

As a result, it has been decided that we will **not** permit the sharing of food as a birthday treat. A suggested alternative to this is to donate a book for the class instead. However, this is optional.

If a child brings food into school to share with their peers on their birthday, this will be looked after by the teacher and returned to the child’s parents at the end of the day.

Christmas

Christmas parties are usually held during the last week of the autumn term. Parents may be asked to donate party food. When drawing up suggestions of food lists, staff should be aware of asking for a balance of sandwiches, cheese, fruit and vegetarian options alongside biscuits and cakes. Fruit squash should be requested for drinks. Fizzy drinks and energy drinks will not be accepted.

Gifts of confectionary between teachers and pupils at end of term holidays - such as Christmas, Easter and the end of the academic year - are permitted.

Annual reviews

Annual reviews are held at school for children with SEND who have an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP). At annual reviews, pupils are allowed to choose what food and drinks they would like to be provided. As this is deemed to be a special occasion, they are not restricted to what is contained in this policy.

Staff food

Staff who eat with the children are entitled to a duty meal. This is another opportunity for social skills and table manners to be taught.

Any staff working directly with children with a severe allergy e.g. nuts or Coeliac disease should not eat the child’s specific allergen(s) in the classroom and should eat their lunch in the staffroom or off site.

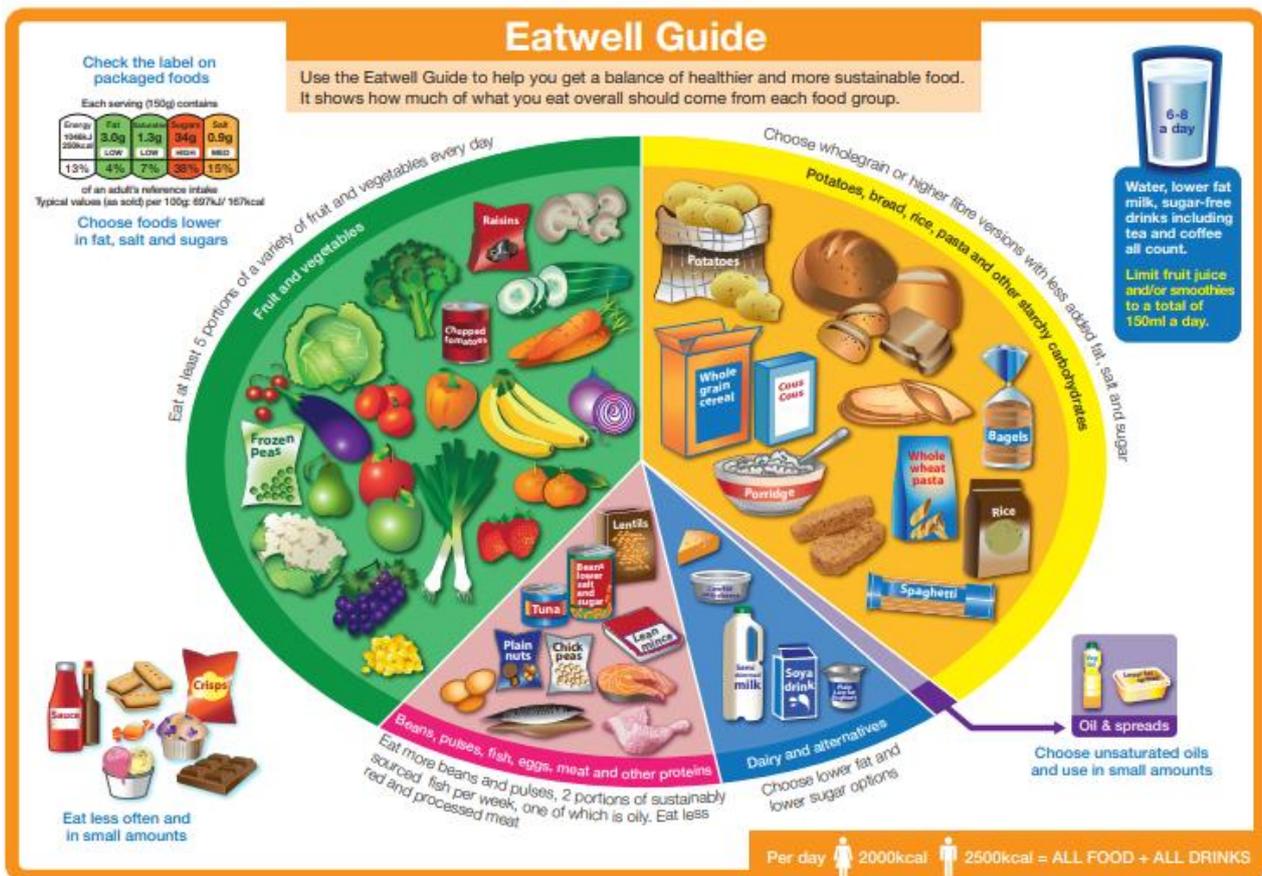
Staff should alert a member of SLT if they have eaten or come into contact with the allergen before directly working with the child if the child's risk assessment requires this level of caution.

Tea, coffee and fresh water is available to drink in the staffroom and conference room.

Staff lunches are sometimes held with staff invited to donate a dish. Staff should ensure that a balance of food is available, taking account of special dietary requirements. If using outside catering companies for provision, then the school should seek to ensure a balance of food, including vegetarian food and halal food, is available.

L D'Arcy, April 2023

Appendix 1 – The Eatwell Guide:



Source: Public Health England in association with the Welsh government, Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland

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