Scholes (Elmet) Primary
St James' CE Primary
Moortown Primary

Policy: Food in school

Date: reviewed regularly; see date in document label for most recent update

Introduction

We want Sphere Federation schools is to be happy and healthy places to learn (St James' CE Primary: happy and healthy place to achieve and believe). The main aim of the policy is to ensure clear, consistent messages and practices about food and health.

The policy has been developed through a process of consultation and review involving senior leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers. Closely related to the policy is the Packed Lunch Guidance and our DT: Food and Nutrition Curriculum Guide.

Our school actively supports healthy eating and drinking, ensuring that aspects of food and nutrition in school promote health and wellbeing of pupils, staff and visitors. A good diet is important for health. A healthy and varied diet can help maintain a healthy body weight, enhance general wellbeing and reduce health issues. It can also support concentration, behaviour and attainment.

Key points

Special occasions, birthdays and rewards

Following consultation, treats for birthdays are not allowed. There are a number of reasons for this which include:

- to avoid parents/carers feeling under pressure
- to ensure teaching time isn't wasted
- to avoid problems with allergies
- to avoid litter

"I agree with not bringing treats into school on your birthday. These are better kept for out of school."
Junior Leadership Team member, Spring 1 2024)

In the vast majority of situations, food is not used as a reward (see Relationships and Behaviour Management Policy). Where it is, it would be in exceptional circumstances to a group or class (and never to a single individual) or for very specific celebratory purposes. Such exceptions require the approval of the Head of School.

"If food was given as a reward, then children who made good choices all of the time wouldn't be healthy - we want everyone to be 'happy and healthy'."
Junior Leadership Team member, Spring 1 2024)

Staff providing food, drink and ingredients

Where staff provide food, drink or ingredients (eg end-of-term party, cooking sessions), they follow specific points:

- pupils with allergies are checked and offered alternatives wherever reasonably possible
- gelatine (eg jelly sweets) must be avoided as it is likely to contain animal fats and therefore should not be eaten by some individuals or groups on the grounds of belief or religion
- sweet snacks (containing sugar or artificial sweeteners) should be minimised – staff check with the Head of School
- butter should be chosen over margarine and low fat spreads (this is because of health concerns around hydrogenated oils)

EYFS

There is specific guidance around food for children in Early Years to ensure safe eating environments for young children:

- children must always be within sight and hearing of a member of staff whilst eating
- whilst children are eating, there is always be a member of staff in the room with a valid paediatric first aid certificate
- young children are seated safely in an appropriately sized low chair while eating
- where necessary, staff must prepare food in a way to reduce the risks of choking (referring to Food Standards Agency guidance), for example, by cutting small fruits (such as grapes) lengthways and then halve again (quarters).

Typically, we follow some top tips around language and food:

Avoid:	Try:
offering rewards or incentives to children for finishing everything on their plate (e.g. stickers or dessert)	praise children for trying new foods and for listening to their bodies
commenting on how much a child is eating	allow children to respond to their own appetite and encourage them to recognise when they are hungry or full
labelling foods as healthy/unhealthy	talk positively about the variety of foods children eat and what different foods can provide e.g. potatoes contain carbohydrates which provide energy

Current provision

Breaks

Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 children are provided with a free portion of fruit or vegetable as part of the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme. Key Stage 2 children may bring in fruit or vegetables as a snack at break.

Drinks

All pupils are taught about the importance of drinking water and are actively encouraged to do so throughout the day. All children have access to clean drinking water. All children should bring in their water bottles to school and are accessible during the day. The bottles may be refilled from taps or water coolers. For health and safety reasons, children are expected to take home and wash water bottles on a regular basis, replacing bottles where necessary. Water is provided at lunchtime for children having school or packed lunches.
This policy is based on water because it is the most freely available, healthiest, and doesn't cause excessive problems if spilt.
Parents/carers should consult the Head of School if there are individual, specific or additional needs.
All children can buy a daily small carton of milk.

School meals

Menus for school meals comply with the School Food Standards, have regard to the Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance, and promote the concept of a balanced and nutritious diet. Our current school meals provider is Catering Leeds, the local authority's catering agency. Their meals are inclusive and take individual dietary needs into consideration. All children are encouraged to make healthy choices when selecting their food for lunch and to try different foods. Pupils choose their main course at the start of the day to ensure they get their first choice. Children are offered two portions of vegetables and/or salad and are encouraged to eat at least one of these portions.

To increase uptake of school lunches and in particular free school meals, school lunches are promoted eg display of weekly menus, school website, taster sessions and regular themed menus.

Staff monitor school lunches on an informal basis eg they might choose to eat school dinner with children.

There is a procedure to ensure that the menu served correlates with the planned menu. When this does not occur, a clear reason is given from the catering staff.

School dinners can be combined with packed lunches over the week.

The dining environment

In line with our Positive Relationships Policy, pupils are rewarded in our dining halls for behaviour, manners and making healthy choices eg with lunchtime certificates ('Lunchtime Legends'), choice chips (St James' CE Primary: shells).

Free school meals

A number of children are entitled to free school meals. There is no stigmatisation of these children. Parents/carers are encouraged to check eligibility for free school meals through reminders, newsletters, posters and school website news posts.

Universal infant free school meals
Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are offered a free school meal.

Packed lunches
We have packed lunch guidance to inform parents, carers and children about what choices should be made for a healthy packed lunch, based on the Eatwell Guide. At least one piece of fruit or vegetable and water is encouraged. Salty or sugary snacks and sweetened drinks should not form the bulk of the packed lunch. We don't allow fizzy drinks, chocolate bars or sweets. Waste and uneaten items are taken home in packed lunch boxes. Staff monitor packed lunches to encourage guidance is followed.

When preparing food for younger children, we encourage parents and carers to follow Food Standards Agency guidance, which feature on our websites. This is to ensure that food is prepared in a way that reduces the risk of choking. For example, cut small fruits (eg grapes) lengthways and then halve again into quarters.

Nut allergies
Nuts can be a key part of a healthy diet for many people. However, we recognise that for a small number of individuals, there is a risk of allergic reaction and for some, the reaction can be very serious. If we assess a high risk for any individual in school, we will take all reasonable and appropriate precautions. This includes, in rare circumstances, requests for all parents and staff to avoid bringing nuts into school, with regular reminders.

Similar principles apply to other allergies – see our Allergy Safety Policy.

"My brother has a bad allergy so I think it is important that we don't bring food in from home."
Junior Leadership Team member, Spring 1 2024)

Pupil involvement
Pupils have the opportunity to give their views on school meals and the lunchtime experience through pupil questionnaires, Junior Leader meetings, informal questioning and pupil interviews.

Wraparound care: Breakfast club

Scholes (Elmet) Primary	Moortown Primary	St James' CE Primary
• cereal • toast • pancakes • water	• wraparound is 8.00am-8.30am; no food provided.	• cereal • toast • bagels • fruit • water, milk

Wraparound care: After-school

Scholes (Elmet) Primary	Moortown Primary	St James' CE Primary
• bread, wrap, pitta • crackers • chicken/ham • cheese • fruit and vegetables • water	• rice cakes • crackers • cheese • fruit and vegetables • water, milk, apple juice • yoghurt • biscuits	• wrap • rice cakes • crackers • chicken/ham • cheese • hummus • fruit and vegetables • water, milk

Our curriculum

Healthy eating

We encourage healthy eating habits and choices eg with reference to 5-a-day.

Food and nutrition education is taught within Science, Design and Technology and Living and Learning sessions. Key learning in our curriculum includes:

- food origins, including growing and farming
- food choices, including why different people might choose different foods for different reasons
- food labelling, including nutritional values
- food prices, including unit costs of a food

Food and nutrition education is delivered by school staff and sometimes outside agencies. Key priorities of teaching are:

- providing pupils with the opportunities to learn about different types of food in the context of a balanced diet (using the Eatwell Guide) rather than labelling foods good and bad
- understanding the need to limit the consumption of foods high in salt, sugar and fat and increase the consumption of fruit and vegetables
- providing pupils with the opportunity to develop food preparation / safety skills through hands-on activities

Cooking in the curriculum

When children are preparing and cooking food, they do as much as possible. Adults should not do the preparing whilst children watch. This includes the use of knives for cutting and the stirring of food on the cooker. If supervised effectively, children should be able to do these things without the risk of injury, and we believe they will become safer in the process. The emphasis is on making sure children are aware of dangers and how to be safe, rather than preventing them from encountering any dangers. Cutting techniques such as the bridge hold and claw grip (www.foodafactoflife.org.uk) are demonstrated and used by pupils. Recipes chosen are predominantly savoury. Copies of recipes are sent home to encourage children and parents/carers to work together; they are also available on our website (Our curriculum and expectations > Design and Technology: Food and Nutrition Guide).

> "I feel that these are life skills that we are learning and are very useful. I enjoy cooking a lot."
> Junior Leadership Team member, Spring 1 2024)

Staff involved in food education have opportunities for relevant training including diet, nutrition, food safety and hygiene. Individual pupil's dietary needs are taken into consideration. Staff are made aware of allergies that children may have and act accordingly.

Eat Well Guide

Read more about the Eatwell Guide and other NHS advice: https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-guidelines-and-food-labels/the-eatwell-guide/

Eatwell Guide

Use the Eatwell Guide to help you get a balance of healthier and more sustainable food. It shows how much of what you eat overall should come from each food group.

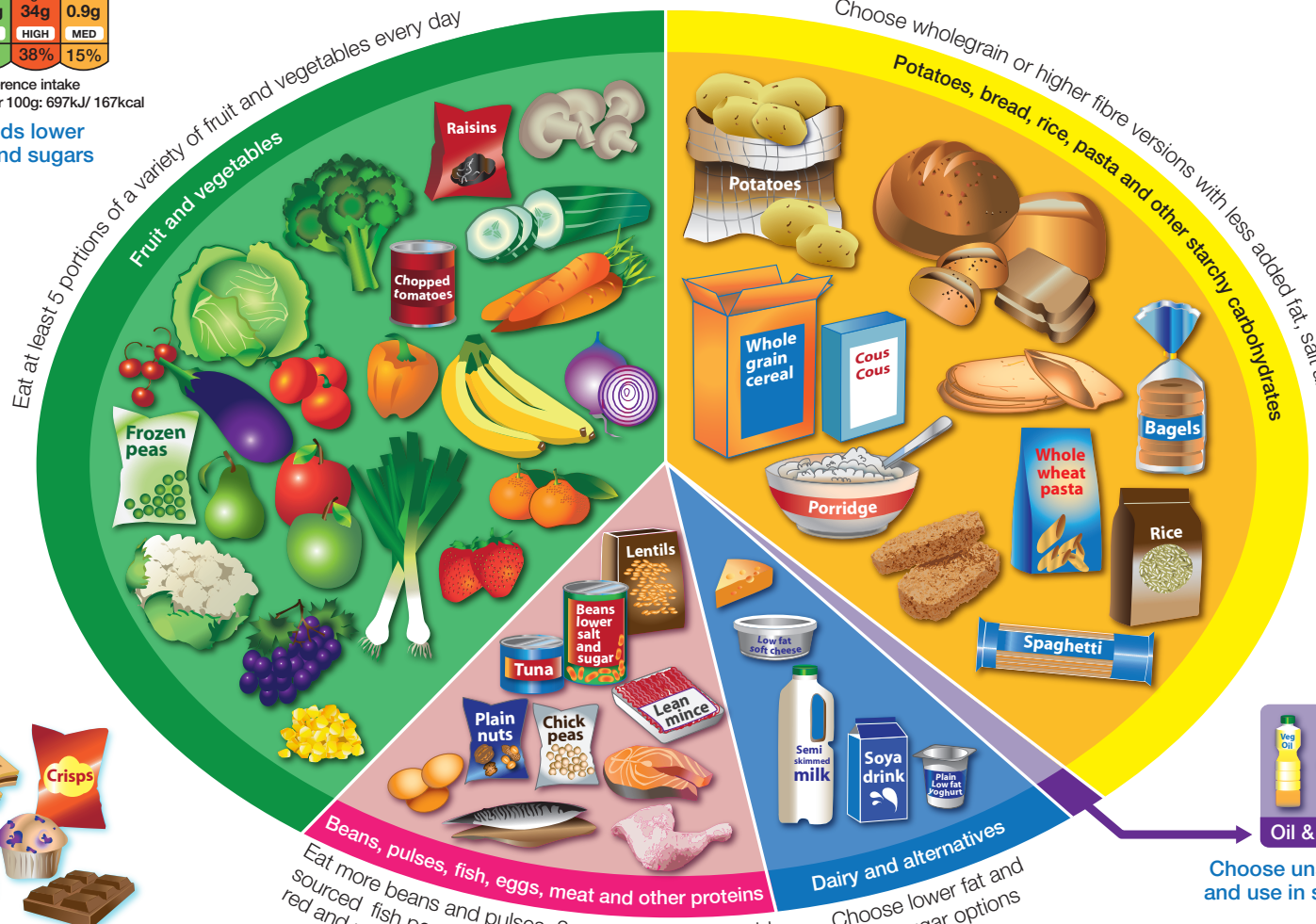
Check the label on packaged foods

Each serving (150g) contains

Energy	Fat	Saturates	Sugars	Salt
1046kJ 250kcal	3.0g	1.3g	34g	0.9g
	LOW	LOW	HIGH	MED
13%	4%	7%	38%	15%

of an adult's reference intake
Typical values (as sold) per 100g: 697kJ/ 167kcal

Choose foods lower in fat, salt and sugars



Water, lower fat milk, sugar-free drinks including tea and coffee all count.

Limit fruit juice and/or smoothies to a total of 150ml a day.

Eat less often and in small amounts

Choose unsaturated oils and use in small amounts

Per day 2000kcal 2500kcal = ALL FOOD + ALL DRINKS

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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