

# School Food Policy



## Adswood Primary School

<b>Ratified by Governing Body on:</b>	January 2025
<i>M. Smart</i> Head Teacher	<i>J Dancy</i> Chair of Governors
<b>Governing Body Review Date:</b>	January 2026



Our school recognises the importance of a healthy diet and the significant connection between a healthy diet and a pupil's ability to learn effectively in school. We will consider the role good food and drink can play across the whole school environment ensuring that awareness of healthy eating is promoted to all members of the school and wider community.

This policy will support and contribute to the Ofsted framework and has been implemented following consultation with pupils and staff to develop healthy eating and drinking activities that benefit the whole school community. Future developments and amendments to the policy and associated action plan will be communicated clearly and consistently to pupils, staff and parents.

Healthy lifestyles are promoted through effective leadership, school ethos and a broad and balanced curriculum. We aim:

- To ensure that all food and drink served is **in line with the Government's mandatory standards<sup>1</sup>**, is varied, is served in appropriate portion sizes, looks good and tastes good. We will ensure this as a school leadership team, working in partnership with our food provider that these requirements are fulfilled across the school day (i.e. 7.45am – 3.10pm) and that the infrastructure, contractual provision and resourcing reflects this aim.
- To ensure that all aspects of food and nutrition in school promote the health and wellbeing of the whole school community i.e. they are able to make informed food choices and are aware of the importance of sustainable healthy food.
- To make every reasonable effort to ensure that food provision in the school reflects the ethical and medical requirements of staff and pupils e.g. religious, ethnic, vegetarian and medical needs and that all relevant staff members (including non-teaching staff e.g. midday assistants) are aware of these.
- To ensure that all regulatory requirements are fulfilled, specifically in relation to food safety and food labeling (e.g. provision of allergen information, Food Information Regulations). This should be reviewed across all provision whether internally or externally managed, ensuring all staff and volunteers involved in food preparation, school lunches, breakfast clubs, after school clubs, fund raising events and cooking in the classroom follow adequate procedures necessary to fulfill statutory requirements.
- To involve the school community in all aspects of food in schools, pupils should be consulted and engaged in the development of a robust school food offer, making healthier sustainable food the default choice.
- To take a whole school approach to healthy eating to ensure that messages taught in the curriculum are reflected throughout the school day.
- To raise awareness and promote the eligibility criteria in relation to free school meals for parents and carers, as well as increasing the uptake of school meals.
- Parents/carers are encouraged to sample the school dinner offered at parent/ open evenings
- The food environment facilitates a positive eating environment, break times are sufficient to allow children to consume food and drink of an adequate nutrition in a relaxed social setting, the dining area allows children to eat together regardless of whether the food is a school meal or packed lunch, the design and infrastructure of the dining environment enables the throughput of all children in a timely manner and is a welcoming environment. All pupils have adequate choice across the lunch period regardless as to whether they are first or last meal recipient. Systems should be adequate to ensure this occurs without excess waste.
- The school works in partnership with the catering provider on the food offer to ensure it is appealing, appetizing, healthy, sustainable and is viable. Roles and responsibilities should be clear. The lunch service is regularly monitored to check that the offer is to specification, staff and the facilities are adequately resourced and management and operations systems are sufficient.
  - Menus/dishes are appealing, descriptive and the information reflects the food on offer.
  - The food offer should promote local provenance where possible, seasonality and healthy food choices.
- Food brought from home such as packed lunches are stored safely and we work with the whole school community to ensure that foods brought from home do not seek to undermine the healthiness of the food

available across the school, we have guidance for parents, curriculum content and use positive messaging to encourage healthier lunch choices.

- We encourage pupils and staff to stay hydrated through drinking water frequently, we only promote water and milk as the safe drinks for teeth. Water is readily available in every classroom through the school. Parents /carers are encouraged to supply children with their own drink bottles/cups which they refill, but school also has a supply of paper water cups should none be provided.
- As a school we promote food and drink content in the curriculum to foster a strong food culture both within the school and beyond. We enable our pupils and staff to make healthy and informed choices by increasing knowledge, changing attitudes and enhancing skills. We educate pupils to understand the importance of a balanced diet, appropriate portion sizes, where food comes from, how it is produced and the relationship between food, physical activity, health and the environment. All schemes of work for all key stages will reflect the whole-school approach to healthy eating. To ensure opportunities within the school curriculum promote and raise awareness of healthy weight, breastfeeding, oral health and lifestyle. Where possible the school will utilise practical opportunities for developing food growing, handling, preparation and cooking.
- The national School Food Standards do not apply at parties, celebrations to mark religious or cultural occasions, or at fund-raising events. However consideration should be given as to how the food and prizes supplied at school events is consistent with the school ethos with regard to food.
- Our school community has or are developing growing clubs and/or cooking clubs where we seek to close the gap between nature and the food available on the high street. We believe our pupils and staff should learn and practice practical food skills and as appropriate engage parents in activities. School facilitates a 'Cook for Life' club where children are taught the basics of food preparation and engage in making simple, nutritious and balanced meals. It is the school's policy that every child in Year 6 will have access to this club.
- We seek to develop innovative and creative ways of celebrating achievements and fostering a positive culture where rewards are not unhealthy food but events and activities. . Eg instead of encouraging parents to send in treats and sweets for birthday celebration, birthdays are marked with the wearing of a 'Birthday Hat'
- Whilst we look at creative ways to finance sporting events and other promotions, we operate an ethical policy on sponsorship by confectionary and fast food companies.

The school governing body is responsible for ensuring that the national school food standards are met. All food and drink provided in the school meets the national school food standards. Where food is provided by the local authority or a private caterer, compliance with the school food standards is specified within the catering contract or service level agreement and the caterer will provide the governing body with evidence of compliance with the standards. If the school provides food it should evaluate the food and drink provision against the standards, and produce evidence of compliance.

The governing body ensures that it receives regular reports on compliance with the school food standards as well as take-up of school lunches and financial aspects of school food provision.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/1603/pdfs/ukxi\\_20141603\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/1603/pdfs/ukxi_20141603_en.pdf)

## Appendix

### Frequently asked questions – School food

1. **Are school food standards mandatory?**
  - a. Yes these are government standards set out in the School Food Regulations 2014 and detailed in the School Food Standards [www.schoolfoodplan.com/standards](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/standards)
  - b. They become mandatory in all maintained schools, and new academies and free schools from January 2015.
  - c. Academies and Free Schools founded between September 2010 and June 2014 can voluntarily sign up to the standards at [www.schoolfoodplan.com/school-food-standards/](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/school-food-standards/)
  - d. They relate to all food provided across the school day including morning and after school clubs, mid-morning snacks and vending between 8am and 6pm.
2. **What powers are there for repercussions if the school does comply with the standards?**
  - a. The food standards are mandatory, which means schools have to comply legally. If they do not, anyone will be free to complain to the Secretary of State who can issue a direction to the school if necessary.
  - b. In addition, since September 2015 Ofsted are monitoring a school's approach to healthier eating as part of their regular inspections of schools. (See [www.schoolfoodplan.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/APPG-School-Food-Letter.pdf](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/APPG-School-Food-Letter.pdf))
  - c. Parents also will be a key player in monitoring the quality of food at their children's school.
3. **Who is responsible for school food**
  - a. The responsibility for School food sits with the individual schools and therefore the Governors and Headteacher.
4. **Can cooks deviate from the menus**
  - a. Cooks should routinely not deviate from the menus as this will have repercussions for the information provided to customer. It could affect the ingredients in a dish and potentially cause the provision to fall foul of contractual obligations or fail to meet statutory standards, pose food safety risks (allergens) and ultimately undermine the integrity of the food service.
  - b. Should there be ad hoc issues where produce hasn't arrived on the delivery or other operational issues which causes an alternative meal or ingredient to be used a clear reporting structure should be in place to handle this to ensure the integrity and safety of the food offer is achievable at all times.
5. **How do we know if school meals are of sufficient quality?**
  - a. Use key performance indicators produced by your food provider or catering manager. Use these in combination with specifications and recipes for each dish to be confident that you can define what good quality looks like.
  - b. Dishes should be appetising, well described on menus and be fresh and consistent. Corrective action should be taken if food fails to meet the agreed standard.
6. **Should portion sizes change by age group?**
  - a. Yes, clear guidance is issued in the School Food Standards, this is set out at primary and secondary age groups and a range is illustrated.
7. **Food standards don't just apply to the lunch?**
  - a. The new food-group standards will apply across the school day to breakfast clubs, lunches, tuck shops and vending machines, as well as after-school clubs until 6pm
8. **Do school food standards apply to packed lunches?**
  - a. Any free, or paid for school lunches will need to meet the standards, regardless of whether the lunch takes the form of a packed lunch.

- b. The Government has no plans to introduce standards for packed lunches that are brought from home. However, the School Food Trust (SFT) and Food Standards Agency have produced advice for parents.
  - c. Schools can also have a role in determining what a packed lunch should and should not contain if they choose to do so. Some schools for example already have school food policies that ban certain products from being brought into school in packed lunches. This can assist with school meal uptake.
- 9. How do we ensure that our school caterers procure foods in line with the standards?**
- a. When considering procurement arrangements, schools and caterers should ensure that suppliers of all products can demonstrate that they can meet the standards. The required standards should form part of the contractual agreement. If there is any reasonable doubt as to whether any products being supplied against the contract comply with those standards, they should not be accepted. In such circumstances, the procurement department should be notified and an alternative means of meeting the requirements should be considered, bearing in mind any contractual restrictions limiting use of a different supplier.
- 10. Is the school allowed to provide chips, crisps and chocolate?**
- a. There are various restrictions and some banned products now in the standards which cannot be served during the school day.
    - i. Chips or deep-fried products (either in the kitchen or manufacturing process) are only allowed twice a week.
    - ii. Chocolate, chocolate coating and confectionary is now banned across the school day with the exception of cocoa in cooking and drinks.
    - iii. Crisps and other savoury snacks are also not permitted, the only savoury snacks which are permitted are nuts and seeds without added salt or fat (above 0.5%)
- 11. What about unhealthy food at school events or brought from home does this have to be healthy?**
- a. There are currently no stipulated standards for food provision outside of the school day e.g. fund raising and fairs or for food brought from home, however, care should be taken to not undermine the integrity of your school food policy using consistent messaging to both staff, parents and pupils.
  - b. There is some good practice available on Learning Leads and across the internet on healthy packed lunches, rewarding achievements and engaging with parents.
- 12. When parents look to provide more interesting food options there can be some challenges with managing the health and food safety of these products for example hot soup and keeping lunch boxes cool.**
- a. Hot soup should not be encouraged due to the risk of scalding.
  - b. Parents should be encouraged that lunch boxes should be brought in insulated bags containing a cool pack and kept in a cool space, out of direct sunlight.
- 13. Our breakfast club is currently sponsored by a local business who offers free sausages and bacon?**
- a. Irrespective of the offer of sponsorship or provision, the food must be compliant with the standards. Bacon is permitted as a meat, whereas sausages are considered to be a processed meat and therefore restricted. There is a restriction on the frequency of processed food during the week, across the school day and care should be taken to coordinate with the lunch caterer to ensure this standard is complied with. Should this product form part of a themed activity then there may be an exemption.
- 14. Do we have to provide Halal meat?**
- a. Schools are expected to take reasonable steps to cater for allergies and special diets as part of your school meals service. It is recommend that schools develop a policy and follow a clear procedure to make sure all requests for a special diet are handled efficiently and appropriately. It is good practice for these requirements to be written into any contracts that are developed with

caterers. Catering providers and local authorities may already have policies and procedures in place. There is information on the Childrens Food Trust website about catering for special diets available here:

<http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/childrens-food-trust/schools/school-food-standards/standards-for-your-school-food/allergies-special-diets/>





# The School Food Standards

*Eating in school should be a pleasurable experience: time spent sharing good food with peers and teachers.*

*These school food standards are intended to help children develop healthy eating habits and ensure that they get the energy and nutrition they need across the whole school day. It is just as important to cook food that looks good and tastes delicious; to talk to children about what is on offer and recommend dishes; to reduce queuing; and to serve the food in a pleasant environment where they can eat with their friends.*

*As a general principle, it is important to provide a wide range of foods across the week. Variety is key – whether it is different fruits, vegetables, grains, pulses or types of meat and fish. Children love to hear the stories behind their food. Use fresh, sustainable and locally-sourced ingredients (best of all, from the school vegetable garden), and talk to them about what they are eating. Go to [www.schoolfoodplan.com](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com) to find examples of what other schools are doing to encourage children to eat well.*

*Remember to use Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services alongside these standards to help reduce salt, saturated fat and sugar in children's diets.*

**\* This Standard applies across the whole school day, including breakfasts, morning breaks, tuck shops, and after school clubs**



## Fruit and vegetables

- One or more portions of vegetables or salad as an accompaniment every day
- One or more portions of fruit every day
- A dessert containing at least 50% fruit two or more times each week
- At least three different fruits and three different vegetables each week



## Milk and dairy

- A portion of food from this group every day
- Lower fat milk must be available for drinking at least once a day during school hours



## Starchy food

- One or more wholegrain varieties of starchy food each week
- One or more portions of food from this group every day
- Three or more different starchy foods each week
- Starchy food cooked in fat or oil no more than two days each week\*
- Bread - with no added fat or oil - must be available every day



## Meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein

- A portion of food from this group every day
- A portion of meat or poultry on three or more days each week
- Oily fish once or more every three weeks
- For vegetarians, a portion of non-dairy protein on three or more days each week
- A meat or poultry product (manufactured or homemade, and meeting the legal requirements) no more than once each week in primary schools and twice each week in secondary schools\*



## Healthier drinks\*

- Free, fresh drinking water at all times
- The only drinks permitted are:
  - Plain water (still or carbonated)
  - Lower fat milk or lactose reduced milk
  - Fruit or vegetable juice (max 150 mls)
  - Plain soya, rice or oat drinks enriched with calcium; plain fermented milk (e.g. yoghurt) drinks
  - Combinations of fruit or vegetable juice with plain water (still or carbonated, with no added sugars or honey)
  - Combinations of fruit juice and lower fat milk or plain yoghurt, plain soya, rice or oat drinks enriched with calcium; cocoa and lower fat milk; flavoured lower fat milk, all with less than 5% added sugars or honey
  - Tea, coffee, hot chocolate
- Combination drinks are limited to a portion size of 330ml. They may contain added vitamins or minerals, and no more than 150mls fruit or vegetable juice. Fruit or vegetable juice combination drinks must be at least 45% fruit or vegetable juice



## Foods high in fat, sugar and salt

- No more than two portions of food that has been deep-fried, batter-coated, or breadcrumb-coated, each week\*
- No more than two portions of food which include pastry each week\*
- No snacks, except nuts, seeds, vegetables and fruit with no added salt, sugar or fat\*
- Savoury crackers or breadsticks can be served at lunch with fruit or vegetables or dairy food
- No confectionery, chocolate or chocolate-coated products\*
- Desserts, cakes and biscuits are allowed at lunchtime. They must not contain any confectionery
- Salt must not be available to add to food after it has been cooked\*
- Any condiments must be limited to sachets or portions of no more than 10g or one teaspoonful\*

## Food provided outside lunch

- Fruit and/or vegetables available in all school food outlets
- No savoury crackers and breadsticks
- No cakes, biscuits, pastries or desserts (except yoghurt or fruit-based desserts containing at least 50% fruit)





# A checklist for head teachers

We know how busy schools are. The idea of turning round your food service – or merely nudging it from good to great – may seem daunting. So we want to make it as easy as possible for you. What follows is a checklist of all the things we have seen working well at schools: specific actions that improve food culture in schools and increase take-up of school dinners.

This checklist is designed to be printed out and pinned up in your office, in the office of your business manager and in the school kitchen.

## Lead the change

- In every school we went to that had a good food culture, the head teacher had led the change.
- Obviously, not all of these actions are your responsibility; they can be shared across the school. Some are best done by the school cook, business manager, senior management team, or your external catering company, or even volunteers.
- Get the right contract - drawing up a new contract is a risky time for your school food service, but also a moment of opportunity
- Don't draw up a new contract alone – lots of other schools have done this before you, and found ways to get a good deal. Use an expert to help you draft it.
- Ask your caterer to draw up a clear, written plan for increasing take-up over a set period.
- Make it a contractual requirement for your caterer to achieve a certain standard of quality, as judged by an external organisation – e.g. Food for Life Partnership or Children's Food Trust.
- Get specialist help. For details of organisations that can help you with contracts, cookery lessons, gardening or any other aspect of this checklist, go to: [www.schoolfoodplan.com](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com).

## Concentrate on the things children care about

### A. Food

- Eat in the canteen often. Ask yourself whether the food looks appetising and tastes good.
- Be sure there is a mix of familiar and new foods for the children, and that the catering staff encourage children to experiment.
- Use local and seasonal suppliers, and make a song and dance about it. Children and their parents find the idea of local produce exciting (especially when it comes from the school garden), and are more likely to try it. When serving fish, avoid the most endangered (Marine Conservation Society red list), and promote the best (MCS green list, which includes Marine Stewardship Council certified fish).
- Manage children's choices to ensure they get a balanced meal, instead of stuffing themselves full of bread rolls. Offer a cheaper 'set menu' meal; require children to fill their plates with options from different categories; or simply put vegetables on their plates.
- Make sure packed lunches are not a 'better' option. Ban sugary drinks, crisps and confectionery, or offer prizes and other incentives for bringing in a healthy lunch. Some schools ban packed lunches outright. If you want to do this, try

starting with your newest intake (pupils in reception or year 7). The ban will then apply to all the years that follow them, until it extends to the whole school.

- Watch what gets served at mid-morning break. Many children eat their main meal at this time. Too often, that means filling up on pizza, paninis or cake.
- Ensure tap water is widely available at all times, make it the drink of choice across the school and encourage all children to keep well hydrated.

### B. Environment

- Look around your dining hall. Is the room clean and attractive? Does it smell good?
- Keep queuing times short. Try staggering lunch breaks; introducing more service points; serving food at the table, family-style; and reducing choice.
- Have a cashless payment system. This shortens queuing times, enables parents to go online to see what their children are eating, and prevents FSM children being stigmatised.
- Replace prison-style trays with proper crockery.

## Adopt a 'whole school' approach

### C. Social life

- Have a stay-on-site rule for break and lunch time.
  - Allow all children to sit together – don't segregate those with packed lunches.
  - Structure the lunch break so there is sufficient time for eating as well as activities or clubs. This may mean making the lunch break longer or timing the clubs differently.
  - Give special consideration to the youngest children, who might be intimidated by the noise and rush of lunch break.
- Offer samples of the food for children to taste.
  - Encourage teachers to eat in the dining room with the children. It may require a cultural or logistical shift, but *every single good school we visited did this. It has a unifying effect on the whole school, and raises the status of school meals.*
  - Hold themed events – such as World Cup day, or international food day – to get the children excited.
  - Organise a group to represent children's views on school lunch, such as a school nutrition action group (SNAG) or a School Council.

### D. Get the price right

- In secondary schools, consider subsidising school meals for year 7 pupils, to make them cheaper or free. Children who start eating school lunches often carry on, even once they have to pay.
  - Offer lunch discounts for parents with more than one child at the school, or whose children eat a school lunch every day.
- Give children opportunities to prepare, cook or serve the food.
  - Get the community involved
    - Give parents, carers and grandparents the opportunity to taste school food and eat with the children at lunchtime and/or parents' evenings.
    - Invite family members to help with cooking or gardening clubs.
    - Seek out partners in the community who can help with cooking and growing activities, e.g. local restaurants, food producers, allotment growers.

### E. Improve the brand

- Make menus available in advance to children and parents online.
- This is a simple idea, but an important one. It means treating the dining hall as an integral part of the school, where children and teachers eat; lunch as part of the school day; the cooks as important staff members; and food as a vital element of school life.
- Treat your cooks and lunchtime supervisors as part of your team, on a par with teachers and business managers. Do they come to staff meetings? Do they enter and leave by the same door as the rest of your staff? Have they received training and development recently?
- Bring your school cook to parents' evenings – not to serve the food, but to answer questions from parents about their children's eating habits.
- Make sure children get consistent messages about nutrition in lessons and at lunchtime.
- Choose classroom rewards for children that are not sweets.
- Grow food in your school, and use some in the school lunch.
- Use cooking and growing as an exciting way to teach subjects across the curriculum – from history to maths, science to enterprise, technology to geography.
- Offer after school cooking lessons for parents and children.

For more information see: <http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/checklist/>