



# Food in School Policy

Approved by Governors 17.11. 2020

Review due Autumn 2023

## **Context**

This policy has been reviewed in the Autumn term of 2020 as there have been provision changes since the last policy was written. The previous policy was shared with the preschool and Westdale Junior School settings. As we have now taken on our own Nursery and wraparound provision, this policy therefore needed to be reviewed.

Parents and carers were asked to contribute to a food at school' survey during this term and their responses form parts of this policy. Our children were also consulted about their opinions in relation to food in school.

At Westdale Infant School we believe that knowledge and understanding of nutrition is essential for good health and effective teaching and learning. We recognise the important connection between a healthy diet and a child's ability to learn effectively and achieve high standards in school.

Research proves that good food is vital to children's health, development, concentration, behaviour and academic achievement. We know that obesity doubles between Reception and Year 6 and that one third of children are leaving primary school overweight or obese. We know that one third of children have tooth decay. Good eating habits established in childhood are more likely to be maintained in adulthood. This will influence health in the short term to ensure healthy weight and good dental health and in the long term to protect against type 2 diabetes, heart disease and cancer.

At Westdale we trust that parents and carers know their children best and will make the right food choices for them in their context.

## **Aims**

To improve the health of staff, pupils and their families by helping to influence their eating habits through increasing their knowledge and awareness of food issues, including what constitutes a healthy, balanced diet.

- To develop healthy eating and drinking habits that will last beyond pupils' time at our school.
- To give pupils the information they need to make healthy choices.
- To ensure that we are giving consistent messages about food and health.
- To ensure that food provision in the school reflects the ethical and medical requirements of all children and staff e.g. religious, ethnic, vegetarian, medical and allergenic needs.
- To encourage fluid intake, with water supply provided throughout the day.
- To make the provision and consumption of food an enjoyable and pleasant experience that enhances the social development of all children.

## **Break Time Snacks and Wraparound Care**

The school promotes healthy eating habits through the food provided at during our wraparound care and the regular consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables at snack time.

This is achieved through:

- Participation in government schemes e.g. The National Fruit and Vegetable Scheme. Our school operates a Fruit and Veg only policy during morning break applying to all pupils. All of our pupils benefit from the Universal Free Fruit Scheme (2004) for pupils aged between 3-6 which offers an item of fresh or fruit or vegetables at break time

- Pupils throughout the school can attend breakfast and after school wraparound care to receive breakfast and an after school snack.

### **School Lunches**

From September 2014, the government introduced the Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) scheme entitling all pupils in the United Kingdom between the ages of 4-6 to have a school meal provided for them free of charge. This means that every child gets a free lunch from Foundation 2 to Year 2.

Our school lunches are currently provided by Notts County Council and because we do not have our own kitchen at the infants, they are cooked at the Carlton Digby school kitchen then brought over at lunchtime. NCC lunches meet many strictly regulated food assurance schemes. NCC are also actively trying to reduce their carbon footprint and use local and sustainable produce.

### **Vegetarian options**

Vegetarian options are available on all our menus. Whenever possible it will be an option of the menu item displayed for instance Spaghetti Bolognese will have a Quorn Bolognese option. There are a number of meat free options available on the menu as a choice. If you wish your child to have a vegetarian choice please let your school office know and they will ensure the school chef is aware.

The school meal menu is displayed on the school's website and on posters in school.

### **Special diets and allergies**

We aim to ensure all pupils have access to healthy school dinners regardless of any special requirements.

If your child's diet does not suit NCC menus due to any food allergies or intolerances, religious or ethical beliefs please let us know so we can make alternative arrangements.

Please complete an EC46 pupil dietary/food allergy request form and return to the school office.

- [EC46 pupil dietary/food allergy request form](#)

Any allergies and intolerances must be accompanied and supported by medical documentation from the child's GP or other medical professional.

NCC menus fully comply with food standards on nutrition and portion size. They contain at least two portions of fruit and vegetables per meal and every meal is served with vegetables and/or salad as standard.

### **Bread**

Part of the new food standards state that free bread should be made available at lunchtime to ensure children are not left hungry after their dinner. We fully comply with these regulations by making sure a basket of bread is available for children to help themselves from at dinner time if your child is having a school lunch. You can visit the School Food Trust website which outlines these standards.

## **The Dining Environment**

All children eat their school lunch in the school hall/dining hall. Nursery children eat their lunch in the Little Stars classroom in a designated area. Staff organise the lunch time as a social setting where children eat with their friends. We ask the children to respect the dining experience of others by keeping an appropriately low noise level. We also want the dining environment to be an attractive and inviting place to eat, where children are encouraged to interact with each other and enjoy their food. We encourage all children to use their cutlery when having a hot dinner and support children with learning how to do this.

### **Drinks**

#### **Aims**

- To encourage pupils to drink water frequently.
- To ensure that drinks that are unsafe for teeth are not consumed between meals.

We recognise that low fluid intake can lead to reduced academic performance through poor concentration and lethargy, reduced physical performance and some health problems. We encourage all children to drink water at regular intervals throughout the school day. Every child is encouraged to bring a bottle of water to school to keep in the classroom.

Water is available free for all pupils at the lunchtime meal service. All children are invited to bring a water bottle into school each day filled with **water only**. Fresh drinking water is available throughout the day to refill a bottle. Bottles must be taken home daily and washed regularly. Drinking water is provided at lunchtime on each table.

**Apart from water and milk at snack time, no other form of drink is allowed at school in water bottles.** In exceptional circumstances for medical reasons other drinks may be allowed in drinking bottles. This needs to be via a request from a doctor or nutritionist and must be discussed with school before being provided.

#### **Packed Lunches, Provided from Home**

The school encourages parents and carers to provide children with packed lunches that complement the nutritional standards. This is achieved by promoting healthy balanced packed lunch options using the principles of the 'eatwell plate'. This will ensure children having packed lunches have a healthy balanced meal.

The school has less control over the content of these lunches but there is strong encouragement to parents and carers to provide healthy food and for the children to eat healthily. We also discourage high fat, high sugar and processed foods but it is the policy of Westdale Infant School not to disallow typical lunchbox snacks such as a chocolate biscuit or a small packet of savoury biscuits. Parents and carers have been consulted about this and there has been a very strong opinion not to impose an outright ban on these foods but to strongly encourage healthy eating habits. We trust our parents to make the right choices for their children within their own family context and undoubted knowledge of their child's needs.

**Please note however the items that sweets and confectionary (including chocolate bars) are not allowed in packed lunches.**

## **No Nuts Policy**

As we have some children with severe nut allergies, we operate a strict no nuts policy in school. This includes any food that may contain nuts so please check ingredients lists for this before sending foods into school e.g.in packed lunches.

We regularly talk with the children, both at lunchtimes and in curriculum and learning time, about the importance of eating healthy food and having a balanced diet. Children who have brought healthy choices, such as fruit and vegetables, a healthy sandwich or savoury snack, are praised. However, children are never criticised for bringing unhealthy food. It will not be their fault and to criticise may well undermine them.

By praising the children's good eating habits, we aim to see an improvement in healthy food provided – children want their choices praised too.

In some instances it may be a challenge to encourage all parents and carers to provide the healthiest or balanced lunchbox. There may be financial issues involved or their children may present themselves to their parents as difficult eaters and food high in fat and sugar is provided.

Another issue can be whether food is really good for us or not. Nowadays some foods, such as yogurts, can be advertised as healthy but can be full of sugar and additives.

Some parents with a professional understanding of the issues question some of the assumptions made about “unhealthy” food, citing the fact that children need more calories and these can be difficult to obtain from a low fat, low sugar diet. Also, there is a higher incidence of children being over concerned with their diet, leading to eating disorders at a younger age. These factors should be taken into consideration when working with children.

However, the overall aim is to see healthier lunches from home with many children having a good understanding of what foods they should try to eat and why. They don't always enjoy these foods though!

## **Other Occasions for Eating in Schools**

After overwhelming support from parents and carers in the survey, we will continue to allow children to bring treats for celebrations if they wish. These treats are given out at the end of the session, so that parents can decide whether their child may have the particular treat and whether or not it is a good time for their child to eat it. These should be sealed and wrapped for hygiene purposes and contain no nuts.

## **Food across the Curriculum**

There are a number of opportunities for children to develop their knowledge and understanding of food, healthy drinking and healthy eating within the curriculum. It is covered in the school curriculum as part of teaching through:

- Science - Scientific enquiry provides an opportunity to learn about the types of food available to humans and animals, their nutritional composition, digestion and the function of different nutrients in contributing to health.
- Design & Technology - Food Technology provides the opportunity to learn about where food comes from and apply healthy eating messages through practical work with food, including food preparation and cooking.

- PSHRE – included to encourage children to take responsibility for their own health and to teach them how to develop a healthy lifestyle.
- Religious and cultural influences on food and eating habits are explored
- Reading and Writing Cafes
- In the EYFS which includes Foundation 2 and Nursery, we explore and learn about the importance of a healthy and balanced diet. We explore and try out different and new foods with consultation of parents and carers.

Aspects of food and healthy eating are also covered in other curriculum areas and through themed weeks and the celebration of various festivals.