



## Delamere School Food Policy

Date	Section of Policy	Amendment
7 <sup>th</sup> November 2022	The Eating Environment	Clarity provided around what the basic level options for lunches are when children move into a fulltime place.

**Date of policy:** January 2020

**Reviewed:** November 2022

This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies: Teaching and Learning Policy, Assessment and Recording Policy, Sensory Policy, Communication Policy and Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulation Policy.

### Overview

Delamere School is dedicated to providing an environment that promotes the health and well-being of pupils, parents and staff by ensuring that all food provision and food messages are healthy and consistent. We aim to enable pupils to make informed choices about the food they eat. This will be achieved by the whole school approach to food and nutrition documented in this whole school food policy. Delamere School staff recognise and are committed to the fact that healthier children learn more effectively.

The policy was formulated through consultation between members of staff, governors, parents, pupils, and our school nurse.

The nutritional principles of this policy are based on the findings of the National Diet and Nutrition Survey of 4 to 18 year olds; the 1991 Dietary Reference Values for Food Energy and Nutrients for the UK; and the Balance of Good Health (BOGH).

Many of the pupils at Delamere School have sensory difficulties which include rigidities around food.

### Intent

Our vision, our values and our rights underpin all our policies and the education we deliver. Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that: "The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions that affect children." This policy has been created to keep the children at Delamere School safe and happy.

- To further develop and maintain an ethos in the school in which a healthy choice is the easy choice
- To encourage a healthier population of children and young people



- To ensure all children have a suitable lunch time meal that sustains and prepares them for their afternoon learning
- To provide cross-curricular education that enables pupils to make an informed choice
- To involve the whole community in developing and maintaining healthy eating and drinking habits
- To have a safe, pleasant and sociable dining experience which enhances the social development of all children
- To encourage a balanced diet
- To encourage fluid intake with an easily accessible water supply throughout the day
- To take into account and accommodate dietary requirements
- To ensure high standards of hygiene amongst the children
- To develop healthy eating and drinking habits that will last a lifetime
- To ensure the safety of children with allergies and feeding and swallowing difficulties are given diligent attention
- To be at all times consistent with medical, religious and cultural needs of the children

Our intent is to work towards ensuring that this policy is both accepted and embraced by governors, school management, teachers and support staff, pupils, parents, food providers and the wider community.

## **Implementation**

### **The Eating Environment**

At Delamere we recognise the importance of lunchtime organisation on the behaviour of pupils and the value of promoting social skills:

The basic level options for lunches are;

- Hot School Dinner / Vegetarian options available
- Cold Packed Lunch unless sent in a Stay warm flask
- Parents pick up child to go home for lunch

Within these basic options there are high levels of individual provision – such as eating in a quiet room away from the dining room / close adult support etc.

More bespoke arrangements can be discussed on an individual basis if these options do not prove successful after an initial trial period - minimum timescale of half a term.

- Most pupils have their lunch in the dining room with their own class and are accompanied by class staff and nominated middays.
- Dining times are split to ensure a calm, quiet eating environment.
- Pupils with packed lunches sit with those having school meals
- Tables and chairs are used that are appropriate to pupil height; to support good posture for eating



- Visuals and other communication methods e.g. PODD mats are available to enable pupils to make choices
- Eating equipment is available according to need e.g. specialist cutlery, plates, non -slip mats.
- Noise and visuals are kept to a minimum to ensure sensory needs are accommodated.
- Children are given the opportunity to access oral exercise programmes, flavour / taste programmes during this time.
- Pupils who have feeding and swallowing difficulties and who are developing specific feeding skills are supported by having detailed feeding guidance written by dysphagia trained Speech and language therapists for staff to follow. This offers clear guidance for all.
- Healthy snacks are eaten in clearly defined classroom areas at other times throughout the school day

### **School Meals (lunches)**

- Food is provided by Trafford Council and meets the healthy food standards as set out by the government
- Healthy options are promoted at the admissions phase
- All children up to the age of 7 are entitled to a free school meal each day
- The school recognises the particular value of school meals to all children, including those from low-income families. The system for free school meals is actively promoted to parents by the school and a non-discriminatory process is used.
- A 3-weekly menu is prepared following the healthy food standards and displayed on the school website.
- Children are encouraged to try different foods each day by the cook and other staff.
- Children have a choice of vegetarian meals if requested by their families.
- There are sandwich facilities and salad available daily.
- Healthy dessert options are offered, ranging from fruit, yoghurts and a hot alternative.
- Adults accompany some children to the hatch to help them with the options and assist with carrying their meal back to the table. Others who can be more independent are helped by the kitchen staff if required. Some pupils have food brought to their table.
- Adults sit with children at the tables to encourage eating healthy options provided.
- Children are encouraged to eat their main meal before going to the hatch to choose a dessert
- Children who eat little food are monitored and encouraged and if required have food programmes in place [in consultation with parents and the school nurse / relevant health professionals e.g. dietician and SALT].
- The cook is informed about children who have special dietary needs or allergies and this information is also displayed in the kitchen/dining hall. Foods are additionally prepared in line with food consistency guidance for foods that are required to be liquidised for pupils requiring specialised diets [as set out by Speech and language therapist]



- The school occasionally has themed days related to a topic or the time of the year such as Christmas and Cultural Week
- Every child had their individualised Eating and drinking Plan providing information about their likes/dislikes and any equipment or support needed (may be written in conjunction with Speech and Language Therapists (SALT))

### **New Standards:**

- That starchy food cooked in fat or oil must not be provided on more than two days each week. The old standards specified no more than three times a week.
- To promote variety the new standards want three or more different starchy foods provided weekly, including at least one wholegrain variety.
- The theme of variety is also seen in fruit and vegetables, with caterers needing now to ensure at least three different vegetables and three different fruits are provided each week.
- When it comes to protein, the revised standards are more specific about the provision of meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources. The revisions here are designed to ensure adequate levels of protein, iron and zinc and increase the variety of foods on offer the same thinking is behind the new requirement for a portion of dairy food to be included every day and that lower fat milk and lactose reduced milk are made available.
- There are changes also to drinks with a maximum quantities of juice and combination drinks (apply secondary schools only). The standards have been designed to control the amount of added sugar.

### **Packed Lunches**

- Parents are consulted by a class teacher or our parent liaison officer if lunchboxes do not contain a balanced diet (unless there are medical reasons for this). Healthier options are discussed.
- Specific difficulties (such as children with autism on restricted diets) are discussed on an individual basis but always with the aim of moving towards healthier choices. Interventions are then put in place, such as Scrummy Crew and food technology sessions.
- All parents and carers have received a letter detailing the healthy choices that are permitted in a packed lunch, including on educational visits.

### **Drinks**

- The National Nutritional Standards for Healthy School Lunches recommend that drinking water should be available to all pupils, every day, and free of charge. Delamere school agrees with this recommendation and provides a free supply of drinking water. Sinks and cups are available in all classrooms to enable pupils and staff to drink water freely.
- Milk will be offered free of charge to pupils from nursery to year 2 at morning snack.
- A range of fresh fruit or vegetables are provided each day for children in EYFS and KS1
- Leftover fruit and milk from EYFS and KS1 is given to KS2 wherever possible



- Wherever possible drinks offered should be milk (lower fat milk or lactose reduced milk) or water.
- Combinations of fruit juice with plain water (no added sugars or honey) may be provided to pupils who cannot or will not drink milk or water. There should be a plan/programme in place for those individuals to encourage acceptance of water or milk in small quantities (if behavioural/sensory reasons).
- Drinks may be thickened using prescribed thickeners e.g. “resource thicken up clear” following assessment and written guidance from a dysphagia trained speech and language therapist to help maintain and develop a safe swallow.
- Adults to be encouraged to promote healthy eating as the norm by consuming water, milk, tea, coffee.
- Fizzy drinks or energy drinks are not allowed in school

## **Snacks**

The following foods are allowed in school for snack/food preparation in classes:

- Nuts, seeds, vegetables and fruit with no added salt, sugar or fat
- Potatoes, rice, pasta and bread/toast (although these are restricted if cooked in fat or oil), malt loaf, or fruit bread.
- Cereal - Porridge (use fruit to sweeten if necessary), fortified breakfast cereals with higher fibre and low or medium sugar content. (Avoid cereals with lots of added sugar and salt)
- sandwich/wraps/muffin fillings or toast toppings, such as eggs, humous, sliced meat, poultry, fish, canned fish, baked beans.
- tortillas, fajitas, burritos, quesadillas, enchiladas, omelette, Spanish omelette or frittata
- yoghurts and fruit based desserts containing at least 50% fruit

The following snacks are not allowed in school:

- No savoury crackers or breadsticks, cakes, biscuits, pastries or desserts (except yoghurts or fruit based desserts containing at least 50% fruit)
- No confectionery, chocolate and chocolate-coated products (applies across the whole school day)
- Salt must not be available to add to food after it has been cooked
- Any condiments limited to sachets or portions of no more than 10 grams or one teaspoon

## **Treats (including special occasions)**

The School Food Standards state that :

Nothing in these Regulations applies to food provided—

- (a) at parties or celebrations to mark religious or cultural occasions;
- (b) at fund-raising events;
- (c) as rewards for achievement, good behaviour or effort;



(d) for use in teaching food preparation and cookery skills, including where the food prepared is served to pupils as part of a school lunch; or

(e) on an occasional basis by parents or pupils.

Therefore at Delamere, whilst we endeavour to encourage healthy eating as the norm, we also accept that at times it may be appropriate to enjoy less healthy options as an occasional treat. Examples include:

- Crisps, chocolate biscuits and sweets (in moderation) eg at Christmas or Eid celebrations
- Treats brought into school by children to share with the class on the occasion of their birthdays.
- Sweets, drinks, cakes etc for sale at a fundraising event for school
- Rewards and special exceptions

The school does not encourage regular eating of foods high in sugar, fat or salt, especially as a reward for good behaviour or academic or other achievements however there are a few exceptions to this rule :

- Feeding and eating problems/difficulties are common in individuals with autism.
- Difficulties such as only eating a very few foods, not being able to eat at school, going long periods of time without eating or over-eating and Pica (eating non-foods).
- Therefore some pupils may be allowed to eat a small amount of foods that should be restricted alongside a programme to increase their intake and tolerance for healthier food types.
- Most of our pupils have communication difficulties and strategies that we use to encourage pupils to communicate are usually based on the use of motivators eg Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS). For children who have very limited motivators and will only communicate for foods that are not on the recommended list in the School Food Standards, an exception may be made. For example, a pupil working at Phase I PECS may use small pieces of biscuit, crisps or chocolate to encourage an exchange. Once this method of communication has become more established, it is hoped a range of healthier food options or motivating toys/activities can then be offered to continue the communication programme.
- Children who are developing feeding and drinking skills in line with feeding programmes set by SALT e.g. biting skills may eat a small amount of a range of snacks to help develop specific skills. These foods may include bite and dissolve crisps e.g. wotsits, skips, quavers, pombears or biscotti biscuits. Where possible healthier options of foods will always be offered and as skills are developed then other foods will be offered to help continue to develop skills e.g. moving onto different textures such as banana, apple slices etc. Guidance is sought from SALT to support an appropriate range of foods on offer.
- Children in school with feeding and drinking difficulties or with complex medical needs follow diets linked to a regime set by a dietician. In some



instances there may be some children who require full fat high calorie foods to help maintain their weight. This is paramount for maintaining their health and well-being. This will be detailed in their feeding advice and is followed in collaboration with parents. A daily log of foods consumed will be shared with parents.

### **Extended School**

After school clubs may offer a snack. These may include fruit juice, water and toast.

### **Curriculum**

Key healthy eating messages will be taught in Key Stages 1 and 2 within Science, DT and PSHE and in the EYFS through Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development. They may also be delivered through other curriculum areas as well as through assemblies and theme days/weeks. Opportunities are taken whenever possible to encourage pupils to taste multicultural aspects of food through cross-curricular subjects including Geography, History and RE. We promote a range of strategies for encouraging healthy eating among our pupils. Many of our pupils, particularly those with autism, are very particular about the foods that they will and will not eat. Pupils will often choose unhealthy options, and sensory or behavioural difficulties may mean that healthy diet has not always been the primary focus at home.

Through school life, we make every effort to expose pupils to a wider range of foods with the aim of promoting a healthier lifestyle. The school's catering staff work hard on a daily basis to provide healthy meals. A variety of food is offered at snack times, during Food Technology and Sensory food exploration sessions. Fruit is always available at lunchtime and to EYFS and KS1 pupils at snack time and usually to KS2 pupils also.

Longer-term strategies have included allowing pupils to experience first-hand where food comes from, so that they can experience new foods outside of meal times, for example, pupils were given the opportunity to help look after chicken eggs, watching them hatch into chicks. The school also has established gardening areas, enabling pupils to try growing their own food.

All pupils are given opportunities to prepare and sample food. The school cook now involves pupils in preparing and cooking a meal that they will eat at lunchtime once per week.

Many pupils follow programmes to reduce their sensitivity to food eg to encourage to handle or taste wet foods rather than restricting themselves to a diet of purely dry foods.

### **Special Dietary Requirements**

- The school provides food in accordance with pupils' religious beliefs and cultural practices
- Vegetarian options are available daily at lunchtime and in class



- When necessary the school provides a vegan option
- Individual care plans are created for pupils with food allergies documenting symptoms, adverse reactions, actions to be taken in an emergency and emergency contact details. School cooks and staff throughout school are made aware of any food allergies/food intolerances and requests for special diets are submitted according to an agreed process.
- Individual feeding requirements are catered for with pupils who have liquidised meals relating to the required consistency as detailed by the SALT following a thorough assessment.

## **Interventions**

For some of our children, eating and drinking can be a significant sensory issue, and is a primary area of difficulty. Interventions are in place in order to address these issues:

Scrummy Crew is a nurture group, in which select pupils are invited to explore food through stories and play. Children access these sessions in a relaxed environment, away from the classroom, with no direct expectation to taste the food that is presented to them.

Our kitchen staff also support children with sensory eating and drinking difficulties through running weekly cooking groups, where children join in the preparation and cooking of foods from the school dinner menu.

Through these interventions, we help to reduce the anxieties that children experience when presented with new or non-preferred foods and we can more successfully encourage them to broaden their diet.

## **Provision for Staff**

- Staff are encouraged to eat healthily themselves.
- Staff have discussions about healthy eating and food policy. This ensures that everyone is part of the process and that opinions of staff, pupils and parents are valued.
- Both cooks have received chef training
- Staff involved in food preparation for extended school and school events have a food hygiene certificate

## **Parents**

- Information about food in school is shared with parents via menus and policies displayed on the school website and in newsletters sent home (and displayed on school website)





- When parents and visitors come to the school the refreshments provided reinforce the schools healthy eating message, such as water, tea, coffee, fruit juice and fresh fruit.

### **Food Safety/Hygiene**

- Appropriate food safety precautions are taken when food is prepared or stored varying dependent on the food on offer. These include: ensuring that adequate storage and washing facilities are available; that food handlers undergo appropriate food hygiene training; that suitable equipment and protective clothing are available. Any food safety hazards are identified and controlled. We consult the local Environmental Health Department about legal requirements. Food hygiene certificates updated for both cooks yearly and for other staff preparing food
- School kitchen has 5 star food hygiene rating (2018)
- School ensures that all members of staff are positive role models
- Children are directed or assisted with hand washing before preparing and/or eating food and after handling animals
- Parents who send a packed lunch into school are encouraged to use an insulated bag and freezer block, if sending, for example, dairy products during warm weather periods

### **Monitoring and Assessing the Policy**

The policy will be reviewed yearly by the senior management team with the views of the whole school community taken into consideration, including those of the pupils.

We encourage children to make healthy food choices through education, adult modelling, praise and reward schemes.

### **Impact**

This policy will promote the following, that are embedded into the school; Attachment Aware and Self-Regulation.

Children will have the opportunity to experience a wide range of healthy and nutritious food. The school's healthy eating strategies work in tandem with its physical activity programme to encourage pupils to lead healthier lifestyles. All of the school's interventions are designed to prepare pupils for later life, pushing them to try new experiences outside their comfort zones

This supports excellent teaching, learning and progress. It will promote the high standards and high expectations set out in the school's aims.

Reviewed by Catherine Jones January 2020.

