

Healthy Eating Policy

For Joseph Clarke School

Key Elements

This document reflects Joseph Clarke School's commitment to developing a positive healthy eating culture for the Trust community.

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Healthy Eating Policy

Learning in Harmony Trust is dedicated to providing a healthy eating environment and preparing and supporting our children and young people to develop healthy lifestyles by supporting children and young people to make informed food choices that will contribute to their health and wellbeing.

This will be achieved at Joseph Clarke School by the approach to food provision and food education documented in this policy.

● Aims

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 support children and young people to learn about healthy lifestyles, experience healthy choices at their own level and in a motivating and functional context.
3. To ensure a consistent approach to healthy eating across the school community including pupils, staff and parents/carers.
4. To develop an environment conducive to positive, calm and enjoyable mealtimes.
5. To ensure school meals are adapted to the dietary needs of our children and young people.
6. To ensure the school meals are delivered in a safe and appropriate way for all pupils to access.
7. To establish a regular, active dialogue and partnership between the Trust, parents and the multidisciplinary team of speech and language therapists, medical professionals, dieticians and- Waltham Forest Catering.

● Food throughout the school day

School Lunches

Lunch times are seen as motivating and functional opportunities for our children and young people to develop their independence skills and to have social interaction with one another. Children and young people on non-oral foods remain with their classmates over the lunch period so that they can share in the social atmosphere.

School meals are provided by Waltham Forest Catering and served between 12.00 - 12.30pm for the primary pupils and 1.00 - 1.30pm for the secondary pupils in the school hall. The school meals meet the mandatory requirements of the School Food Standards 2019 (updated 2021).

School meals are planned on a 3 week cycle and have a variety of options including meat, fish, vegetarian and vegan meals. The school meals menu can be found on our school website and shared staff area.

In consultation with catering and school staff, we frequently review meals, approaches, and environment, in order to make meal times enjoyable and ensure the dietary and nutritional needs of our children are being met. School menus

are sent out for children and young people and parents to review at the beginning of each term and pupils are supported to make their choices each morning.

Catering staff, when necessary, will provide tasters from the meals to give children and young people the opportunity to try foods before being presented with unfamiliar meals or to allow them to accept a wider range of foods than a selective eater will typically try.

Teaching and support staff endeavour to create a safe and enjoyable eating environment. However, the dining hall can be an overwhelming sensory place for some children who may enjoy their lunch in a calmer space in line with our Positive Behaviour Support ethos.

Supervision by trained midday staff is provided at lunch and break times both in the dining hall and within the classroom, to ensure safe, healthy procedures are adhered to. Where necessary supervision and support is on an individual basis. Meal supervisors will support the pupils and will ensure the tables and surrounding floor area are left clean after the classes have left the dining hall. A middle or senior leader will be on call every day to support with any issues and ensure a smooth lunchtime.

Packed Lunches

The catering team will, on teachers' request and with sufficient notice, provide packed lunches for children and young people going offsite on curriculum visits. The content of the packed lunches will be in line with the School Food Standards.

Children who don't have school meals will bring in a packed lunch. As part of our commitment to being a healthy school, we encourage parents to provide children with healthy food and drinks. However, some children have very limited preferences and will choose to only eat very specific foods.

Snacks

The school understands that healthy snacks can be an important part of the diet of young people.

Children and young people, other than those who are enterally fed, are encouraged to eat a piece of fruit at break time as a mid-morning snack.

Parents are encouraged to send in a healthy mid-morning snack.

2.5. Drinks

Water, is provided for our pupils. The school will not provide fizzy drinks and parents are also discouraged from doing so.

We encourage children and young people to drink water regularly throughout the day to ensure they are well hydrated. Drinking water is provided at snack times and in jugs during lunch time. Water is available and accessible throughout the day and pupils are encouraged to bring in their own water bottles which are freely available and/ or kept on their tables. Children and young people are encouraged to drink more regularly during hot weather. Pupils who take fluids non orally will be given extra fluid according to their dietician recommendations.

2.6 School trips

A packed lunch with food and a drink including water will be provided by the school, for all children who usually have a school meal. Children are welcome to bring their own packed lunches on trips.

2.7 Rewards

The school does not use food as a reward for good behaviour or achievement. In line with our PBS ethos, activities are planned to enable the children to access intrinsic pleasure from engaging in the lesson or activity. Proactive strategies are used throughout the school day to help a child or young person remain content and engaged and where appropriate to help them learn positive ways to communicate. Food served at lunchtime must not be used as a motivator or withheld at any time.

2.8 Celebrations

The school recognises the importance of food when celebrating birthdays and special occasions as part of a motivating experience to help children and young people understand and enjoy different festivals, appreciate different cultures, and share and develop social eating behaviours. On these occasions care is taken to adhere to dietary requirements of the students within the class (vegetarianism, nut/other allergies, Halal/Kosher foods etc.). Staff check all food brought into school to share against any allergy plans of the pupils. Foods containing identified allergens are sent home and not shared with any pupils in the room.

2.9 Curricular and extra-curricular activity

Food and nutrition are taught at an appropriate level throughout each Key Stage in Science, PSHE and Design Technology (cooking and nutrition).

Food technology lessons provide motivating and functional contexts in which to acquire important life skills. These lessons are used to promote an understanding of healthy eating and the preparation of balanced meals and snacks. The lessons are differentiated to the individual levels and needs of each child or young person via varied outcomes surrounding healthy eating. These range from exploration of tactile ingredients through to planning and preparation of full meals.

Children and young people are also encouraged to participate in a range of cross curricular activities, to broaden both their knowledge and experience such as gardening, and growing fruit and vegetables. Visits to garden centres and farms provide opportunities to see food being grown in different ways (e.g. organically). They may also visit shops and cafes in the local community where they can put into practice independent living skills such as; locating ingredients for a recipe, making a selection from a menu, calculating the cost of their purchase and exchanging the correct money.

2.10 Special dietary & feeding requirements

The school does everything possible to accommodate pupils' specialist dietary requirements including allergies, intolerances, religious or cultural practices. See also our Allergy Awareness policy.

Pupils' food allergies are displayed in a sensitive way either by name or with their photo in the dining hall kitchen. Individual care plans are created for pupils with food allergies devised by doctors and nurses as appropriate.

Support for children and young people with dysphagia and other conditions is provided by a multidisciplinary health team, including Speech and Language therapists, Dietitians, Paediatricians and Nurses employed by the NHS. We ensure communication is clear between professionals, the Trust and parents and that staff are appropriately trained by nursing staff and written guidance is provided from relevant specialists to meet the specific needs of the children.

Children and young people who do not eat orally will be prescribed specific guidelines and recommendations by their dietician which will be administered by classroom staff. Some children and young people may be on feeds throughout the day. Some of them may also be offered oral tastes and require access to their preferred tastes during the day.

Children and young people who are selective eaters or are on restricted diets will be supported via individual

programmes and encouraged to make choices about foods they are able to eat to ensure sufficient nutritional intake. These needs are supported, monitored and reviewed via classroom teams and professionals as necessary.

Children and young people with sight impairment are supported to know what food is on their plate and its location. They are supported to feed themselves through the use of adapted cutlery, plate guards and anti-slip mats. Water-level indicators are available. Contrasting colours are used for plates, trays and tables.

3 Food safety and hygiene

We recognise that food safety and hygiene is of paramount importance for the health of the whole Trust community.

Children and young people and members of staff are encouraged to follow appropriate hygiene procedures. In particular, washing their hands properly after using the toilet and before handling food (e.g. at snack breaks and before lunch). Appropriate notices/signs are displayed in the toilet facilities reminding children and young people to wash their hands after using the toilet.

Particular care is essential in relation to the hygiene around pumps and tubes for children and young people who take non-oral food. This is part of staff training.

Lunchboxes are stored in a safe and hygienic manner, in particular away from sources of heat, e.g. pipes, radiators and direct sunlight and in a cool, well-ventilated place. Parents are encouraged to use insulated boxes or 'ice' packs in their child's lunchbox and follow any 'safety lunchbox' tips.

4 Training

A multidisciplinary team, including speech and language therapists, school nurses, and dieticians, are available to provide training where necessary. These sessions are open to school teaching and support staff, parents and the catering staff. The school supports staff to attend training opportunities with respect to healthy eating.

In order to enable children and young people to remain in class alongside their peers, staff are trained by the nursing service to manage enteral feeds. Speech and Language therapists also provide basic and advanced level training to staff on dysphagia. Only staff with advanced dysphagia training are allowed to support with eating for those children and young people identified by the Speech and Language Therapists as high risk.

5 Pupil Involvement

We provide opportunities for children and young people to play an active role and contribute to decisions on food within the Trust. The School Council provides a mechanism for children and young people's consultation and input. The school also promotes children and young people's involvement and ownership through cross-curricular activities and assemblies.

6 Expectations of staff

The school expects staff to contribute to and support this food policy across the school day.

Staff will:

- Model good practice behaviour around food and drink and in line with the policy, when they are with pupils and when eating in front of pupils.
- Support pupils during snack and lunchtimes according to their dietary and feeding requirements.
- Maintain good communication with the parents around their child's eating.
- Report any concerns and issue around, lunchtimes.

The Vice principal will:

- Support staff with the management of operational tasks around lunchtimes.
- Liaise with the cook and the area catering manager to ensure the food is appropriate for our pupils and the hygiene standards are maintained.

7 Parents, carers and family members

As part of our commitment to being a healthy school, we encourage parents to provide children with healthy food and drinks.

We encourage parents to participate in decisions concerning school food; for example, through the use of questionnaires and in response to articles in newsletters. We discuss children and young people's specialised dietary needs with parents. Menus are available for parents and children and young people to see. These are sent out to parents at the beginning of each new term or as appropriate.

In order to enable parents/carers to be involved in decision making about healthy eating priorities and be informed about food within the school:

The Food Policy is available to parents/carers on request and on the school's website. Parents receive information on food issues/healthy eating as necessary.

8 Monitoring and review

This policy is monitored and reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team.

The policy will be reviewed every 2 years.

This policy is a living document, subject to review every two years but also amended where necessary as appropriate in response to developments in the Trust and local area. Although many aspects will be informed by legislation and regulations we will involve staff, pupils and parents in writing and reviewing the policy. This will help ensure all stakeholders understand the rules that are in place and why, and that the policy affects day-to-day practice. Children and young people, where possible and appropriate, will help to design a version in language their peers understand.

Appendix 1: Available procedures to facilitate children, young people and parents' involvement in policy implementation

- Signs and symbols to support children and young people's voice and ascertain their views;
- Suggestion boxes, surveys;
- If a child or young person is having particular difficulty at lunch time or with meals, consult with catering staff to enable 'tasters' of the meal to be provided;
- Ensure children and young people are provided with the appropriate seating and adapted cutlery;
- Use cues to enable children and young people to request 'more' or indicate 'finished'. Where appropriate, as part of the 'meal time' programme encourage children and young people to eat at an appropriate speed and in an appropriate manner;
- Allow children and young people to indicate that they do not want certain foods (they should be encouraged to try these foods without taking away favourite foods);
- Food cooked by children and young people is either sent home or eaten in place of a scheduled snack or meal;
- Liaison with parents and the multi-disciplinary team to support children and young people with dysphagia or other issues with eating and drinking.