

Whitecote Primary School



Healthy Eating Policy

Approved: September 2024

Review: September 2026

HEALTHY EATING POLICY

At Whitecote Primary School we recognise the important connection between a healthy diet and the children's ability to learn effectively and achieve high standards in school. Sharing food is a fundamental experience for all people; a primary way to nurture and celebrate our cultural diversity; and an excellent bridge for building friendships and inter-generational bonds.

Our mission is to improve the health of the community by teaching children about the food served in schools, the academic content in the classroom and how their future lives can be improved.

Aims:

Proper nutrition is essential for good health and effective learning. To improve the health of pupils, staff and their families we aim to:

- Provide knowledge and awareness of food issues, including what constitutes a healthy diet and hygienic food preparation and storage methods.
- Provide a consistent programme of cross-curricular nutrition education that enables children to make informed choices without guilt or anxiety.
- Work in partnership with catering staff to ensure that nutritional standards are implemented by providing attractive, value for money meals that are appropriate to local needs.
- Provide food provision in the school that reflects the ethical and medical requirements of staff and pupils e.g. religious, ethnic, vegetarian, medical, and allergenic needs.
- Ensure that the school breakfast club follows healthy guidelines and the impact of this upon health and attendance is monitored.
- Work in partnership to achieve a pleasant and sociable dining experience which enhances the social development of each child.
- Involve staff, pupils and parents/carers in all decision making.

We aim to promote healthy & balanced eating by:

- encouraging children to choose a variety of foods to ensure a balanced intake in line with the national nutrition guide – 'The Balance of Good Health' and the new nutritional standards.
- encouraging foods which are rich in vitamins, iron and calcium, in particular fruit, vegetables, meat, beans, bread and low-fat dairy products.
- encouraging starchy foods as a source of energy (such as bread, pasta, rice and potatoes) rather than fatty foods.
- encouraging pupils to drink water, fruit juices, lower fat milk and sugar-free drinks.
- discouraging sugary drinks and less healthy snacks between meals.

School Catering:

We believe that the subtle messages that pupils receive about food and health from the daily life at school are as important as those given during lessons, eg school menus, peer pressure to eat certain snacks in packed lunches. By working together, we promote healthier eating habits.

- School lunchtime menus have been discussed between School Council members and catering staff. Local preferences are considered within the framework of the nutritional standards.
- Themed menus are linked to curriculum areas or calendar events.
- All children are given a portion of vegetables as part of their meals. They are encouraged to try some, even if it is a small portion.
- Due to the large difference in calorie requirements between infants and juniors, portion sizes are adjusted accordingly.
- Subsidised milk is available for children in all classes. Subsidised school milk is promoted as a vital contribution to calcium intake.

Breakfast:

Cereals, toasted bagels, fruit juices, fruit and milk are available. (For further details regarding Breakfast Club contact the School Office). All children across school have free access to toast when they arrive in the morning. There is not limit on the amount of toast they can take.

Packed Lunches:

Packed lunches should include some fruit or vegetable eg piece of fruit, dried fruit, cherry tomato, raw carrot, cucumber wedge. Reduced sugar drinks are encouraged.

The school provides a suitable storage area for lunch boxes. There is provision in the dining hall to put all rubbish from lunch boxes, but children are encouraged to take uneaten food home so that parents are aware of what has not been eaten. See the separate Packed Lunch Policy for further details.

Mid-morning Snack:

In consultation with parents, it has been agreed that the only snack children can bring to school is fruit. Apart from the health benefits, this helps to reduce litter and ensures children still have an appetite for their lunch. Foundation and Key Stage One pupils are provided with free fruit.

Drinks Policy

- Water for drinking is available throughout the school day.
- Children are permitted to bring water to school each day in a suitable drinks bottle. Bottles can be refilled from the sinks in the classrooms.
- Each classroom has beakers available so that children, who do not bring bottles, can access drinks of water throughout the day.
- Fizzy drinks are not permitted at any time during school activities.
- No added sugar drinks are provided at certain times by the school, eg. at the end of Sports Days.

School Ethos, Environment and Organisation:

The school recognises:

- The importance of lunchtime organisation on the behaviour of pupils.
- The value of promoting social skills.

Teachers, caterers and lunchtime staff work together to create a good dining room ambience and the development of appropriate table manners. A free school meal is funded by the school for teachers who are timetabled to eat with the pupils. Support staff are supported by the school behaviour policy and receive training from senior leaders. All Reception children are encouraged to have school meals to support the development of social skills and to promote acceptance of a wide range of foods.

Free School Meals:

All Reception and KS1 children are now entitled to a free school meal every day. The school recognises the particular value of school meals to children from low-income families. The system for free school meals is actively promoted to parents by the school and a non-discriminatory process is emphasised.

So that those families who claim free school meals (FSM) are not highlighted to other pupils, parents pay for school meals through the Parent Pay system and school packed lunches are offered to all children for trips and visits, not only those entitled to FSM.

Treats and Rewards:

Whitecote Primary School believes in promoting a balanced diet and explains that all foods can be eaten in moderation. Therefore, occasionally, sweets can be used as rewards or for celebrations, such as children bringing in Birthday sweets.

Curriculum, Teaching and Learning:

Teaching about food, nutrition and safety is mainly done through PSHE and D & T lessons although it can be linked to other areas too such as traditional foods in History, Geography or RE. Children are given the opportunity to taste, touch, smell feel and prepare a variety of foods. Multicultural aspects of food are explored and linked with school meal theme days. As pupils can have a variety of medical conditions and allergies, when it is appropriate, we teach the children about others' particular needs and allergies so that they understand why it may be a bad thing to share food and some of the consequences of sharing food.

Parental Involvement:

All new parents are given a summary of this School Food Policy. Information about school catering is provided at the Reception class new starters open days and also in school newsletters e.g. menus, theme days, free school meals. Parents and governors are invited into school to eat lunch with children. Feedback from parents is invited.