

Food and Nutrition Policy



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Introduction

At St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School, we are committed to giving our pupils consistent messages about all aspects of health to help them understand the impact of their behaviours, and encourage them to take responsibility for the choices they make. 'When children eat better, they do better – they're in better shape to reach their full potential' (Children's Food Trust, 2016). This is in line with our Character Education policy as well as the school's mission statement, 'realising the potential of every child within a caring, Christian community'.

Aims

St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School is committed to helping children develop healthy eating habits through curriculum, routine and practice. The Department for Education (2017) states that a healthy, balanced diet for pupils should include plenty of fruit and vegetables, plenty of unrefined starchy foods, some meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein, some milk and dairy foods, a small amount of food and drink high in fat, sugar and salt.

Objectives

- To contribute to the healthy, physical development of all members of our school community.
- To work with staff, pupils and parents/carers to monitor and improve children's diets at lunchtimes so that every child has access to safe, tasty and nutritious food and a safe, easily available water supply throughout the day.
- To ensure that all packed lunches brought from home and consumed in school (or on school trips) provides the pupil with healthy and nutritious food that is similar to food served in schools.
- To further develop key partnerships to provide extended opportunities for food awareness e.g. establishing a gardening project, cooking activities and an understanding of foods from different cultures.
- To introduce children to new tastes and encourage them to be adventurous in their choices of fresh fruit and vegetables.
- To promote healthy snacks at break time and to highlight the accessibility of water during unstructured times.
- To increase family awareness of the importance of having a healthy diet.
- To give the children an understanding of how food is prepared, and an opportunity to cook.
- To form links between healthy eating, mental and physical health.
- To work towards a Healthy Schools accreditation in food and nutrition.

Responsibilities

Senior Leaders:

- To lead on the development and monitoring of health education and its implementations.
- To liaise with school catering staff and midday assistants (MDAs).
- To ensure there is a welcoming, positive eating environment.
- To ensure parents/carers receive the catering menu and this is shared with children in advance.
- To ensure that this policy takes account of national guidance produced by the School Food Plan (2013), and Change4life (2017).

Subject Leaders (PE, PSHE, D&T, science, collective worship and enrichment planning):

- To ensure that what constitutes a healthy diet is taught across the curriculum.
- To provide opportunities to prepare and cook food.
- To help children to form links between healthy eating, mental and physical health

School Catering Staff:

- To ensure children are provided with high quality food that complies with the national and local nutritional standards for school food.

Governors:

- To monitor and check this school policy is upheld and can also offer guidance where a member of the Governing Body has expertise in this area.

Parents/Carers:

- To encourage a healthy diet within the school day, particularly in terms of the content of their snacks, packed lunches and drinks.
- To prevent sending children into school with nuts, sugary foods and drinks.
- To sign and keep food and allergies page updated in home-school diaries.

Food across the curriculum

St Thomas' is committed to enhancing pupils' cultural experiences through food and the school curriculum. Food, its production and preparation is an important part of the curriculum for all pupils and is explicitly taught across the curriculum through science, PSHE, D&T, PE, enrichment and other subject areas. The children are encouraged to practice gratitude in relation to food, particularly during the time of Harvest. We also explore concepts around healthy eating as part of our 'Healthy Me' topic area during collective worship (Jigsaw PSHE curriculum). We ensure that pupils are taught cooking from Year 3 to Year 6, in line with the national curriculum (2014), developing their understanding of food related issues including food hygiene, safety issues and environmentalism.

Snacks

We encourage all children to have a snack at break time to support concentration and as a way of eating five portions of fruit or vegetables per day. Children are encouraged to bring **fresh fruit or vegetables** for consumption during playtimes. Snacks with nuts are not allowed in school (see special diets and allergies below). Snacks must not include confectionary items such as chocolate bars, crisps or sweets. These expectations are monitored by staff, who communicate with parents/carers when necessary. In cases of repeated concerns, these are communicated and logged through the school's safeguarding procedures.

Packed lunches

Where pupils decide to have a packed lunch, lunchboxes should have healthy and nutritious food, in line with the recommendations of The School Food Standards. All children are encouraged to eat their sandwiches, wraps, pasta and other savoury foods first, then to move on to yogurts and fruit. Water is available for children who may have forgotten a drink or who wish to have more than what has been provided as part of their lunch. Lunchboxes should not contain crisps, chocolates, cakes, sweets, fizzy or sugary drinks, or nuts (see special diets and allergies below).

School dinners

Our in-house school catering staff provide meals which meet the national guidelines for nutritional standards. A menu is sent home and on display for both parents/carers and pupils to look at before they make their choices. Whilst being served, catering staff discuss their choices with children and encourage them to try new foods. Cups of water are provided and are readily available on each table during eating times.

Gardening Club

At gardening club, the children are taught how to plant, care for, and harvest fruits and vegetables. They are supported to make connections between the food they see in the supermarket and the land that produces it. Children are shown how to incorporate these items into their daily diets with healthy recipes.

Cooking Club

Over a period of eight weeks each term, a group of children have the opportunity to create healthy recipes using fresh ingredients offering a balanced intake of vitamins, minerals, protein and carbohydrates. Children are encouraged to discuss and practise these skills at home.

Special diets and allergies

Parents and carers must specify any special dietary needs as well as allergies in their child's home-school diary. As needs change, diaries must be updated to ensure their safety in school. Staff will pay particular attention to these notes in preparation for food tasting or eating within the curriculum and/or enrichment opportunities.

We are a nut free school but we cannot guarantee that food products are totally nut free. Parents are asked to refrain from providing food products, which may contain nuts, in packed lunches or any other food brought into the school.

All staff are aware of children's dietary needs. This information is displayed in the staffroom and relevant first aid areas. Staff are trained to recognise and manage allergic reactions. If a child requires an epipen then this is kept in the child's classroom for easy access. A spare epipen is also kept in the School Office.

Children are able to choose their school meals at the beginning of each term. School catering staff offer a vegetarian option at lunch every day. In addition, the catering staff provide food in accordance with pupils' religious beliefs and cultural practices.

'Water for all'

Children are encouraged to drink water regularly. Pupils and staff have access to fresh drinking water throughout the school day. There are water fountains on the school playground and in various corridors. Although children are encouraged to bring in their own water bottles, every classroom also has access to drinking water.

Events and celebrations

We want to give children the opportunity to celebrate their birthdays but in order to reduce the amount of high fat, sugar and salt foods children eat, we ask that parents and carers send in celebratory foods that amount to a small portion of food for each child, e.g. a small bag of sweets for each child in the class. Children with special diets, e.g. anaphylactic, diabetics or those with other allergies or intolerances should always be considered (see special diets and allergies below).

The Parent-Teacher-Association (PTA) organise various fundraising events throughout the year. Many of these events may involve the sale and consumption of unhealthy foods, e.g. a bake sale or a pizza sale. These events are held outside of the school day.

References and further reading

Children's Food Trust (2016) Children's Food Trust. *Eat Better Start Better*. Available at: <http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/advice/eat-better-start-better>

Department for Education (2017) *The Eatwell Guide*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-eatwell-guide>

Department for Education (2014) *The national curriculum in England: key stages 1 and 2 framework document*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-primary-curriculum>

Department for Education (2013) *The School Food Plan*. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-school-food-plan>

Healthy Schools (2013) Available at: healthyschools.org.uk

Jigsaw PSHE Curriculum (2013) Available at: www.jigsawpshe.com

National Health Service (2017) *Change4Life*. Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families>.