



St. Alban & St. Stephen Catholic Primary School & Nursery

Learning and growing with God by our side.

School Food Policy

Approved by:

Governing Body

Date: January 2024

Next review due by:

January 2026



The school is dedicated to providing an environment that promotes healthy eating and enables pupils to make informed food choices both inside and outside of school. This will be achieved by the whole school approach to food provision and food education documented in this policy. The policy was formulated through consultation between members of staff, governors, parents and pupils.

INTRODUCTION

In our school, we are committed to giving all 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.

The school supports the '5-A-DAY' ethos to encourage children to eat five portions of fruit and vegetables a day, which has been shown to reduce the onset of certain life-threatening conditions, as well as being helpful in tackling and preventing childhood obesity.

We have used the following approach to identify what areas we need to change to develop a healthier approach to the issue of food in our school:

- How well are we doing?
- How well should we be doing?
- What more should we aim to achieve?
- What must we do to make it happen?
- What action should we take and how do we review progress?

RATIONALE

St Alban & St Stephen is a healthy school. It is important that we consider all elements of our work to ensure that we promote health awareness in all members of the school community. We can provide a valuable role model to pupils and their families about food and healthy-eating patterns.

Through effective leadership, the school ethos and the curriculum, all school staff can bring together all elements of the school day to create an environment which supports a healthy lifestyle.

Encouraging healthy eating also links to our school value of respect. In encouraging pupils to adopt a healthy lifestyle, we are helping them to show respect for themselves, as well as respect for the environment.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To ensure that we are giving consistent messages about food and health across the school community including pupils, staff and parents/carers
- To give our pupils the information they need to make healthy choices
- To promote health awareness
- To contribute to the healthy physical development of all members of our school community
- To encourage all children to eat five pieces of fruit or vegetables each day

1. FOOD AND DRINK THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL DAY

Breakfast

Breakfast is an important meal that should provide 25% of a child's energy requirement and supports pupils to be ready to learn at the start of each day. The school runs a daily breakfast club for pupils who choose to attend this provision from 7.45 am – 8.45am.

School Lunches

School meals are provided by Herts Catering Ltd

The school meals meet the mandatory requirements of the School Food Standards.

School meals are planned on a 3-week cycle and always contain a meat, fish and vegetarian option. The school meals menu can be found on our school website. Meal choices can be made in advance online, enabling parents to discuss meal choices with their child beforehand.

Packed Lunches

The school relies on parents to use common sense to pack healthy lunches for their children that will be balanced and prepare the children for afternoon learning. As a reminder the Children's Food Trust give guidance as to the food groups that packed lunches should include.

Packed lunches should aim to include:

- Some starchy foods such as bread (sliced bread, pitta bread, wraps, bagels), pasta, potatoes, couscous; choose wholegrain where possible
- 1 portion of fruit and 1 portion of vegetables or salad
- Dairy food such as cheese or yoghurt
- Meat, fish, or another source of protein such as eggs, beans and pulses, hummus, falafel
- Oily fish once every 3 weeks e.g. sardines or salmon

Packed lunches should **not** include:

- Crisps or crisp type snacks e.g. flavoured rice cakes or cheddars (except once a week on Fridays if parents wish)
- Sweets
- Any items containing chocolate including bars, biscuits, cakes or yoghurts/desserts

The school provides water for all pupils at lunchtime; therefore there is no need for packed lunches to include a drink.

Snacks

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

In the Early Years, snacks are provided during the morning and include fruit or vegetables. Key Stage 1 pupils are provided with free fruit.

Key Stage 2 pupils are able to bring a healthy snack into school to eat at break-times. This must not be chocolate, sweets or crisps. This must also not contain any nuts as the school maintains a nut-free environment.

After school club for those pupils that use that provision has food provided as a rolling snack until 4.30pm with a more substantial cold tea for those pupils that remain until 6pm.

Drinks

The school is a water-only school, with the exception of the free and subsidised milk entitlement for all primary pupils. Water is provided at lunch times and at water fountains. Children also bring their own refillable water bottle into school each day.

School Trips

A packed lunch will be provided by the school, for all children who usually have a free school meal. Children are welcome to bring their own packed lunches on trips, however, these lunches must adhere to the same food and drink guidance described above.

2. EATING ENVIRONMENT

It is important that the children feel they are eating in a welcoming, clean and comfortable environment which encourages them to be there. The lower site has a large dinner hall, where

they children are put through in year order which varies. Packed lunch children are allowed to mingle in with school lunch children if they wish to. The number of children with packed lunches is small with 29% taking school lunches. When asked, a number of the children on the lower site said they 'enjoyed their food' their favourite day being 'Friday pizza'. The token system is used to ensure that each child receives the lunch they and their parent/carer have chosen for them. Children are expected to carry their own trays and cutlery, and to clear their empty plates and cutlery afterwards. Classes are seated together.

In the upper site the eating area has a busier feel as it is a smaller area with lower ceiling. Again the children all seemed very content with the food on offer with some commenting when asked about environment that it 'can be a little noisy'. Packed lunch numbers are higher on the Upper site with school lunches at about 41%.

The token system is used to ensure that each child receives the lunch they and their parent/carer have chosen for them. Children are expected to carry their own trays, cutlery and drinks and to clear their empty plates and cutlery afterwards. There is a quiet table where children can choose to eat in a slightly quieter environment.

3. FOOD ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Across the school, there are many opportunities for pupils to develop knowledge and understanding of health, including healthy-eating patterns and practical skills that are needed to understand where food comes from such as shopping, preparing and cooking food.

- Literacy provides children with the opportunity to explore poetry, persuasion, argument and narrative work using food and food-related issues as a stimulus, e.g. writing to a company to persuade them to use non-GM foods in children's food and drink etc.
- Maths can offer the possibility of understanding nutrition labelling, calculating quantities for recipes, weighing and measuring ingredients.
- Science provides an opportunity to learn about the types of food available, their nutritional composition, digestion and the function of different nutrients in contributing to health, and how the body responds to exercise. The Eatwell model is used throughout the school (see appendix 1) as a model of understanding a balanced diet.
- Religious Education provides the opportunity to discuss the role of certain foods in the major religions of the world. Children experience different foods associated with religious festivals.
- Design Technology can afford pupils the opportunity to research food issues using the internet and other electronic resources. Pupils design packaging and adverts to promote healthy food choices.
- Food Technology as part of design technology provides the opportunity to learn about where food comes from and apply healthy-eating messages through practical work with food, including preparation and cooking.
- Personal, Social and Health Education encourages young people to take responsibility for their own health and well-being, teaches them how to develop a healthy lifestyle and addresses issues such as body image. Pupils can discuss issues of interest to young people, e.g. advertising and sustainable development.
- Music can explore songs which link to the theme of food.

- Geography provides a focus on the natural world and changing environment, offering the chance to consider the impact our consumer choices have on people across the world who rely on growing food as their source of income. Children are encouraged to learn more about and shop for Fair Trade and locally grown food.
- History provides insight into changes in diet and food over time.
- Physical Education provides pupils with the opportunity to develop physically and to understand the practical impact of sport, exercise and other physical activity such as dance and walking.
- School visits provide pupils with activities to enhance their physical development, e.g. to activity centres.

4. CELEBRATIONS

The school recognises the importance of celebrating birthdays and special occasions. For birthday celebrations, all children will receive permission to wear their own clothes that day and have a birthday song. We do not allow sweets to be brought into school for birthdays. For celebration events, we welcome a variety of foods, from different cultures, for children to try. Class teachers will provide parents/carers with suggestion lists of celebration food to ensure that we have a wide variety of food choices available. Occasional fund-raising events may include the sale of nut-free treat food such as cakes, but the inclusion of other foods will also be encouraged. Sweets and chocolates are not used as rewards in school.

5. ALLERGENS, INTOLERANCES AND PUPIL REQUIREMENTS

The school does everything possible to accommodate pupils' specialist dietary requirements including allergies, intolerances, religious or cultural practices. Individual care plans are created for pupils with food allergies and the lead member of staff for this is Sandra Grisley in line with Health and Safety policy of the school. Pupils' food allergies are displayed in a sensitive, GDPR compliant way in school.

6. THE WHOLE SCHOOL FOOD COMMUNITY

The school expects staff to contribute to and support this food policy across the school day. Staff and visitors will be expected to model good practice behaviour around food and drink and in line with the policy, when in the company of pupils.

The school provides a staff breakfast free of charge to all staff once a week to promote wellbeing and a healthy start to the day. A free cooked breakfast is also provided to all Year 6 pupils during SATS week to encourage children to eat before they start the school day.

Our relationship with parents/carers is very important and we aim to support them with information and advice around food, so that they are best prepared to make healthy choices for their families. Herts Catering provide an annual food-tasting session for parents once a year in conjunction with parent consultations.

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, pupils, parents/carers and governors. The policy will be reviewed every 2 years.