



Hesleden Primary School

Food in School Statement of Policy

(Incorporating Curriculum, School Meals and Packed Lunches)

Introduction

Hesleden Primary School recognises the important connection between healthy eating and a pupil's ability to learn effectively and achieve high standards in school. Schools are an influential setting and can contribute significantly to improving the health and well-being of pupils. We also recognise the role the school can play, as part of the larger community, to promote family health, and sustainable food, including production and farming practices.

The school recognises that 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.

Good nutrition in childhood can help to prevent a variety of health problems, both in the short term and later in life. There is increasing concern that many children are consuming too much fat, sugar and salt and too little fibre, fruit and vegetables.

A whole school approach centred on food education and skills (such as cooking and growing food), the food served in schools, and core academic content in the classroom can be guided by this policy and its guidelines.

The Grab 5! Model School Food Policy (www.sustainweb.org) has been incorporated into this Policy.

The Brain - Food Research and Science

Over the past few years there has been increased amounts of research into the effects of diet on brain functioning. Some facts include:

- 💡 Brains need water - without it dehydration sets in rapidly
- 💡 Some foods are better for the brain than others

What we eat for breakfast and how much water we drink affects brain functioning:

- 💡 Breakfast rekindles dwindling glucose stores, which are the brain's only source of food
- 💡 Complex carbohydrates like bananas, cereals and low-fat milk are all useful breakfast brain food
- 💡 Drinking water is also important - 5 or 6 glasses a day help our brain, and the rest of our body - to avoid the effects of dehydration

Other brain friendly foods include:

- 💡 Antioxidant-loaded foods like peppers, orange juice, carrots, sweet potatoes and apricots
- 💡 Iron and zinc rich foods like wheat germ, almonds, dark-green leafy vegetables and cooked beans

Fibres in the brain, called axons, carry electrical impulses between neurons (cells) inside the brain. These axons work best when coated in a fatty white insulation called myelin. Myelin coatings are built up effectively with a good diet.

A good diet combined with increased oxygen also helps to produce electricity in the brain. This is important because the electricity triggers useful chemical reactions in the brain, helping neurons to interact with each other.

The quality of diet, exercise and sleep actually helps memory to function more effectively.

Aims of this Policy

- To improve the health of pupils, staff and their families by helping to influence their eating habits through increasing their knowledge and awareness of food issues, including what constitutes healthy eating.
- To provide an opportunity for pupils to plan recipes, budget, prepare and cook food.
- To increase pupils' knowledge of food production, manufacturing, distribution and marketing practices, and their impact on both health and the environment.
- To ensure pupils are well nourished at school, and that every pupil has access to safe, tasty, and nutritious food and a safe, easily available water supply during the school day.
- To ensure that food provision in the school reflects the ethical and medical requirements of staff and pupils e.g. religious, ethnic, vegetarian, medical, and allergenic needs.
- To make the provision and consumption of food an enjoyable and safe experience in a pleasurable and dedicated environment.
- To introduce and promote practices within the school to reinforce these aims, and to remove or discourage practices that do not support them.
- To monitor menus and food choices to inform policy development and provision.

Our Objectives are:

1. To work towards ensuring that this policy is both accepted and embraced by:
 - School management
 - Governors
 - Teachers and support staff
 - Pupils
 - Parents
 - Food providers
 - The school's wider community
2. To integrate these aims into all aspects of school life, in particular:
 - All food provision within the school
 - The curriculum
 - Pastoral and social activities

How we will do this

1. Establish an effective structure to oversee the development, implementation, and monitoring of this policy, and to encourage a participatory approach to meeting the objectives. Consultation should be ensured throughout the process with priority given to the views of pupils. This will be achieved by:
 - Senior Leadership Team member responsible for development and monitoring of healthy food practices in school
 - The School Council SNAG will work with Taylor Shaw and kitchen staff to develop menus showing healthy options and preferred choices.
 - HT providing updates to Governors summarising the whole service provided (menus, uptake etc.)
2. Develop an understanding and ethos within the school of safe, tasty, nutritious, environmentally sustainable food, through both education and example. Activities will include:
 - Curriculum activities appropriate to each year group's technology/topic work will include food tasting, sandwich making etc. (ie when studying India/Chinese New Year/Healthy bodies etc.)
 - Through direct teaching about healthy living (Science, PSHE) children will learn about food groups, healthy choices.
 - Development of a school garden to encourage growing and sustainability.
3. Create an environment, both physical and social, conducive to the enjoyment of safe, tasty, nutritious and affordable food. This will be achieved by:
 - Kitchen staff appropriately trained and keeping their environment clean and tidy, food is served well and food is stored correctly.
 - Breakfast club encourages children to begin the day with a healthy diet (wholewheat cereals/breads) and this is promoted across the school.
 - Water is available for all staff and children at all times, and children are encouraged to bring a refillable bottle from home.



Hesleden Primary School

Food in School

Information and guidelines for School Meals and Packed Lunches

School Meals

Taylor Shaw is our School Meals contractor. This means that the ladies who work in the kitchen are supported by them to design and prepare menus which are tailored to the preferences of our children, at the same time, meeting the food-based and nutrient-based standards for food in schools. Our school menus are nutritionally balanced and agreed and provide varied, healthy choices for all children.

Our menus are organised on a four-week rolling programme and provide a choice of two hot meals and one deli (sandwich) option each day. We also operate an ordering system and children make their choices one week in advance to ensure ordering and preparation serves their choices.

Children with special dietary requirements (religion/medical/vegetarian) can be catered for following consultation with Taylor Shaw.

Information about the food-based and nutrient-based standards can be found here; and further examples can be found at: <http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/>

Why have the school food standards been introduced?

The standards were developed following research showing that children were not making healthy food choices at lunchtime and that school meals did not meet their nutritional needs. In 2005 the Government appointed an expert group, the School Meals Review Panel (SMRP), to recommend new standards for school food.

The SMRP report, published in October 2005, proposed radical changes which would prohibit or restrict food high in fat, sugar and salt or made with poor quality meat being served at school. The SMRP also set minimum levels for the nutritional content of school lunches. The standards generally adopt the SMRP and School Food Trust advice and recommendations. Unhealthy eating patterns take time to change, so these new standards for school lunches are just the start of a much longer process.

Why have food-based standards been introduced for lunches?

- They define types of food which are no longer allowed or are restricted, in order to replace food high in fat, sugar and salt with more nutritious food and drinks.
- To ensure nourishing food is served more frequently.
- To ensure an immediate improvement in school lunches, allowing time for the more detailed process of developing meals that meet the new nutrient-based standards.

Why have nutrient-based standards been introduced for lunches?

- It is important that school lunches contain sufficient energy and micronutrients to promote good nutritional health in all pupils and to protect those who are nutritionally vulnerable.
- The nutrient-based standards aim to make the food offered healthier by increasing the vitamin and mineral content and decreasing the fat, saturated fat, non-milk extrinsic sugars and sodium (salt) content.

Empty calories

Increasingly, a large proportion of many children's diets consists of manufactured food high in fat, sugar and salt. These highly processed products often provide 'empty calories' which fill children up but do not supply the essential nutrients they need for healthy physical and mental development.

Health risks

Much of the food no longer allowed under the food-based standards is associated with a growing range of child health and nutritional issues, including obesity, diabetes and tooth decay and erosion. Childhood obesity is now recognised as a major threat to long-term health and the statistics are alarming.

How the new standards will help children

- The ultimate goal is to help children enjoy balanced meals containing good sources of protein and carbohydrate, accompanied by lots of vegetables, salad and fruit.
- These standards mean that the less healthy food choices, high in fat, salt and sugar are replaced by more nutritious options.
- They should have a positive impact on children's health, help encourage them to eat more nutritious food and improve the quality of school food nationwide.

How will schools benefit

Feedback from teachers suggests that changes in the food provided helps bring about better behaviour and performance in the classroom.

Packed lunches

Packed lunches can contribute to almost a third of a child's weekly food intake and therefore need to be balanced and nutritious. The aim of these guidelines is to ensure that packed lunches (brought in from home) reflect the new standards for school meals introduced in September 2006. Our reasons for this include:

- The content of lunchboxes needs to reflect the requirement of schools to meet minimum food and nutrition standards for school meals.
- The contents of some lunchboxes in school can be extremely unhealthy, recent monitoring of lunchboxes has shown that they can contain foods with high levels of fat, sugar and salt, and very few fruit and vegetables.
- The short term effects of unhealthy packed lunches and food intake can include poor growth, tooth decay, obesity, anaemia, constipation, poor concentration and behavioural problems which may have an impact on a child's learning.
- The longer term effects of a poor diet in childhood can be an increased risk of stroke, cancer, heart disease and diabetes in adulthood.

We want to:

- To improve the nutritional quality of packed lunches in schools and the eating habits of children at lunchtimes
- To develop an awareness in pupils, parents, staff and the wider community that the school takes a pro-active approach to promoting healthy eating.
- To encourage healthy eating habits in childhood that can influence health and well being in later life.
- To ensure that food brought into school (packed lunches) reflects and meets food standards for School Food (2006).

Meeting the Standards through packed lunches:

Children's packed lunches should be based on the 'Eatwell Plate' model which shows items the 5 main food groups; (Food Standards Agency 2007).

- ✓ Bread, Rice, Potatoes, Pasta - These starchy foods are a healthy source of energy. Packed lunches should include 2 or more portions.
- ✓ Fruit and Vegetables - These foods provide vitamins, minerals and fibre. Lunches should include at least 1 portion of fruit and 1 portion of vegetables / salad, or more.
- ✓ Milk and Dairy foods - These foods provide calcium for healthy bones and teeth. Include 1 portion at lunch.

- ✓ Meat, Fish, Eggs, Beans - These foods provide protein for growth. Packed lunches should include 1 portion of these foods.
- ✗ Foods and drinks high in fat and / or sugar - It is important not to fill up on too many foods that are high in fat and / or sugar at the expense of other more nutritious foods. Limiting high fat and sugar foods will help protect young people from becoming overweight as well as helping prevent tooth decay, heart disease, stroke, and diabetes. This food group includes sweets, chocolate, crisps, cereal bars, fruit bars, toffee/salted popcorn, squash and fizzy drinks.

To keep packed lunches in line with food standards for school meals, packed lunches **should not** contain the following:

- ✗ Fizzy / sugary drinks in cartons, bottles or cans - *high in sugar*
- ✗ Chocolate-coated products / sweets / confectionery - *high in sugar and fat*
- ✗ Cereal bars, fruit bars - *high in sugar and sometimes fat*
- ✗ Chocolate spread as a filling for sandwiches - *high in sugar*
- ✗ Chewing gum - *not allowed in school*
- ✗ Sugared / toffee and salted popcorn - *high in sugar*
- ✗ Crisps or packet savoury snacks high in salt and fat - *some varieties are high in salt and fat*
- ✗ Salted nuts - *very high in salt*

Drinks - the school will provide all children with a cup for water at lunchtime in school

Waste and Disposal

The school will, within reason, send any uneaten packed lunch food items back home. This is so that parents can also monitor what their child has eaten during the day.

Packed Lunch Containers

It is the responsibility of the parents / carers to provide an appropriate packed lunch container where food items can be stored securely and appropriately until the lunchtime period. Parents are advised to include an ice pack. Food products prepared and stored in ambient temperatures after a period of time can have increased levels of bacteria in them.

Storage of Packed Lunches

The school will provide an area for storing packed lunch bags, in the most convenient and appropriate place possible. However the school cannot provide cooled storage areas and therefore cannot take legal responsibility for foods prepared at home and then brought into school.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The school will carry out monitoring of packed lunch provision - where there may be concerns over a child's food / nutrition intake and / or content of packed lunches, this can be dealt with timely and sensitively.

OfSTED are required to report on how the school promotes the personal development and wellbeing of all pupils - this may include food provision including packed lunches brought into

school. Our most recent Inspection report states: *"Pupils have a strong grasp of the importance of diet, physical activities, and personal hygiene to their health and well-being."*

The Local Authority will work with the school to review packed lunch provision and will provide advice and support to members of the school community.

We are a Healthy School, and as part of that schools are required to:

- ensure healthier food and drink options are available and promoted in breakfast clubs, at break and at lunchtimes - as outlined by Food in Schools guidance
- monitors pupils' menus and food choices to inform policy development and provision

Schools that have achieved Healthy School Status may be monitored as part of a national and local quality assurance process.

This Policy and its Guidelines will be reviewed every 2 years, unless changes to published guidance require this to be different..

This Policy has been agreed by the Governors and shared with staff, children and parents.

Signed: (Chair of Governors)

Date: