



The Willows School

Food in School Policy

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An academy within:



“Learning together, to be the best we can be”

1. Introduction

The Governing Body recognises the important connection between a healthy diet and a student's ability to learn effectively and achieve high standards in school. They also recognise that a whole school approach to healthy messages in our curriculum and in the food we provide ensures consistency in the messages given to the school community about the value of a healthy diet.

The Governing Body recognises that sharing food is a fundamental experience for all people. Food is an effective way to nurture and celebrate our cultural diversity, and an excellent way of encouraging social interaction.

Schools are increasingly offering 'extended' services and activities to their communities. This means that pupils, other children and young people, staff, parents/carers and the wider community will be able to access activities co-ordinated by schools which could occur before and after the school day, and during holidays and weekends. Often refreshments and food will be provided during these activities, and we will encourage all providers of services and activities to adhere to the advice contained in this guidance. There will be significant emphasis on Being Healthy in the type of 'extended' services and activities co-ordinated by Schools for their communities.

2. Aim

We at The Willows aim to improve educational achievement in this school and benefit the entire community by teaching students and their families ways to establish and maintain life-long healthy and sustainable eating habits. This will be accomplished via food education and skills development through the academic content in the classroom, food provision within school and extra curricular activities.

3. Objectives

- 3.1 Nutrition, food sustainability and food safety should be taught at an appropriate level throughout each key stage by including it in relevant schemes of work.
- 3.2 Extra curricular activities such as growing and cooking clubs should be encouraged.
- 3.3 All staff should have access to training about healthy eating and lifestyle.

- 3.4 All staff and pupils should have access to safe, tasty and nutritious food during the school day, as appropriate to their age and the time spent on the site.
- 3.5 All staff and pupils should have access to a safe drinking water supply throughout the school day.
- 3.6 Food and drink should be provided in a hygienic, safe and pleasant environment.
- 3.7 Food provision should reflect the diverse needs of pupils and staff, this relates to religious, cultural, medical requirements and should also contribute to reducing health inequalities.
- 3.8 The uptake of free school meals should be encouraged in a way which eliminates stigma, and contributes to reducing health inequalities.
- 3.9 Practices which reinforce the above objectives should be encouraged and those which negate them should cease.

There is a lot of evidence to support the view that eating habits are generally formed at an early age and that the diet young people choose, or are offered, can have a direct impact on learning and health – well nourished children are likely to be more receptive to teaching, and learn better. We, at The Willows, are committed to encouraging and facilitating young people to make informed choices and involve them in discussions about developing good eating habits, and about what provision is available to them in the school setting.

We have developed all of our work in the area of Food in Schools through involvement in our local Healthy Schools Scheme. Each of the sections that follow has formed part of our Healthy Schools annual action plan, and has involved consultation with our whole school community.

This policy is a working document and will expand as different pieces of work are undertaken and added to the policy document.

Our work in this area will help maintain the current Healthy Schools status.

4. Working with the Whole School Community

4.1 Aims:

- To work with parents/carers to optimise the education, achievement, health and well being of pupils.
- To work with all staff to optimise the opportunities to re-enforce key messages and to offer positive role models whenever possible.

- To give children and young people a voice in issues relating to food in schools.

4.2 Objectives:

- The school will work with and consult parents/carers about the food in school.
- The school will work with parents/carers to encourage them to provide healthy lunch boxes and snacks.
- Where possible, lunchtime supervisors and catering staff will receive information and training on healthy eating which is consistent with the healthy eating messages that pupils receive through the curriculum.
- Staff are encouraged to teach by example so that healthy eating attitudes and values are modelled to pupils in and out of the classroom.
- Where staff eat a school meal or their own packed lunch, they should act as a positive role model.
- To actively involve children and young people, by engaging them in:
 - Utilising the school council process to gather a consensus view on current and developing provision in school.
 - Testing out new initiatives.
 - Decision making on issues relating to food.
 - Understanding the issues relating to healthy eating.

4.3 Expected Outcomes

- Parents/carers and school work more closely together.
- An increased potential for a consistent approach to healthy eating at school and at home.
- All staff feel confident to give healthy eating messages to pupils
- Staff are seen as positive role models in and out of the classroom.
- An increased potential for a consistent approach to healthy eating across the school day.

5. The provision of Fruit and Vegetables

5.1 Aims

- To promote the consumption of Fruit and Vegetables

5.2 Objectives

- The school will incorporate the healthy eating message into the school curriculum.
- Pupils will be encouraged to try different fruit and vegetables.
- Pupils will be encouraged to eat fruit/vegetable without chopping or, in the case of apples or pears, without prior peeling.

- Where possible, to recycle the peel and waste from any fruit and vegetables consumed at school.
- To encourage pupils to wash non peel fruit prior to consumption.
- To lay the foundation for the provision and take up of fruit and vegetables at other times of the day.
- The school will look at ways of promoting consumption of fruit and vegetables at key stages 2, 3 and 4.

5.3 Expected outcomes

- Pupils develop the good dietary habit of eating fruit or vegetables as a snack at break times.
- Pupils understand the importance of fruit and vegetables in the diet.
- Pupils may have the opportunity to try fruit and vegetables they may not have previously experienced.
- Eating a portion of fruit and vegetables will contribute to the five portions of fruit and vegetables that are recommended by the national 5 A DAY programme.

6. Break-time Snacks

The requirement for snacks and drinks during a morning break may be questioned, but growing children may benefit from the additional intake of food at this time. The school will supply foods which promote healthy eating and dental health.

6.1 Aims

- To encourage the provision of a nutritious snack which may give a slow energy release, thus aiding concentration and learning.

6.2 Objectives

- To provide foods which will provide energy to sustain attention span and improve mental performance and ability.
- To develop good dietary habits that can be continued into adulthood. (School Caterers will be limited to providing foods which meet the recommended guidelines).
- Examples of suitable food could include fruit, vegetables, toast, teacakes, yoghurt, muesli bars, bacon sandwiches, scones, milk, fruit juice and sugar free squashes.

6.3 Expected Outcomes

- Pupils can identify a healthier snack.
- Pupils know which food is allowed within school.
- Increase in pupil concentration span and therefore educational performance.

- Pupil behaviour is improved.

7. Lunch time Food Service

7.1 Aims

- To provide a good quality food service, which promotes healthy eating and eating together sociably.

7.2 Objectives

- To work with the caterer to ensure that the National Nutritional Standards for School Lunches are adhered to as a minimum.
- To promote healthier choices which are freshly prepared using a minimum of processed food, where possible utilising locally procured produce.
- To display weekly menus in the school dining area and on the school notice boards.
- The cook, kitchen staff and lunch time support staff will, subject to availability, receive information and training on healthy eating which is consistent with the healthy eating messages that pupils receive through the curriculum.
- Lunchtime staff will encourage pupils to choose healthy balances of food.
- Water will always be available free of charge as a lunch time drink for all pupils.
- To ensure appropriate time tabling and time allocation for the lunch break to allow for good experiences of eating and talking with friends.
- To explore ways to enhance the environment for school meals by improving furniture, fittings and equipment in the dining area so that there is a pleasant environment for pupils and staff to eat their lunch.
- To provide supervision of pupils at lunchtime, with a sensitive manner by teaching and/or non-teaching staff.
- To help pupils gain social skills and appropriate behaviour when eating food.
- To work with parents/carers, school council, staff and caterers to design menus to meet the religious, ethnic and vegetarian needs of pupils and staff.
- Where a medical condition determines that a child eats a specialised diet (e.g. allergies, diabetes, coeliac disease, cystic fibrosis) the catering service will, where possible, try to accommodate the varying needs. The school will encourage parents/carers to discuss the individual requirements following consultation with their GP and a paediatric dietician. No diet will be implemented by the caterers without consent from the Head teacher.
- To ensure that pupils are reminded to wash their hands before they eat food.

7.3 Expected outcomes

- Pupils understand appropriate social behaviour at mealtimes.
- Pupils and staff should have enough time to enjoy eating their lunch together.
- There is less conflict about food.

- Children are well fed and ready to learn.
- An enhanced environment in the dining area will increase social development of pupils, learning to eat together and enjoy food.

8. Healthier Lunch Boxes

In order to ensure that all children have a healthy, balanced meal, it is important to work with parents to improve the quality of food provided in lunch boxes brought from home. As these meals are eaten on school premises/school trips it is important that the content of lunch boxes is in line with the school's policy on food provision.

8.1 Aim

- To ensure that all children who eat their lunch on school premises/school trips enjoy a healthy, balanced meal.

8.2 Objectives

- To ensure that lunch boxes are stored safely and hygienically.
- To work with parents/carers and children to raise awareness about eating a healthy packed lunch.
- To support parents/carers by making available information and suggestions regarding food and drink in order to provide a Healthy balanced lunchbox.
- To ensure lunchtime arrangements for children eating a packed lunch are given the same consideration as children eating a school lunch.
- To ensure that the school packed lunches are in line with the school's Healthy School policy which is available on the school website.

8.3 Expected Outcomes

- All pupils are eating a healthy lunch
- Pupils understand appropriate social behaviour at mealtimes.
- There is less conflict about food.
- Children are well fed and ready to learn.
- An enhanced environment in the dining area, increasing social development of pupils, learning to eat together and enjoy food.

9. Provision of Drinking Water

9.1 Aims

- To ensure that children and teaching staff have access to drinking water at all times during the school day.

- To encourage children to drink more water at school so that they remain properly hydrated.

9.2 Objectives

- To give pupils access to water during the lunch and break times, as well as during lessons.
- To encourage and enable water and milk consumption and limit sweetened drinks to meal times.
- The water supply will not be located in toilets, and children will be discouraged from drinking water from the taps in the toilets.
- Canned and glass bottled drinks will not be allowed due to health and safety considerations.
- Fizzy and Carbonated drinks are not allowed in school or school trips in compliance with the Department for Education's School Food Standards Regulations 2014.
- Care will be taken to ensure bottles used are designed to be re-filled with water only at a designated sink/area during the break times.
- Plastic cups/beakers can be used for pupils who do not have a water bottle.

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10. Special Considerations

10.1 Rewards

The school believes in the importance of rewarding and celebrating good behaviour and good work, but the practice of giving sweets is not consistent with the taught health message of reducing sugary foods in the diet. Sugary foods contribute to

damaging dental health. Dieticians are unequivocal in their view that food should not be used as a reward. Childhood obesity is a major and increasing problem in the UK. The school therefore does not use confectionery or any other food as a reward. Good work and good behaviour is rewarded in different ways e.g. praise, stars, school stamps and merit certificates. Further examples of reward systems used in this school are documented in the Behaviour Policy.

10.2 Return from holiday treats

To maintain a consistent message about healthy eating in school and to ensure children are not eating food without the consent of their parents/carers which may contain ingredients they are allergic to, parents/carers are asked not to send in sweets and confectionery on return from a holiday. Children are asked to talk about their experiences on holiday, share photos etc.

10.3 Celebrations in school

From a social and cultural perspective, there will be times when it is both appropriate and acceptable for the whole school to celebrate special occasions together by sharing food and confectionery. Examples of these times may be: Easter, Christmas, Eid, Ramadan, Divali, Vaisakhi and Hannukah, Birthdays.

10.4 Competitions

There may be occasional times throughout the school year when confectionery is used as a prize for competitions organised by the school or local community. On these occasions prizes given are at the discretion of the Head Teacher.

10.5 After school clubs

Any food or drinks provided by after school clubs are healthy and nutritious e.g. milk, water, fruit, vegetables, toast, cereals, bread products. Foods high in fat and sugar are avoided.

10.6 Social catering/formal meetings

The school ensures that where food is available at any event held at the school e.g. open evenings, plays, concerts etc., healthy options are provided. Where food is provided at staff meetings, governors' meetings and other formal meetings healthy options are available, promoting the ethos of the healthy school to parents/carers and the wider community.

10.7 Sporting events

It is acceptable for pupils taking part in after school sporting activities and sports day to have a healthy snack to eat before or after the activity e.g. fruit or a sandwich. Drinking water is also available.

10.8 School trips

A packed lunch with a balance of healthier food and drink is encouraged when pupils take part in school trips. A copy of the healthy lunch boxes leaflet is available for parents/carers as a reminder at such times. The promotion of healthier food and drink provision is continued when pupils go away on residential trips.

10.9 Offsite provision

The school discourages commercial food vans e.g. ice cream and hot dog vans parking outside school. Pupils are discouraged from leaving the school premises during the school day to purchase food from local shops.

10.10 Sponsorship and fund raising

The school does not participate in the collection of confectionery/snack wrappers/tokens to raise funds for the school. These products are high in sugar, salt and fat. This practice is not consistent with the messages being taught about healthy eating.

10.11 Environmental considerations

- Pupils are discouraged from consuming water from taps in the toilets.
- Pupils have access to hand washing facilities before and after eating food.
- We aim for pupils to feel comfortable when eating or drinking.
- The school provides sufficient, suitable provision for waste disposal.

11. Our Curriculum

11.1 Aims

- To raise awareness of the basic principles of a healthy diet.
- To enable children to develop an interest in healthy eating.
- To empower pupils to make healthy eating choices.

11.2 Objectives

- The basic messages about healthy eating and oral health will be taught in the curriculum, particularly through Science, PSHE and Food Technology. The content will be at a level relevant to the age and ability of the pupils.
- The school will ensure that the taught curriculum and food/drink provision throughout the day present a consistent message.
- Training updates on dental health and healthy eating messages will be sought for teaching staff to ensure they are confident to deliver accurate and relevant information.
- There will be opportunities for pupils to learn about food handling, food preparation and food safety in the curriculum, as well as issues such as sustainability, recycling, fair trade and food production.

11.3 Expected outcomes

- Pupils understand the importance of a balanced diet for good health and in helping to prevent obesity, tooth decay and chronic diseases in later life.
- Pupils can apply the concept of a balanced diet to planning their own meals.
- Pupils and staff are empowered to make improved choices about food in and outside school.