

RATIONALE

This policy has been written to enable Elmstead Primary School to develop a shared philosophy on all aspects of food and drink. Its key aim is to develop healthy eating and drinking activities within the school that benefit pupils, staff, parents, caterers and others associated with the school. It has been developed in conjunction with the Every Child Matters and Healthy Schools agendas, in addition to the PSHCE policy.

Our school supports the 'five a day' campaign to encourage children to eat five portions of fruit and vegetables a day, by providing the facility for eating three portions in school. Only with parental support can we achieve the target of five. The purpose of this initiative is to reduce the onset of certain life threatening conditions as well as being helpful in tackling childhood obesity.

As part of the National Healthy Schools framework this policy has been developed through consultation with children, parents, staff and governors to gain a whole school policy. Fact gathering exercises, such as parental surveys and consultations with staff, governors and the school council – particularly in respect to relaunching our school dinner provision – have been a key feature of this process. We feel that it is vitally important to ensure that through effective leadership, the school ethos and the curriculum, we create an environment which supports a healthy lifestyle.

DEFINITION

Elmstead Primary School defines healthy eating as providing the body with well-balanced, nutritional food which will ensure good health and well-being. We do not refer to any foods as being good or bad and aim to give children the skills they need to make healthy choices which will stay with them throughout their lives. We are always prepared to support parents in any way we can and will provide a list of useful websites which will also help to reinforce the healthy eating initiatives.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To ensure all aspects of food and drink in school promote the health and well-being of pupils, staff and visitors.
- To give our pupils the information they need to make healthy choices.
- To recognise the important connection between a healthy, balanced diet and a child's ability to learn effectively.
- To contribute to the healthy physical development of all members of our school community.
- To promote a well-balanced, healthy lifestyle.
- To ensure children have the basic knowledge to formulate life-long skills, eg cookery sessions, gardening club and workshops on healthy lunchboxes.
- To promote a welcoming eating environment to encourage the positive social interaction of staff and pupils. The school recognises that sharing food is an excellent opportunity to build relationships and promote good social skills.
- To ensure that food provision reflects the ethical and medical requirements of pupils and staff, eg vegetarian, medical, allergenic and religious needs.

SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF FOOD IN SCHOOL

Break Time Snacks:

All children in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are invited to bring a healthy snack from home to eat at morning break time. This can be any selection of fruit, dried fruit and vegetables. Nuts are discouraged because of allergies. Children are encouraged to bring in water, kept in bottles and available throughout the day. However, in conjunction with our PSHCE provision, which promotes informed choice, the children are free to bring in a snack of their own choice. Parents are being encouraged to discuss the choices with their children. At present all our Key Stage 1 children receive free fruit or vegetables, in the afternoon, under the government scheme, but are welcome to bring in additional fruit or vegetables if they so wish.

Water:

Water is freely available throughout the day to all members of the school community. Regular opportunities are given to drink water and children are regularly reminded and encouraged to drink water at break times.

School Lunches:

School lunches are provided by our own catering staff and all meals must meet the nutritional government guidelines for school catering. These include the following:

- Children should have no less than two portions of fruit and vegetables a day, one of which should be salad or vegetables and at least one should be fresh fruit, fruit tinned in juice or fruit salad. A fruit based dessert shall be available at least twice a week.
- Oily fish such as salmon or mackerel should be served at least once every three weeks.
- Bread should be available at all times.
- The only drinks which should be served are water, pure fruit juices, milk, yoghurt and milk drinks with less than 5% added sugar, smoothies, low calorie hot chocolate, coffee and tea.

Note: The School Council and Class Councils have time allocated to express their opinions on the food offered.

Packed Lunches:

The Food Standards Agency national survey of packed lunchboxes showed that in general children's lunchboxes contained too much salt, fat and sugar and too little fruit and vegetables. Elmstead Primary School actively encourages parents and children to pack healthy lunchboxes by providing information and guidance. We encourage parents to make a balanced meal with plenty of fruit and vegetables, bread and protein. Food not eaten in a packed lunch will be sent home to ensure parents are aware of how much has been eaten.

Birthdays:

We are aware that many parents like to celebrate their child's birthday in school as well as at home. Often this is done by sending in sweets or cakes to share with the rest of the class. However, parents may like to consider – following the publication of this policy – a healthier option and will be invited to consider, for example, sending in a book for the book corner instead for the class to enjoy. A name plate can be added to the front of the book to show which child's birthday has been celebrated. Lollipops of any kind are not allowed, for health and safety reasons. Similarly, if children would like to bring a class gift back from holidays, perhaps they would consider a postcard or small item from the country they visited as an alternative to sweets. These could play an important part in providing resources for our curriculum.

Dining Environment:

The school is committed to providing a welcoming eating environment to encourage the positive social interaction of pupils and teachers. It is recognised that the physical constraints of the hall mean we operate two sittings, limiting the time available for serving and eating school dinners and packed lunches. Despite this constraint, the school aims to provide a calm, ordered environment – conducive to enjoyable eating and good manners.

The school is also committed to:

- active help for children where necessary, eg opening of packets, carrying trays;
- encouraging children to eat as much of their dinner as is appropriate;
- equal treatment of children having school dinners and packed lunches in terms of supervision;
- provision of water jugs and clean cups in an easily accessible location;
- encouraging children to wash their hands before eating;
- ensuring the hall is cleaned daily and well presented.

Celebrations and Festivals:

The school recognises that food plays an important role in the celebration of different cultures and religious festivals. As part of our curriculum children will have the opportunity to experience foods significant to different countries and belief.

Food in the Curriculum:

The significance of food in our lives means it can and should be used to enrich the curriculum. In turn, the curriculum can enrich each pupil's experience of food and healthy eating. Children are introduced to healthy choices from the Foundation Stage, when they first enter Elmstead Nursery and the emphasis on this continues through every year group. Our curriculum offers opportunities, with support from parent-helpers, for children to experience food from different countries, historical periods and cultures as well as reinforcing the need for a healthy, balanced diet.

Out of School Activities:

On special occasions eg the Summer Fete, Fireworks Night and the Christmas Bazaar, we accept that a wide range of confectionery, drinks and crisps may be available, with parental supervision. However, we will encourage our PTA – known as Elmstead Primary School Association – to consider this food policy, especially with regard to quality and choice. Where healthy options have been used we need to highlight this and advertise the fact that we are making healthy choices! The School Council representatives will be encouraged to compare and contrast sweets and their nutritional content and use of additives.

VALUES

At Elmstead Primary School we strive to work together as a whole community, sharing our ideas and beliefs and all working for the ultimate good of the children in our care. We aim to show respect for ourselves and each other and this is demonstrated by the empowerment we give to our children from an early age. We aim to give children information so that they are able to make sensible choices over food. We do not believe in actually banning all sweets, crisps, cakes etc from our school as then the children do not have the opportunity to make these informed choices.

Talking to parents about food issues is always a very sensitive issue and we endeavour to listen carefully and respect the views of others. That is why in some parts of this policy certain issues are suggested rather than fully imposed, as we feel it is important to work together for the good of the children.

Our broad and recently revised curriculum gives us an ideal platform from which to give clear messages about healthy eating eg comparing the diets of groups

of children from different parts of the world will give our own children the awareness of their own good fortune.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is very important that the whole school is united in providing the children with the correct information about healthy eating. We need to give consistent messages about the importance of a healthy, well balanced diet and regular exercise. Consultation with parents ensures that similar messages are reinforced at home. The Food Policy therefore needs to be closely allied with our overall approach to a healthy lifestyle, involving the Healthy Schools Co-ordinator, the Eco-Schools Co-ordinator, the PSHCE Subject Leader and anybody else involved in leading this wide initiative. The Governing Body receives termly reports on our progress with the Healthy Schools agenda.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Evaluation of the progress made by the school in implementing the aims and objectives of this policy will be made by the Healthy School Co-ordinator and the responsible governor. This will form the basis of the termly report to governors, included in our Impact Analysis.

COMMUNICATION OF THIS POLICY

A copy of this policy will be on the school website, available from the school office and displayed in the staffroom. Everybody will be encouraged to forward comments and suggestions as to how the policy may be improved. As a result the policy will be updated during the Spring Term every year. The Annual Parental Survey also encourages feedback on our healthy schools provision.

APPENDIX

- School Food Trust – Eat Better Do Better! This guide is available to download on the School Food Trust website at www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/nutrientbasedstandards
- Regulations for School Lunches. A copy of these regulations, which become mandatory from September, 2008, can be downloaded at http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/uksi_20072359_en.pdf
- If you have any queries see FAQs section at www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/nutrientbasedstandardsforschoollunchesfaqs
- Policy for PSHCE.
- Policy for Physical Education.
- DCFC updates and guidelines – see main folder.

