

# Whole School Food Policy

Fairmead School



**Wellbeing Statement:** At Fairmead School we take a holistic approach to the wellbeing of our young people and staff. All policies are written with this in mind and consider the physical and mental wellbeing of our young people, staff and our school community.

Signed by:

Mrs T Felstead

Date:

1<sup>st</sup> February 2026

Next review:

February 2028

## Introduction

This policy covers all aspects of food and drink at school. Fairmead School is dedicated to providing an environment that promotes healthy food and eating, enabling young people to make informed choices about the food they eat. This will be achieved by the whole school approach to food and nutrition documented in this whole school food policy.

The policy is referred to on the school website and is communicated to the entire school community. It is adhered to by everyone involved with the teaching/serving/cooking of food/drink in school during the day and our partners that may use our school premises.

The nutritional principles of this policy are based on current evidence-based findings; and the Eatwell Guide is the agreed model for ensuring a healthy balanced diet. <https://www.nhs.uk/Live-well/eat-well/food-guidelines-and-food-labels/the-eatwell-guide/>  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-eatwell-guide>

The school will follow the school food standards for food throughout the school day. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools> Further information can also be found in the School Food Plan (2014) [www.schoolfoodplan.com](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com) and [Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-nutrition)

### Food Policy Co-ordinator

This school food policy and healthy eating strategy is co-ordinated by the **Curriculum lead**, the **Headteacher** and the **Head of School**.

### Food Policy aims

The main aims of our school food policy are:

1. To enable young people to make healthy food choices, both now and in the future, through the provision of information and development of appropriate skills and attitudes.
2. To provide healthy food/drink choices throughout the school day and ensure food brought into school is healthy too.
3. To ensure that all aspects of food and drink in school promote the health and wellbeing of young people, staff and visitors to our school.

These aims will be addressed through the following areas:

#### 1. Curriculum

Nutrition is embedded throughout our curriculum to ensure young people develop a clear understanding of healthy lifestyles and the skills needed to make positive choices. It features within our RSHE curriculum, where young people learn about balanced diets, food groups, and the impact of nutrition on physical and mental health. Elements of nutrition also appear in Science, DT/Food Technology, Cookery Enrichment and Life Skills, giving young people repeated and practical exposure to key concepts across different subjects.

We also enrich classroom learning through a range of extra-curricular opportunities that encourage young people to apply their knowledge in meaningful, hands-on contexts. These include enrichment sessions, which give young people the opportunity to grow their own fruit and vegetables while learning about where food comes from and how it contributes to a healthy diet.

Together, these curricular and extra-curricular elements ensure that nutrition education is consistent, practical, and closely aligned with our broader commitment to promoting healthy lifestyles.

It is essential that nutrition education is embedded in the curriculum and there is consistency across different subjects- science, technology, RSHE, PE and that it remains consistent with the whole school food policy.

### **Food related aspects of teaching and learning**

All visits to external food provision e.g; restaurants and cafés, as well as any lessons or activities in which young people will be consuming food or drink, must be carefully planned in advance. Staff should consult with the Curriculum Lead to ensure the activity aligns with curriculum intent and delivery. Additionally, if the activity involves the use of money provided by parents or carers—such as contributions for food, drink, or related costs—this must also be discussed with and approved by the phase leader before arrangements are finalised.

### **Trips and Forest School**

On full day trips the trip leader will identify requirements for food for the day. Labelled water bottles should always be provided by parents and carers, healthy snacks may still required to be provided by parents and carers. Parents and carers will be informed around the requirements for lunches, however if a young person has free school meals, a packed lunch will be provided.

Residential trips; the plan for food will be shared by the trip leader.

### **Sensory food**

The school maintains a small but carefully selected supply of food-based resources that are used to support a range of sensory activities. We recognise that some young people naturally explore materials through mouthing, and we take this into account when planning and delivering sensory sessions. To ensure full transparency and to prioritise the safety and wellbeing of every young person, we contact parents and carers at the start of each academic year to request consent for their young person to engage in activities that may involve handling or tasting these items.

In situations where a young person requires specific food items as part of their individual sensory regulation needs or as a component of a personalised sensory diet, we will liaise directly with parents and carers. In these cases, families will be asked to provide any required food materials so that they are tailored to the young person's preferences, dietary requirements, and therapeutic needs.

### **Safeguarding**

In accordance with our Code of Conduct, **teaching and support staff must not provide any food or drink to young people without obtaining prior written consent from the safeguarding team.** This requirement ensures that all dietary needs, medical conditions, allergies, and parental preferences are fully considered before any food or drink is offered.

Furthermore, **any ingredients or food items used by young people as part of learning activities must be appropriately sourced and funded.** This means they should either be:

- purchased and supplied by parents or carers, or
- funded by parents or carers, or
- funded through the school budget in accordance with standard procurement procedures.

These measures help maintain the safety and wellbeing of all young people, ensure transparency in our practices, and support consistent safeguarding standards across the school.

### **Teaching methods / resources**

Our approach to teaching healthy, balanced eating is grounded in a whole-school commitment to promoting young peoples' long-term health and wellbeing. Nutrition education is woven consistently throughout the curriculum—linking Science, RSHE, embedded technology, and PE—to ensure young people gain accurate knowledge, practical cooking skills, and positive attitudes toward food. We use high-quality, evidence-based resources sourced from the NHS Eatwell Guide, School Food Standards, the

School Food Plan, Public Health England's School Zone materials, and national guidance on food teaching, ensuring that all materials are current, reliable, and aligned with statutory expectations. These resources support lessons involving practical cooking, sensory exploration, budgeting, meal planning, and understanding cultural and ethical influences on food choices, helping young people develop independence and make informed decisions.

To strengthen the connection between curriculum content and real-world understanding, we use a range of methods to link classroom activities with young people learning about food. These include hands-on practical cooking sessions where young people apply nutrition knowledge to create healthy dishes; cross-curricular links that reinforce key concepts through science experiments, RSHE discussions, and embedded design-technology projects; and experiential learning such as tasting sessions, gardening activities, and food-origin investigations. We also use visual tools like the Eatwell Guide to support conceptual understanding, and we encourage reflection through food diaries, menu analysis, and evaluation of prepared dishes. These methods ensure that theoretical knowledge is embedded through meaningful, practical experiences that develop long-term healthy habits.

#### Resources:

- Eatwell Guide <https://www.nhs.uk/Live-well/eat-well/food-guidelines-and-food-labels/the-eatwell-guide/>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-eatwell-guide>
- School Food Standards <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools>
- Relevant information from School Food Plan (2014) [www.schoolfoodplan.com](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com)
- Food Teaching in Primary schools (2015) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/food-teaching-in-primary-schools-knowledge-and-skills-framework>
- 32 Steps to eating [32 Steps To Eating STARGOLD 04-23-18](#)

## 2. Food and drink provision throughout the school day.

The revised standards for school food came into force on 1 January 2015 and are set out in the requirements for School Food Regulations 2014.

The government encourages all schools to promote healthy eating and provide healthy, tasty and nutritious food and drink. Compliance with the requirements for School Food Regulations 2014 is mandatory for all maintained schools including academies and free schools. These school food standards are to ensure that food provided to young people in school is nutritious and of high quality; to promote good nutritional health in all young people; protect those who are nutritionally vulnerable and to promote good eating behaviour.

The regulations set out the requirements for school lunches provided to registered young people, whether on the school premises or not, and to any other person on the school premises.

The regulations also set out the requirements for food and drink other than lunch, provided to young people on and off school premises up to 6pm, including breakfast clubs, tuck shops, mid-morning break, vending and after school clubs.

Full details and guidance are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/standards-for-school-food-in-england/school-food-in-england>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools>

### Breakfast club

Breakfast is an important meal that should provide around 25% of a young person's daily

energy needs and make a meaningful contribution to their vitamin and mineral intake.

The school operates a breakfast club that provides bagels for young people at the beginning of the school day and complies with the Standards for school food other than lunch (Checklist available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools>).

The bagels adhere to the portion sizes set out by the **Department for Education's School Food Standards**, which specify appropriate bread and bagel portion weights for young people. They are provided through the **National School Breakfast Programme**, where the supplier **Family Action** sources and delivers breakfast food products to participating schools. We use only dairy-free spread on them. [Portion sizes and food groups - GOV.UK](#) [National school breakfast club programme - GOV.UK](#)

### Vending machines

We have no vending machines in our school.

### Breaktime snacks

The school understands that snacks can be an important part of the diet of young people and can contribute positively towards a balanced diet.

The school discourages the consumption of snacks high in fat and sugar at break-time. We relay this to parents through our website, newsletters and through teacher / parent conversations.

We encourage a fruit or vegetable for a break time snack as this positively enhances the free fruit in Key Stage 1.

We participate in the National Fruit & Vegetable Scheme and this fruit is distributed up to year 2. If snacks sent into school are inappropriate class teachers / tutors will call home and the snack may be removed.

### Staff tuck shop

A tuck shop provides a range of snack foods that comply with the food-based standards for all school food other than lunch. This is available to staff in the staffroom but never to the young people.

### School lunch

At Fairmead School, all meals provided through our catering partner, **Figs Catering**, are fully compliant with the School Food Standards set by the Department for Education. These standards ensure that every meal served is nutritious, balanced, and aligned with national guidance designed to support the health and wellbeing of young people.

We actively encourage all young people to enjoy a school-prepared lunch, as these meals are carefully planned and measured to meet government expectations for quality and nutrition. Choosing a school lunch not only supports healthy eating habits but also helps foster a positive and shared mealtime experience within our school community.

Free School Meals (FSM) are available for all young people who meet the eligibility criteria.

Families who believe they may be entitled, or would like further information or support, are warmly encouraged to contact the school office at [office@fairmeadschool.com](mailto:office@fairmeadschool.com). Our receptionist will be happy to provide guidance on the application process or answer any questions.

At lunchtime, we place strong emphasis on promoting healthy food choices. This includes offering a variety of balanced meal options, supporting young people to try new foods, and encouraging positive conversations around healthy eating. Our approach aligns with research highlighting the importance of nutritious meals for concentration, energy levels, and overall wellbeing.

Healthy eating is reinforced across the school day, and all meals served by Figs Catering reflect our commitment to providing food that supports the development, learning, and long-term health of every young person.

When there is surplus food available after each lunch sitting, young people may be offered a small additional portion. This will always be the same food they originally selected, ensuring it aligns with their dietary needs and preferences. If parents or carers would prefer this not to happen, please inform the school.

### **Packed lunches**

The school encourages parents and carers to provide young people with packed lunches that complement our nutritional standards. We promote healthy, balanced packed lunch options by using the principles of the Eatwell Guide alongside our Packed Lunch Guidelines. This approach helps ensure that all young people who bring packed lunches are provided with a nutritious, balanced meal that supports their learning and wellbeing.

Food safety considerations relating to packed lunches, including safe storage, reheating guidance, and allergy awareness, will be shared with parents and carers regularly.

### **Foods and Drinks not permitted**

To support healthy eating habits and maintain a consistent approach across the school, the following items are not permitted in packed lunches:

- Sweets or confectionery,
- Fizzy or energy drinks,
- Chocolate bars (small chocolate-coated snacks as part of a balanced meal may be permitted at staff discretion),
- Highly processed snacks high in salt or saturated fat.

## **3. Allergy Policy**

The school operates a **no-nut and no-egg policy** to reduce the risk to young people with nut and egg allergies. Packed lunches must not include:

- Peanuts or tree nuts,
- Nut butters or spreads,
- Chocolate products containing nuts,
- Cereal bars or processed items containing nuts,
- Egg sandwiches,
- Whole eggs / scotch eggs,
- Mayonnaise made with raw egg.

Parents and carers are asked to remain vigilant about ingredients and to contact the school if they are unsure about a product.

### **Guidance for healthy packed lunches**

To support families in providing nutritious meals, we offer the following advice:

- Include a variety of foods from the Eatwell Guide: fruit and vegetables, wholegrain starchy foods, protein sources (meat, fish, beans, eggs), and dairy or alternatives.
- Aim for at least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables each day.
- Provide water as the main drink (school will also provide drinking water).
  - Choose healthier snack options such as yoghurt, cheese portions, crackers, fruit, or vegetable sticks.
- Limit pre-packaged foods high in sugar, salt, or fat.

### **After school club**

We do not currently serve food at after school clubs.

### **Use of food as a reward / celebrations / birthdays**

The school does not encourage the regular eating of sweets or other foods high in sugar or fat,

especially as a reward for good behaviour or academic or other achievements. Other methods of positive reinforcement are used in school. These include, ePraise points, special mention certificates and Headteacher awards. If cakes or sweets are sent in by parents or carers they will be returned.

#### **Whole school celebrations**

The school may have whole school celebrations for example; national celebrations, charity coffee mornings, etc. These will be well planned in advance and food and drink choices will be shared with parents and carers well in advance. Healthy food should also be planned into these events.

#### **Drinking water**

The School Food Standards recommend that free, fresh drinking water must be available at all times

The school agrees with this recommendation and provides a free supply of drinking water and will encourage young people to drink at frequent intervals throughout the day. Every classroom has a sink and tap with fresh drinking water. Water is available free for all young people at the lunchtime meal service. This water is offered through the use of jugs and cups in the school hall. All young people are required to bring a water bottle into school with them each day in order to drink from. We also have two water fountains located in the outside area.

### **4. Special dietary requirements**

#### **Special diets – Religious and ethnic groups**

The school provides food in accordance with young people's religious beliefs and cultural practices as required.

#### **Vegetarian diets / Halal meals**

School caterers offer a vegetarian option at lunch on every menu.

Figs Catering will work closely with the school to accommodate any allergy, dietary need, or religious requirement.

#### **Special diets or medical professional guided diets**

Under section 100 of the Children and Families Act 2014, schools have a duty to support young people at their school with medical conditions. We recognise that some young people may require special diets that do not allow for our food policy to be exactly met, however our allergy policy must always be met. In this case parents are asked to make us fully aware of this in writing. Individual care plans need to be created for young people with special dietary needs/requirements and agreed by Teacher, Phase Leader and Head teacher / Head of School. These should document symptoms and adverse reactions, actions to be taken in an emergency.

Emergency contact details, along with any particular food requirements e.g. for high-energy diets. The school and school caterers (if appropriate) are made aware of any food allergies/food intolerance/medical diets and requests for these diets are submitted according to an agreed process.

Staff are made aware of food allergies through the cascading of individual Emergency Care Plans.

Further information can be found on Allergy Guidance for schools at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools>

And

Allergy UK <https://www.allergyuk.org/living-with-an-allergy/at-school/>

#### **Neurodiversity**

At Fairmead School, we recognise that neurodiversity can significantly influence a young person's relationship with food. Neurodevelopmental profiles—including autism, ADHD, sensory processing differences and other neurodivergent needs—may affect eating patterns, food preferences, and

tolerance for new or unfamiliar foods. Our approach aims to create a safe, respectful and non-judgemental environment that supports all young people to access food in a way that meets both their nutritional needs and their individual sensory, emotional, and regulatory needs.

- Understanding restricted or rigid diets - Many neurodiverse young people have highly selective or rigid diets due to factors such as, sensory sensitivities (texture, smell, temperature, colour), anxiety-linked food avoidance, fear of novelty or change.
- Executive functioning differences affecting hunger cues, planning, or pacing while eating.
- Associations between food and emotional regulation.

These patterns are not behavioural choices but reflect underlying neurological differences. Staff will always approach food-related needs with empathy, curiosity, and respect.

Staff will:

- Respect established safe foods - Young people may rely on a limited set of “safe foods” they feel comfortable eating. Staff will support access to these foods wherever possible (within allergy-safe parameters outlined elsewhere in the policy).
- Avoid pressure or coercion - Young people will not be forced to try new foods, change quantities, or eat at certain speeds. Gentle exposure and scaffolding may be used where appropriate and only with consent from the young person and family.
- Adopt a strengths-based approach - Celebrating small steps, encouraging food exploration through sensory play (where appropriate), and building confidence without creating stress.
- Collaborate with families and professionals - Staff will work closely with parents/carers and, where relevant, external practitioners (e.g., from SEND, SALT, OT pathways) to understand the young person’s dietary profile, triggers, and strategies that work well.

### **Sensory and environmental adjustments**

Where required, the school will make reasonable adjustments to support eating, including:

- Providing quiet or low-stimulus eating environments.
- Allowing flexible seating or timings to reduce overwhelm.
- Supporting use of utensils, preferred containers, or familiar packaging.
- Permitting adjustments to presentation of food (e.g., separating components, specific temperatures).

Parents and carers may provide a small bottle of no-sugar or sugar-free squash for their young person to keep in the classroom. The bottle must be clearly labelled with the young person’s name and can only be stored and used with the agreement of the class teacher and phase leader. Sugar-free options are required to support healthy dental habits, reduce unnecessary sugar intake during the school day, and help maintain consistent energy levels for learning. The drink must not be shared or given to any other young person and is strictly for the named young person only.

All requests regarding special diets, medical professional guided diets or diets which are related to neurodiversity must be requested in writing by parents / carers and agreed with the Phase Leader and Head teacher / Head of School and communicated in writing across the school.

### **Safeguarding and Escalation**

Where a young person’s dietary rigidity places them at medical risk (e.g., nutritional deficiency, sudden reduction in intake), staff will follow safeguarding and wellbeing procedures and may recommend referral to appropriate professionals. This aligns with the wider safeguarding principles set out in Fairmead’s policies.

## **5. Food safety**

Appropriate food safety precautions are taken when food is prepared or stored. These vary

depending on the food on offer and include: ensuring that adequate storage and washing facilities are available; that food handlers undergo appropriate food safety and hygiene training; and that suitable equipment and protective clothing are available. Any food safety hazards are identified and controlled. Information is cascaded to everyone who is involved with food related activities in school. We have food safety information displayed in the appropriate areas.

**Food Hygiene Certificates are held by:** Lunchtime supervisors, Senior Leadership Team, Site Manager, Phase leaders, Breakfast club staff, Forest School lead as well as a range of other EYFS and curriculum area staff.

## **6. The food and eating environment**

The school will provide a clean, sociable environment for young people to eat their lunch and has developed the healthy/welcoming aspects of the dining room environment.

Lunch time staff will help to ensure a safe, enjoyable experience at lunchtime and will be able to encourage healthy eating. Taster plates are offered to young people, including those with restricted diets, within lower primary which supports the 32 steps to eating.

## **7. Leading by example and staff training**

Teachers, caterers and lunchtime supervisors have a key role in influencing young people' knowledge, skills and attitudes about food, so it is important that they are familiar with healthy eating guidelines.

We encourage staff to sit with the young people during mealtimes, eating alongside them to model positive social interaction build relationships and help create a calm, supportive dining environment.

It is essential that all staff are committed to modelling positive attitudes and behaviours around food in school. The food available in the staffroom should reinforce the wider food culture we promote for young people—reflecting our values of healthy choices, balance, and enjoyment.

By ensuring that staffroom practices align with the school's approach to food, we create a consistent, whole-school message that supports young people in developing healthy relationships with eating.

Staff will receive training on food-related matters on an ad-hoc basis and in response to identified organisational requirements, ensuring compliance with relevant standards and the consistent implementation of best practice.

## **8. Food related action plans**

As a school we are aware that we need to ensure healthy and nutritious food is available across the school day. The food agenda in school is part of criteria to be assessed for the voluntary Healthy Schools rating scheme which has been designed to recognise and encourage schools' contributions to young people' health and wellbeing as part of the commitment from the government's Childhood Obesity Plan. We are actively working towards this rating scheme.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/healthy-schools-rating-scheme>

## **9. Monitoring and evaluation**

The policy and its impact are reviewed on an ongoing basis. The policy is communicated to the entire school community and new families/staff to our school are made aware of its importance.