

Food and Nutrition Policy

Policy Information

Date of last review:	3.11.25	**Review period:**	2 yearly
Date ratified by Local Givernors:	March 26	**Policy owner:**	Mrs V. Callaghan

Reviews/revisions

Review date	Changes made	By whom
November 2027		

Introduction

This policy covers all aspects of food and drink at Princefield First School.
We are dedicated to providing an environment that promotes healthy food and eating, enabling pupils to make informed choices about the food they eat.
The policy is adhered to by everyone involved with the teaching/serving/cooking of food/drink during the school day.

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

And the Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition guidance.
Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance

Aims

The main aims of our food policy are:

1. To enable pupils to make healthy food choices 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 schools promote the health and wellbeing of pupils, staff and visitors These aims will be addressed through the following areas:

CURRICULUM

Princefield First School aims to:

- integrate food and nutrition as part of the curriculum
- bring in a practical element around food education, through cooking
- provide healthy school food including breakfast and school lunches following the National School Food Standards
- encourage uptake of school lunches
- reinforce our food policy throughout the school year
- ensure that everyone in the school understands their role and has access to resources that help promote healthy eating

FOOD AND DRINK PROVISION THROUGHOUT THE 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 along with the Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers (2025)

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 pupils in schools is nutritious and of high quality; to promote good nutritional health in all pupils; protect those who are nutritionally vulnerable and to promote good eating behaviour.

The regulations set out the requirements for school lunches provided to registered pupils, 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 pupils on and off school premises up to 6pm, including breakfast clubs and after school clubs.

BREAKFAST CLUB

Breakfast is an important meal that should provide 25% of a child's energy requirement and contribute significantly to their vitamin and mineral requirements.

At Princefield we offer a nutritious breakfast for pupils before the school day which complies with the latest government guidance.

SCHOOL DINNERS

Food prepared by the kitchen catering team meets the school Food Standards.

As a Trust we encourage pupils to have a school lunch provided by our catering service and free school meals are provided to all those pupils who are entitled to them.

Healthy options are promoted at lunchtime.

Children/young people are consulted about food choices through school council, pupil questionnaires and surveys.

There are no official guidelines on exactly how much food children need. Portions should be appropriate for a child's body size and appetite.

We avoid:
• making children finish everything on their plate or eat more than they want to
• offering rewards to children for finishing everything on their plate (e.g. stickers or dessert)

PACKED LUNCHES

At Princefield we encourage parents and carers to provide children with packed lunches that complement the nutritional standards.

This is achieved by promoting healthy balanced packed lunch options.This will ensure children having packed lunches have a healthy balanced meal.

Packed lunches should include:
• starchy foods – these are bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and others * EY nutrition guidance states to avoid flavoured dried rice, pasta and noodle products e.g. packets and pots of instant flavoured noodles, pasta and rice for Reception and Nursery aged children.
• protein foods – including meat, fish, eggs, beans and others
• a dairy item – this could be cheese or a yoghurt

• vegetables or salad and a portion of fruit • a healthy drink such as water, milk or 100% fruit juice (no fizzy drinks)
*EY nutrition guidance states to avoid sugary drinks (including fruit juices, squash and smoothies) for Reception and Nursery aged children.

Packed lunches may include one small chocolate bar and one small snack or crisps and should not include sweets.

* EY nutrition guidance states to avoid foods high in saturated fat, salt, and/or sugars like cakes, sweet and savoury pastries, biscuits, crisps, chocolate and other confectionary for Reception and Nursery aged children.

Food safety issues around packed lunches will be conveyed to parents.

Parents may be contacted if packed lunches are not suitable for additional support with providing a nutritious lunch. Parents may be signposted to websites such as the following: https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes

EY nutrition guidance states lunch boxes should be clearly labelled with the child's name to avoid cross contamination. (p26)

EY nutrition guidance states all food must be prepared in a way to prevent choking.

Parents are encouraged to pack an ice pack inside their child's lunchbox.

Following food safety guidance, we will not reheat food brought in from home.

AFTER SCHOOL CLUB

The food and drink provision at our After School Club is prepared by our on site kitchen and is in line with our whole food policy with standards for food other than lunches.

USE OF FOOD AS A REWARD/BIRTHDAYS

At princefield we do 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.
WE encourage other methods of positive reinforcement such as dojo points, reward certificates, stickers, prizes of books/ stationary etc.

We encourage children to bring in healthy alternatives to sweets and cake for birthdays and other celebrations.

DRINKING WATER

At Princefield we ensure that free, fresh drinking water must be available at all times. We encourage pupils to drink at frequent intervals throughout the day.

Water is available free for all pupils at the lunchtime meal service.

Children are encouraged to use their own water bottles and these can be refilled throughout the day. Water bottles are taken home daily to be washed out.

In primary settings, milk is available for children using the cool milk scheme https://www.coolmilk.com for all pupils under 5.

SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

SPECIAL DIETS - RELIGIOUS AND ETHNIC GROUPS
At Princefield we provide food in accordance with pupils' religious beliefs and cultural practices as required.

VEGETARIAN DIETS/HALAL MEALS
At Princefield we offer a vegetarian option at lunch everyday.

SPECIAL DIETS - MEDICAL
At Princefield we recognize that pupils may require special diets that do not allow for our food policy to be exactly met. We ask parents are asked to make us fully aware of this through our admissions process.

Individual care plans are created for pupils with special dietary needs/requirements. These document symptoms and adverse reactions, actions to be taken in an emergency, emergency contact details, along with any particular food requirements. The kitchen staff are made aware of any food allergies/food intolerance/medical diets and requests for these diets are submitted according to an agreed process.

Our dinner menus are available on Class Dojo and parents are responsible for booking lunches for their child, considering the ingredients.

Food allergies

Food allergy is common.

At Princefield we work closely with parents to reduce the potential risks in the following ways;

- bottles, other drinks and lunch boxes should be clearly labelled with the name of the child for whom they are intended
- if children eat our school dinners parents should check the ingredients of foods and choose alternatives if needed
- when planning out-of-school activities such as excursions or visits we plan early for catering requirements for food-allergic children, and include emergency planning (including access to emergency medication and medical care)

Food Intolerance

Food intolerance is different to food allergy and usually occurs when the body has difficulty digesting certain foods or ingredients in food.

Intolerances do not involve the immune system and are not life threatening.

Food intolerances cause unpleasant symptoms such as abdominal pain or discomfort, diarrhoea, bloating, constipation, red rash, itching or eczema flares.

At Princefield we recognise that some children may have specific dietary needs because of physical or developmental issues, which may affect their ability to eat independently, for example difficulty with swallowing. These children may need to have their food prepared in a particular way to make it easier to eat.
Parents will provide the setting with support and support from health professionals may need to be requested.

It is also important to consider children who may experience sensory needs in relation to foods, for example, sensitivity to textures, tastes or smells, which can lead to limited preferences or aversions towards specific foods.

As well as modifying the foods offered, some adaptations to the eating environment could also be made, wherever possible, as a way to support the child at mealtimes, e.g. limiting noise and other distractions, having a cloth to wipe hands if required and not pressuring the child to eat.

If a child requires a special diet for a medical reason not discussed above, it is important to have written confirmation from their qualified health professional about the nature of their specific needs so that their nutritional requirements can be achieved. This information should be recorded, updated regularly and communicated to all staff involved in the preparing and handling of food.

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
-food handlers undergo appropriate food safety and hygiene training
-suitable equipment and protective clothing are available -any food
safety hazards are identified and controlled.
-EY nutrition guidance states all food must be prepared in a way to prevent choking

Early years food choking hazards

Food Standards Agency
food.gov.uk

Below is a table of advice on key foods for care givers who are involved with preparing and serving food for babies and young children (under 5 years old)

Vegetable and fruits	Advice
Pips or stones in fruit	Always check beforehand and remove hard pips or stones from fruit.
Small fruits	Cut small round fruits like grapes, cherries, berries, strawberries and cherry tomatoes, into small pieces: cut lengthways and then again cut them in halves (quarters).
Large fruits and firm fruits	Cut large fruits like melon and firm fruits like apple into slices instead of small chunks. For very young children, consider grating or mashing firm fruits, or softening them up by steaming or simmering.
Vegetables	Cut vegetables like carrots, cucumber and celery into narrow batons. For very young children consider grating or mashing firm vegetables and legumes like butter beans, chickpeas and tofu, or softening them up by steaming or simmering.
Skin on fruit and vegetables	Consider removing the skin from fruit and vegetables, especially for very young children. Peeled fruit and vegetables can be swallowed more easily.
Cooking fruit and vegetables	Consider softening firm fruit and vegetables (such as carrots, broccoli, yam and apples) by steaming or simmering until soft. Serve cut into slices or narrow batons.
Meat and fish	**Advice**
Sausages and hot dogs	Cut sausages and hot dogs into short strips. Cut them in half and then lengthways or as thinly as possible. Peeling the skin off the sausages helps them to be swallowed more easily.
Meat or fish	Remove bones from meat or fish. Cut meat into strips as thinly as possible. Remove skin and fat from meat and fish, it will help the food pass smoothly down the throat.
Cheese	**Advice**
Grate or cut cheese	Grate or cut cheese into short strips. Cut lumps of cheese as narrow as possible.
Nuts and seeds	**Advice**
Chop or flake whole nuts	Chop or flake whole nuts, peanuts and seeds. Whole nuts should not be given to children under five years old.
Bread	**Advice**
White bread and other breads	White bread can form a ball shape with a dough-like texture at the back of a child's throat, if not chewed properly. Brown bread or toasted white bread are good alternatives. Cut bread, chapatis, naan bread and other breads into narrow strips.
Snacks and other foods	**Advice**
Popcorn	Do not give babies and young children popcorn.
Chewing gum and marshmallows	Do not give babies and young children chewing gum or marshmallows.
Peanut butter	Do not give babies and young children peanut butter on its own, only use as a spread.
Jelly cubes	Do not give babies and young children raw jelly cubes.
Boiled sweets and ice cubes	Do not give babies and young children boiled, hard, gooey, sticky or cough sweets, or ice cubes.
Raisins and other dried fruits	Do not give babies under the age of 1 whole raisins or dried fruits. Cut them into small pieces.

Make sure food is prepared appropriately for children under 5 years old, see: https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/weaning/

It is also advisable that care givers are familiar with how to respond to a choking incident, see: How to stop a child from choking: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/first-aid-and-safety/first-aid/how-to-stop-a-child-from-choking/

and How to resuscitate a child: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/first-aid-and-safety/first-aid/how-to-resuscitate-a-child/

Food Safety Advice 0–5 Years

The EYFS framework requires providers to take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well – you must be confident that those responsible for preparing and handling food in your setting are competent to do so. By ensuring procedures and safe practices are established, children can thrive in a healthy, safe and nurturing environment.



Remember...

- All staff should have a clear understanding of what food is safe for children to consume (depending on age and stage), which foods pose a risk for choking as well as understanding how to age-appropriately prepare food.
- Before a child is admitted to the setting, settings must obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and intolerances that the child has and any special health requirements.
- Children should be seated safely in a highchair or an appropriately-sized low chair while eating.
- Never leave children alone while they are eating.
- Children must always be within sight and hearing of a member of staff whilst eating. Where possible, adults should sit facing children whilst they eat so they can make sure children are eating in a way to prevent choking and so they can prevent food sharing and be aware of any unexpected allergic reactions.



- While children are eating, there should always be a member of staff in the room with a valid paediatric first aid certificate.

How to Reduce the Risk of Choking – Food Preparation

- Remove any stones and pips from fruit before serving.
- Cut small round foods, like grapes, strawberries and cherry tomatoes, lengthways and into quarters.
- Cut large fruits like melon and hard fruit or vegetables, like raw apple and carrot, into slices instead of small chunks.
- Do not offer raisins as a snack to children under 12 months – although these can be chopped up as part of a meal.
- Soften hard fruit and vegetables (such as carrot and apple) and remove the skins when first given to babies from around 6 months.
- Sausages should be avoided due to their high salt content, but if offered to children, these should be cut into thin strips rather than chunks and remove the skins.
- Remove bones from meat or fish.
- Do not give whole nuts to children under 5 years old.
- Do not give whole seeds to children under 5 years old.
- Cut cheese into strips rather than chunks.
- Do not give popcorn as a snack.
- Do not give children marshmallows or jelly cubes from a packet either to eat or as part of messy play activities as they can get stuck in the throat.
- Do not give children hard sweets.

Disclaimer: This resource is provided for informational and educational purposes only and sources information on recommendations and requirements from the Department for Education. Twinkl is not responsible for the health and safety of your group or environment. Please be aware that learners should be supervised at all times, particularly young or vulnerable learners. You must ensure that an adequate risk assessment is carried out and it is your responsibility to ensure that the information this resource contains is safe and appropriate to use in your situation.

Updated April 2025

CPD | Early Years

Before a child enrols with us, at Princefield we obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and intolerances that the child has and any special health requirements.

EYFS

Reception and nursery children should be seated safely while eating (including snack times)

Reception and nursery children must always be within sight and hearing of a member of staff whilst eating to ensure the children are eating in a way to prevent choking and food sharing.

Whilst Reception and Nursery children are eating there should always be an adult present with paediatric first aid certificate.

THE FOOD AND EATING ENVIRONMENT

At Princefield we will provide a clean, sociable environment for pupils to eat their lunch.

Lunch time supervisors will help to ensure a safe, enjoyable experience at lunchtime and will be able to encourage healthy eating.

LEADING BY EXAMPLE AND STAFF TRAINING

Teachers, caterers and lunchtime supervisors have a key role in influencing pupils' knowledge, skills and attitudes about food, so it is important that they are familiar with healthy eating guidelines. It is essential that staff are committed to setting an example with food in accordance with this policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body will

- Ensure the policy is implemented and will monitor through HT reports to Governing Body under Health and safety

The Head teacher will

- Monitor the policy and procedures ensuring they are implemented effectively
- Report to the Governing Body through HT reports **The Staff will**
- Ensure procedures are followed in accordance with this policy and government food standards and guidelines

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years, or earlier if necessary.