

Healthy Eating Guidance

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office@tssmat.staffs.sch.uk or 01543 472245

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05.01.21	0.1	Internal Lead Scheduled Review	Name & Logo update. Suggested change to length of review. J Bowman	SCC
09.02.21	0.2	Board Lead Scheduled Review	No changes made. P Lovern	
26.02.21	1.0	Board Scheduled Review	guidance ratified	
10.11.21	1.1	Internal Lead Scheduled Review	Packed Lunch and Healthy Eating policies incorporated. J Bowman	
11.01.22	1.2	Board Lead Scheduled Review	No changes. C Gethin.	
11.02.22	2.0	Board Scheduled Review	Ratified by Board	
01.09.23		Review of required policies	Change from policy to guidance	
01.07.25		EYFS Framework update	Review of guidance - no changes made.	

Food guidance

Why is a guidance needed?

At The Staffordshire Schools Multi Academy Trust we recognise the important part that a healthy diet plays in a child's well being, and their ability to learn and achieve effectively. We believe that our schools, in partnership with parents and carers, can make a major contribution to improving children's health by increasing their knowledge and understanding of food and helping them to make healthy food choices as part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. We believe this is an integral part of the Trust's "Healthy body, healthy mind" ethos.

National Guidance

This guidance has been written to reflect the School Food Standards (2015), the Eatwell Guide of Healthy Eating (2016), the updated 2025 EYFS Framework and recommendations from The Children's Food Trust. The guidance supports Ofsted's commitments to assess pupils' knowledge of how to keep themselves healthy and our Trust's ethos of healthy eating.

As part of the School Food Plan, a new set of standards for all food served in schools was launched by the Department for Education. They become mandatory in all maintained schools, and new academies and free schools from January 2015.

These school food standards are intended to help children develop healthy eating habits and ensure they obtain the energy and nutrition they need across the whole school day, which includes food provided for breakfasts, mid-morning snacks, lunches, tuck shops and after school clubs.

For more information please refer to: <http://www.schoolfoodplan.com>

Aims

The main aims of our Food guidance are:

1. To provide a range of healthy food choices throughout the school day, in line with the mandatory School Food Plan
2. To improve the health of pupils, staff and their families by helping to influence their eating habits through increasing knowledge and awareness of food issues, including what constitutes a healthy diet and hygienic food preparation

3. To ensure a consistent approach to healthy eating across the Trust community including pupils, staff and parents/carers, modelling good health behaviours
4. To develop the teaching of the Food Technology aspect of Design & Technology curriculum, with regard to healthy eating
5. To improve the nutritional quality of packed lunches and other foods taken into our schools
6. To ensure that all packed lunches brought from home and consumed in school (or on school trips) provide the child with healthy food that is similar in its nutritional value to food served in our schools
7. To give clear guidance to parents/carers, pupils, Directors, and staff on providing a healthy packed lunch

Please note this guidance does not include food provided as part of PTA events or sales.

Food and sharing food are an important part of what we do as a Trust. All Trust schools ensure that children can sit together at lunch, whether eating packed lunches or school meals.

The menu, which is healthy and nutritionally balanced, is changed at least termly by the Trust's in house catering staff, in consultation with the School Councils. Dietary, medical dietary needs and allergies are taken into consideration. Menus are based on the School Food Plan guidelines.

We are very happy to work with you and your child to make sure that they are able to eat the food on offer. We know that some children can be particular about food, but we are committed to working with you to help your child enjoy a wide range of foods. Please talk to us to see if we are able to accommodate your child (i.e. smaller/larger portions, food not touching on a plate etc.)

We believe eating is more than just 'refueling', it should be an informal social situation where children work together, share responsibilities, and make new friends across the school. We are committed to working with you to make lunchtime better for your child, but at the Trust, lunch time will always be more to us than just food. Particular attention is paid to healthy eating, trying new foods, social interaction, and table manners, and these are rewarded through our Healthy Lunch Reward Programme.

Application

This guidance covers the areas of:

- Before and after school wrap around provision food
- Snacks
- Drinks
- School Lunches
- Packed Lunches
- Curriculum

- School clubs, events and trips
- Events and celebrations, including food sent from home.

The guidance applies to all staff, pupils, parents/carers, Directors, and partner agencies working within school.

Healthy Eating Statement

The Staffordshire Schools Multi Academy Trust provides healthy, nutritious and balanced food and drinks. Food and drink are safely prepared with regard to the dietary and religious requirements of the children in our care. We ask parents to notify us regarding any special dietary requirements or allergies when they register their child.

Information regarding food allergies is recorded on the Allergy Information Board which is visible to staff whilst food is being prepared.

The Staffordshire Schools Multi Academy Trust promotes healthy eating and leads by example. Staff responsible for food preparation, handling and storage have received appropriate training.

- We provide suitable healthy snacks for all the children in Nursery, Reception and Care Club.
- Children are encouraged to develop good eating skills and table manners.
- All children are given plenty of time to eat.
- Where appropriate, children are involved in planning and preparing food and snacks.
- Fresh drinking water is available at all times.
- Fresh fruit is available at all Care Club sessions.
- Withholding food is never used as a form of punishment.
- Staff discuss with children the importance of a balanced diet where appropriate.
- Children are encouraged to make balanced, healthy choices.
- Children are encouraged to try new foods.
- The Trust does not regularly provide sweets for children.
- We limit access to fatty or sugary foods.
- Children are never forced to eat or drink anything against their will.

Food at TSSMAT.

Breakfast

Breakfast is an important meal that should provide 25% of a child's energy requirement, providing essential vitamins and minerals, and supports pupils to be ready to learn at the start of each day.

Trust schools run an early morning wrap around care provision for pupils, which will include breakfast for some.

Healthy breakfast options offered within the Trust:

- A variety of different fruits and vegetables every day, e.g. fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, dried fruit, canned fruit in natural juices and juice (not syrup);
- A selection of cereals including wholegrain, low sugar, low salt, high fibre alternatives;
- A variety of different types of bread for toast, including wholegrain varieties;
- Porridge or overnight oats (oats soaked in milk, with fresh or frozen fruit);
- Toppings for toast and bread e.g. low fat spread, reduced sugar jam, honey or marmite;
- Low fat yoghurt;
- Semi-skimmed milk for drinking, or with cereal.

Snacks

All Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 children are provided daily fruit or vegetables as part of the Government scheme.

Any snacks that are brought from home will be restricted to fruit or vegetables unless recommended by a doctor on medical grounds (e.g. dietary need, diabetes etc.)

Any additional snacks provided will meet the School Food Standards.

Drinks

Milk

Our schools provide a mandatory milk scheme for all EYFS pupils, in accordance with Government guidelines, which provides a carton (189ml or 1/3 of a pint) of full fat milk for Nursery children. Parents/carers can specify if an alternative type of milk is required e.g. soya.

Milk can be offered at lunchtimes.

Water

Clean drinking water will be available for all pupils throughout the day and pupils will be encouraged to drink water at frequent intervals.

Pupils are encouraged to bring a water bottle every day that they can refill as necessary. Bottles go home at the end of every day to be washed and returned.

All packed lunch pupils have access to water at lunch time.

No drinks other than water will be brought into school by pupils partaking in school lunches, unless recommended by a doctor for medical needs. Drinks acceptable for packed lunches are outlined in the Packed Lunch guidance.

School lunches

For information on packed lunches, please see our Packed Lunch guidance.

School meals are provided by the Trust's in-house catering team and served between 11.50am and 1.15pm in the dining hall. The school meals meet the mandatory requirements of the School Food Standards 2015.

School meals are planned on a 2 or 3 week cycle and always contain a meat or fish and vegetarian option. The latest menu can be found on our school website.

School menus are changed at least termly. Pupils are encouraged to put forward suggestions for meals to be included in the new menu. Tasters will be available before the new menu is launched for pupils to try.

The Trust provides Universal Free School Meals for children in Key Stage 1 and encourages parents/carers to take up this offer. We are committed to providing food which is compliant with all national guidelines.

Staff will work with children to provide a clean, safe, attractive and appropriate dining area. We believe that lunchtimes should foster the caring, friendly ethos that governs everything that we do. (Children are encouraged to be independent during the meal and clearing up after themselves at the end by tidying their plates and cutlery away.)

Some families prefer to provide a packed lunch and we are aiming for our packed lunches to be as healthy as they can be. If children have a packed lunch, our Packed Lunch guidance and leaflet supports parents/carers to make informed choices to create it healthily. Support and advice is provided through information on our website.

Packed lunches provided for school trips as part of our Free School Meal provision comply with the School Food Plan.

Any meals taken as part of on or off school site residential trips will provide a balanced and healthy approach to meals and where possible we will look to use off site providers that comply with the School Food Plan.

Dining Hall Experience

Children are given ample time to eat their lunch, and do not need to rush. Dining times are staggered, and children generally sit in class groups, to give a calmer lunchtime experience. Gentle music is played in the background to encourage a calming environment.

Children are encouraged to wash their hands before eating, and to enter the dining hall quietly.

Children are able to eat with their friends, and children eating packed lunches or school meals can sit together.

Packed lunches

Our schools will work with pupils to provide attractive and appropriate dining room arrangements, and will work with parents to ensure that packed lunches abide by the standards listed below.

Our schools will promote a healthy lifestyle across the curriculum, and staff will be expected to comply with the guidance when bringing in packed lunches and eating these with pupils.

Glass bottles and tins are not permitted due to safety issues that could arise. All uneaten food and waste will be kept in the lunchbox and returned home with the child so that parents are able to monitor their child's food consumption.

Parents will follow the advice given in this guidance and in the Trust's 'Healthier Packed Lunches for Children' leaflet.

Food contained in a packed lunch

Packed lunches should be based on the EatWell Guide (See Appendix A).

Packed lunches should aim to follow the below guidance:

INCLUDE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fruit and Vegetables - at least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables or salad.• A non-dairy source of protein - meat, poultry, fish, egg, beans or pulses, such as lentils, kidney beans, chickpeas, hummus or falafel.• A starchy food like bread, pasta, rice, couscous, noodles, potatoes or other types of cereals.• Dairy foods such as milk, cheese, low fat or natural yoghurt or fromage frais, low sugar rice pudding. (not split pot or flavoured yoghurts, these have a lot of sugar)• Drinks - the school provides water, but only healthy drinks, such as water, 100% pure fruit juice (maximum portion 150 mls), semi-skimmed or skimmed milk, yoghurt or milk drinks and smoothies should be included in your child's packed lunch.• Oily fish such as salmon should be included at least once every three weeks. (Tuna is no longer considered an oily fish, oily fish includes herring (bloaters, kipper and hilsa are types of herring), pilchards, sardines, sprats, trout, mackerel and salmon)• Snacks such as malt loaf, low sugar jelly, or plain popcorn
LIMIT
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Snacks such as crisps (although seeds, , vegetables and fruit with no added salt, sugar or fat would be preferable, snacks such as fruit winders are full of sugar, and therefore should be limited)• Corned meat and sausages (these have a high fat and salt content)• Cakes and plain biscuits are allowed but children should be encouraged to eat these only as part of a balanced meal
DO NOT INCLUDE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chocolate, chocolate-coated biscuits or food items containing chocolate• Cereal bars, or processed fruit bars• Food containing nuts• Processed meat products such as pepperami, sausage rolls, or Fridge Raiders. These foods have a very high fat and salt content• Other confectionery such as Haribo, and chewing gum• Fizzy or sugary drinks, including squash or fruit flavoured squash drinks such as Ribena, Fruit Shoot or Capri Sun; or diet or energy drinks which contain high levels of caffeine and other additives. (Even if labelled as 'sugar-free', 'no-added sugar' or 'reduced sugar' these drinks can contribute to tooth decay and provide little nutritional value).

As part of the packed lunch guidance, children's packed lunches **should always** include:

- ✓ A starchy food, such as bread, potato, rice, or pasta
- ✓ At least one item of fruit, vegetable or salad
- ✓ A balance of foods from different food groups

For healthier options:

- ✓ Replace cakes and pastries with fruit bread, malt loaf, or teacake
- ✓ Replace salted savoury snacks, such as crisps, with popcorn (not sweet or toffee), breadsticks, rice cakes or cheese and crackers
- ✓ Include dried fruit or fruit salad
- ✓ Swap chocolate pudding pots for tinned fruit in it's own juice (not syrup)
- ✓ Drink water, milk, 100% juice (maximum portion 150 mls), plain sparkling water, fruit smoothie, or a yoghurt or milk drink

Special diets and allergies

Some pupils within our schools suffer from food allergies. We have a procedure in place to manage food allergies and other special dietary requirements. Read [The Children's Food Trust guide to producing and sharing allergen information](#), and visit www.anaphylaxis.org.uk/schools/help-forschools for more information.

We are a nut free school. Please do not send your child with food that contains nuts or traces of nuts.

The Trust also recognises that some pupils may require special diets that do not allow for the standards to be met exactly. In this case, parents are urged to be responsible in ensuring that packed lunches are as healthy as possible. For these reasons, pupils are also not permitted to swap food items.

Health and safety

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. Glass or tin containers are not permitted.

Storage of Packed Lunches

Our schools will provide storage areas/facilities for packed lunch bags in the most convenient and appropriate place possible. However our schools cannot provide cooled storage areas and therefore cannot take legal responsibility for foods prepared at home and then brought into school.

Assessment, evaluation and reviewing:

Packed lunches will be regularly reviewed by teaching staff, LSAs, midday meal supervisors and pupil handy helpers. Children who eat healthy lunches will be acknowledged and rewarded through the Healthy Lunch Reward Programme.

Parents and pupils who do not adhere to the packed lunch guidance will receive a leaflet in the packed lunch informing them of the guidance. If a child regularly brings in a packed lunch that does not conform to the guidance then the school will contact the parents to discuss this.

Pupils with special diet or food allergies will be given due consideration.

Curriculum

Food, its production and preparation is an important part of the curriculum for all pupils and is taught across the curriculum through Science, PHSE, RE, PE, Geography and Design and Technology, as well as incorporated into many topics undertaken by classes, or whole school events such as Roald Dahl Day.

The Trust works in partnership with Phunky Foods (www.phunkyfoods.co.uk) to support our curriculum's offering around healthy food, activity, and emotional wellbeing.

Where cooking or baking is undertaken by pupils within school, we will utilise these resources to ensure healthier options are chosen.

Before and after school club

Food provision at our breakfast and after school club is compliant with the School Food Plan. Relevant staff have basic food hygiene and preparation certification. Children in the clubs have regular opportunities to prepare and cook healthy snacks and there are frequent opportunities to discuss healthy eating as part of their general activities.

Events and Celebrations

We want to give children the opportunity to celebrate their birthdays, but to promote healthy eating choices we would ask that parents/carers think about alternatives to birthday cakes or sweets. If parents/carers want to bring something in to celebrate birthdays we would ask that non-food items such as stickers, a special book for the class or colouring pencils are considered as alternatives.

In school, we celebrate children's birthdays during our Achievement Worship, when they are invited to the front for the school to celebrate, and receive a card.

At Christmas and at the end of the school year classes may have a class party in which food is sent in by parents/carers. We will ask parents/carers to send in healthy alternatives, as well as treat foods.

For religious festivals or celebration events, we welcome a variety of foods, from different cultures, for children to try. These events may be incorporated into the curriculum, and the

school lunch menu. Parents/carers are welcome to send in food at these times for their child's class to enjoy. (i.e. Divali, Eid, Chinese New Year etc.)

Occasional fund-raising events (i.e. Macmillan Coffee Mornings), may include the sale of treat food such as cakes, but the inclusion of other foods will also be encouraged. We will aim to limit any cake sales to one per half term. Please note this does not include PTA events, which are run separately to school. We will put lighter or healthier version cake recipes on our website to support those parents baking cakes to send in.

Motivational rewards or prizes will utilise non-food items where possible.

Special Dietary Requirements

The Trust does everything possible to accommodate pupils' specialist dietary requirements including allergies, intolerances, religious or cultural practices. Dietary requirements and allergies are recorded for each pupil on entry to a Trust school.

Individual care plans are created for pupils with food allergies and this will be discussed with you when your child starts at a Trust school.

Pupil's food allergies are displayed in a sensitive way (a small poster with their photo and allergy) in relevant places around the school including the school kitchen, school office, and within classrooms. You will be asked to give consent for this to be displayed, in line with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Healthy Lunch Reward Programme

The Trust runs a healthy lunch reward programme, aimed at promoting positive behaviours at lunch, including making healthy food choices, helping others, trying new foods, and good table manners. Please see the Healthy Lunch Reward Programme Guidance for more information.

Expectations of staff and visitors

The Trust expects staff to contribute to and support this food guidance across the school day. Staff and visitors will be expected to model good practice behaviour around food and drink in line with the guidance, when in the company of pupils.

Staff are encouraged to eat with the pupils, and can purchase a school lunch at a subsidised cost.

Parents/carers and family members

Our relationships with parents/carers is very important and we aim to support them with information and advice around food, so that they are best prepared to make healthy choices for their families. We encourage them to get involved with our work around healthy eating.

Trust schools will provide at least one opportunity per term for parents/carers and/or family members to join a school lunch at a subsidised price.

Monitoring

We consult annually with pupils, parents/carers and staff, and involve them in reviewing school meals. The results are used to evaluate the impact of the food guidance and to further improve school meals.

The eatwell plate

Use the eatwell plate to help you get the balance right. It shows how much of what you eat should come from each food group.

