



Food and Nutrition Policy

Ferndale Primary School
School Policies
NOV 2025,
UPDATED SUMMER '26

1. Aims

The collaborative group of West Bromwich North primary schools in Sandwell are committed to promoting the health and wellbeing of all pupils through a consistent, evidence-informed approach to food provision and healthy lifestyles.



Our shared intent is to:

- Actively contribute to reducing childhood obesity levels in Sandwell by promoting healthy eating habits, physical wellbeing, and positive attitudes towards food from an early age.
- Ensure compliance with the national School Food Standards, providing nutritious, balanced meals and snacks that support pupils' physical development, concentration, and readiness to learn.
- Establish a consistent approach across all participating schools, ensuring that families receive clear, aligned messages about healthy eating, packed lunches, celebrations, and rewards.
- Promote equity and inclusion, ensuring that all pupils—regardless of background—have access to healthy food choices and opportunities to develop knowledge and skills for lifelong wellbeing.
- Embed health education within the curriculum, enabling pupils to understand nutrition, make informed choices, and develop positive relationships with food.
- Work in partnership with families, local authorities, and health professionals, including public health teams, to reinforce healthy lifestyle messages and provide targeted support where needed.
- Create a whole-school culture of health and wellbeing, where food provision, physical activity, and wellbeing are prioritised and consistently modelled by staff.

2. Food Standards for Schools

As part of the School Food Plan, a set of standards for all food served in schools was launched by the Department for Education. These standards are mandatory for all maintained schools and since 2014 they are an explicit requirement within funding agreements.

Eating in school should be a pleasurable experience. 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 breakfast, mid-morning snacks, lunch, and after school clubs.

The standards do not apply:

- to parties or celebrations to mark religious or cultural occasions
- for fund raising events
- to rewards for achievement, good behaviour or effort
- for use in teaching food preparation and cookery skills, including where the food prepared is served to pupils as part of a school lunch
- on an occasional basis by parents or pupils

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

3. Early Years Foundation Stage Nutritional Guidance

This Food and Nutrition policy is linked to the DfE's Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance - Guidance for group and school-based providers and childminders in England (May 2025).

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6839b752210698b3364e86fc/Early_years_foundation_stage_nutrition_guidance.pdf

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework sets the standards that early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn, develop well and are kept healthy and safe.

As part of this, there is a requirement that providers must have regard to nutritional guidance which states: 'Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, these must be healthy, balanced and nutritious'.

This DfE nutritional guidance recognises that the early years are a crucial time to reduce health inequalities and set the foundations for a lifetime of good health. It states that providing healthy, balanced and nutritious food ensures that all children:

- get the right amount of nutrients and energy they need while they are growing rapidly, which is especially important for children who might not have access to healthy food at home. This can help prevent children from becoming overweight or obese.

- develop positive eating habits early on. Children's early experiences with food can shape future eating habits. This can impact children's long-term health including maintaining a healthy weight, and good oral health.

Therefore, in Early Years (Nursery and Reception), children are only able to have fruit/ vegetables at snack time and will be offered milk or their water bottles. Children are already offered from a selection of fruit/ veg every day which they can choose from or alternatively they can bring in fruit/ veg from home if they prefer. This must, however, be prepared in a suitable manner- e.g. grapes must be quartered and cut lengthways. If it is not prepared suitably, children will not be able to eat it in school.

4. Allergies and medical needs

We work closely with families to support children with allergies or intolerances. Discussions are had with parents and/or carers and, where appropriate, health professionals to develop allergy action plans for managing any known food allergies and intolerances. At Ferndale, we are a nut-free school. **Products containing nuts are not allowed in school.** If children bring these in, they are not allowed to consume these and they will be returned home. The profile of any allergies in school is high- information is kept up-to-date and shared with staff, including first aiders.

This links to school's Allergy Safety Policy.

5. Staff training

Allocated staff receive regular training on Food hygiene including food handling and preparation. As well as this, there are always members of staff who have Paediatric First Aid and First Aid Training across school, meeting any requirements necessary. Staff receive face- to face and refresher training within the recommended time scales.

6. Food and drink throughout the school day

6.1 Breakfast

Breakfast Club and After School Club is provided by Junior Adventures Group, who cater for children following the required standards.

6.2 Snacks and drinks

Snacks can play an important part of the diet of children and young people and can contribute positively towards a balanced diet. Snacks provide an opportunity to have 1 of your 5-a-day, as well as include other important nutrients in the diet. As part of the School Food Standards, schools are only able to provide fruit, vegetables and seeds as a snack. Dried fruit should not be offered as a snack and should only be offered at mealtimes within a meal/dessert.

The Government's school fruit and vegetable scheme entitles all children in Early Years and KS1 to one piece of fruit and / or vegetable per day. As mentioned previously, in Early Years, children only have fruit/ veg for snack time. Children in KS1 and KS2 are allowed to bring one small snack from home.

Government guidance states that snacks should be limited to fruit, vegetables, or similar healthy options without added salt, sugar or fat. Therefore, in line with statutory guidance, and as a coordinated response from schools in the West Bromwich North Learning Community, from September 2026, we will not be allowing children to consume unhealthy snacks including confectionary, chocolate or chocolate-coated items; cakes,

biscuits, pastries or desserts (outside lunchtime provision) ; crisps or highly processed snack foods high in fat, salt or sugar. Instead, we will encourage children to bring in a small, nutritious snack. Suggestions include:

- Fresh fruit (e.g. apples, bananas, berries, oranges, pears, grapes etc.)
- Vegetables (e.g. carrot sticks, cucumber, peppers, celery)
- Plain dairy products (e.g. plain yoghurt, cheese portions)
- Savoury items pack size less maximum 30g (e.g. plain breadsticks)

EXAMPLES OF SUITABLE SNACKS



Staff will be monitoring snacks brought into school. In the first instance, if an unsuitable snack is brought in, parents and children will be politely reminded of our policy. If there is a further occasion, a policy reminder slip will be given to parents, then if this happens again, children will not be allowed to consume their snack and will be offered fruit, if possible, as an alternative.

Children have access to drinking water throughout the day and can be provided with milk (via subscription to Cool Milk). Water fountains are available for children to refill their water bottles which are taken to and from school. Only healthy drinks such as water and milk are permitted under school standards. Sugary drinks, fizzy drinks, and juice/ smoothies above 150ml are not allowed.

6.3 Lunchtime

All children in Reception to Year 2 are able to have Universal Free School Meals. We actively promote this and encourage parents to take up this offer.

Our school meals are provided by Dolce Catering, who comply to the mandatory food standards. Children not in KS2 (including 30 hour nursery) are able to pay for school meals if they are not in receipt of Free School Meals. Dolce caterers cater for children with different dietary requirements including allergies and intolerances. They liaise directly with parents when required.

<https://www.dolce.co.uk/education-catering/primary-school/>

Children are able to bring in a packed lunch from home. We strongly encourage parents/ carers to provide a healthy, nutritional packed lunch. Lunchtime staff monitor the content of packed lunches and relay any concerns about inappropriate food to staff who discuss this with parents/ carers.

Ideas for lunchboxes can be found here:

[https://www.healthylittlefoodies.com/healthy-lunchbox-ideas/#Lunchbox_Builder -
What to Put in A Healthy Lunchbox](https://www.healthylittlefoodies.com/healthy-lunchbox-ideas/#Lunchbox_Builder_-_What_to_Put_in_A_Healthy_Lunchbox)

We are unable to refrigerate or heat up any food brought in from home. Below are some tips on keeping food safe and fresh. Parents/ carers should:

- ensure the food is suitable for their child's individual developmental needs and prepared in a way to prevent choking.
- for perishable items that should be kept cool, pack food in insulated sealed bags. If ice packs are unavailable, the '4-hour rule' can be applied. This rule allows food to be stored outside of chilled conditions for up to 4 hours, but this should only be done once during the entire storage.
- clearly label their child's name on the lunch bag and detail the contents.
- pack foods that can safely be kept at room temperature as there is no refrigerated area for storing food brought from home.

At Ferndale, lunchtime is promoted as a positive social experience. The dining areas are pleasant and welcoming. Children sit down with peers whilst eating and trained lunchtime leaders supervise the children whilst eating and outside.

Lunchtime also provides an opportunity for children to get moving and be active. Lunchtime leaders and play leaders regularly provide activities to engage children in games and activities. As well as being encouraged to be active, children's wellness is also considered- children can choose to go to sit on benches, go the calm corner for mindfulness activities such as colouring.

6.4 Food in Early Years

As previously mentioned, guidance provided in the DfE's Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance - Guidance for group and school-based providers and childminders in England May 2025 is followed in school as well as the Statutory Framework for Early Years.

As part of the [EYFS framework](#), information about children's special dietary requirements – including food allergies and intolerances – must be obtained, recorded and acted upon before they attend. This information must be kept up to date by having ongoing conversations with parents and carers.

At each mealtime and snack time a member of staff must be responsible for checking that the food being served to each child meets all their dietary requirements and is prepared in a way to prevent choking.

In Early Years, any food brought in from home for snack or lunch must be prepared at home in a manner that is suitable for a child's age and stage of development. For example, grapes must be quartered and cut lengthways or children will not be able to eat these at school. Guidance from the Food Standards Agency regarding potential choking is displayed in the setting and shared with parents and staff. See the links below and Appendices 2 and 3.

Children always sit down for snack and lunchtime in Early Years. There is always a Paediatric First Aid Trained member of staff when children are eating.

https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/Early%20Years%20Choking%20Hazards%20Poster_English.pdf

https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2021/09/Early-Years-Choking-Hazards-Table_FINAL_21-Sept-2021.pdf

7. Food in the curriculum

At Ferndale, we recognise that cooking is a great experience for children which helps to create a positive relationship with food and that some children have limited opportunities to cook or learn about food at home. Across school, from Nursery to Year 6, there are opportunities for children to try, prepare and cook a range of different dishes from across the globe.

In our Science curriculum, children learn about the importance of eating a balanced diet, knowing that no food is 'bad' and that portion control is important relevant to the different food groups. They learn that a balanced diet, and regular physical activity are lifelong habits that positively impact health. The Eatwell Guide uses government advice to show what a healthy and balanced diet looks like. It shows what a balance of foods should look like in one day or over a whole week. The advice in the Eatwell Guide applies to children from the age of 2 years. A healthy, balanced diet is based on the 4 main food groups (fruit and vegetables; potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates; dairy or dairy alternatives; and beans, pulses, fish, eggs,

meat and other proteins). These provide essential nutrients to help children grow and develop. (See Appendix 3.)

We also have opportunities for children to plant seeds, care for the plants and grow food in school. This begins in our 'garden room' in Early Years where children grow beans, tomatoes and cucumbers. Eating the food we have grown helps teach children about sustainability from a young age.

8. Celebrations

Many families like to celebrate their child's birthday and other special events traditionally by bringing in sweets to share. This can mean that some children are eating these unhealthy foods several times a week. At Ferndale, instead of doing this, we recommend that children wear a birthday badge/ sash or non-uniform to celebrate.

9. Monitoring and Review

Staff will monitor snack provision and address concerns with parents.

The policy will be reviewed annually in line with updated NHS/NICE guidance.

Policy agreed: July 2026

Appendix 1- policy reminder slip



FERNDALE
PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Website: ferndaleprimary.co.uk

Date

Dear parent/ carer of

As you are aware, in order to follow government guidance on food standards in school, our snack policy is now stricter on what children can bring into school. Your child's snack today does not follow our policy. If this happens again, we will not allow your child to consume it- they will be offered fruit, if possible, instead and their snack will be sent home with them.

A copy of our Food and Nutrition Policy can be found on our website and a link to information on the food standards is below: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools/school-food-standards-practical-guide>

Please support us in trying to promote healthy choices in school.

Regards,

Mrs Gillett

(Head teacher)



Early years choking hazards food safety advice

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For babies and young children, food can be a choking hazard, especially when they do not chew their food well or they try to swallow it whole.

Choking can happen with any foods, but 'firm foods', bones and small round foods that can easily get stuck in the throat present a higher risk. Therefore, care givers should follow these five essential steps:

- 1** Make sure food is **suitably prepared and served** for babies and children under 5 years old. For suitable foods, see <https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/weaning/> Introduce babies to solid foods from around 6 months of age.
- 2** **Think about size, shape and texture of food.** Cut food into narrow batons, avoid round shapes and firm foods. Firm fruit & vegetables can be softened by cooking.
- 3** Ensure that babies and young children are **alert and seated safely upright** in a highchair or appropriately sized low chair whilst eating.
- 4** **Babies and young children should be supervised at all times** while eating. You will be able to identify the early signs of choking and prevent harm.
- 5** **Encourage babies and young children to chew food well.** Teach children how to chew and swallow food properly, and ensure they take their time during meals. This will reduce their risk of choking.

Care givers and parents should be familiar with how to respond to a choking incident in line with guidance on first aid for children:

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/>

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

Early years food choking hazards

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/>

Appendix 4

A healthy balanced diet for children

Food group	Examples of food included	Main nutrients provided	Recommended serving
Fruit and vegetables	Fresh, frozen, canned, and dried fruit, vegetables, and pulses	Carotenenes (a form of vitamin A), vitamin C, zinc, iron, and fibre	At least 5 portions each day Provide a portion as part of each main meal (breakfast, lunch and tea) and with some snacks
Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates	Bread, potatoes and sweet potatoes, starchy root vegetables, pasta, noodles, rice, other grains, breakfast cereals	Carbohydrate, fibre, B vitamins and iron	4 portions each day Provide a portion as part of each meal (breakfast, lunch and tea) and provide as part of at least one snack each day
Dairy and alternatives	Milk, cheese, yoghurt, fromage frais	Protein, calcium, and vitamin A	3 portions each day Provided as part of meals, snacks and drink
Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins	Meat, poultry, fish, shellfish, eggs, beans, pulses, nuts	Protein, iron, zinc, omega 3 fatty acids, vitamins A and D	2 portions each day Provide a portion as part of lunch and tea (two to three portions for vegetarian children)