



Spa Bermondsey Food Policy

Rationale

At Spa School we believe that knowledge and understanding of nutrition is essential for good health and effective teaching and learning. We recognise the important connection between a healthy diet and a child's ability to learn and play effectively and to achieve their full potential in school.

This policy, like all others in the school, supports the school's vision statement.

The whole school food policy will enable us to develop and maintain a shared philosophy on all aspects of food and drink.

Name of member of SMT responsible for school food

Head of School (Georgina Quigley) has overall responsibility for food in school, for policy development and for ensuring all providers on school premises are aware of the policy.

People with key responsibilities for food in schools

- Lead school cook, Tracy Nwabia – responsible for managing the kitchen staff team; ordering, preparation, cooking and serving of school lunches
- Procurement, Alan Burrows – responsible for all ordering of foods for snack and foods used outside of the lunch hall
- Café staff, Agnese Graudina, Louisa Rambarran and Egle Venckute– responsible for ordering, preparation and supervision of foods in the School House Café
- Cooking Subject Lead, Jess Doumbos – responsible for cooking planning, food ordering and recipes
- Members of SMT – responsible for monitoring foods brought into the school by students and other adults

Aim of the Whole School Food Policy

1. To improve the health of staff, pupils and their families by helping to influence their eating habits through increasing their knowledge and awareness of food issues, including what constitutes a healthy, balanced diet.
2. To foster healthy eating and drinking habits that will last beyond pupils' time at our school.
3. To give pupils the information they need to make healthy choices, by ensuring that all pupils have the opportunity to learn through the different types of activities that incorporate not only age and ability but also appropriate lessons on balanced diets, planning, budgeting, preparing and cooking skills.
4. To ensure that we are giving consistent messages about food and health.
5. To ensure that food provision in the school not only reflects the ethical and medical requirements of all students and staff, e.g. religious, ethnic, vegetarian, medical and allergenic needs, but also considers the emotional aspects of food and eating disorders

6. To encourage fluid intake, by providing easy access to drinking water at lunchtime and throughout the day.
7. To make the provision and consumption of food an enjoyable and pleasant experience that enhances the social development of all students.
8. To contribute to the healthy physical development of all members of our school community.
9. That staff act as role models in their actions within the school for the students they teach and encounter.
10. That the school has a responsibility to encourage healthy lifestyles within the whole school community as part of the school's commitment to the welfare of those attending, employed by and connected to Spa School

Objectives

Nutrition in the curriculum

Nutrition is part of the PSHE programme. Students are taught about the Eat Well Plate, the classification of different foods, the importance of a balanced diet and where we buy different foods.

In Science, pupils learn about the importance of food to growth.

In Cooking, students learn about different cooking techniques, different types of food, healthy ways of preparing foods and general cooking skills.

In Healthy Living, students learn how to produce balanced meals, how to find alternative ways of cooking things to improve their nutritional value, how to avoid food poisoning and different dietary lifestyles.

In RE, delivered through Humanities, when students learn about different religions, they learn about the foods that are important or avoided in those particular cultures.

As part of their KS5 work experience, pupils learn about safe food handling and a range of health and hygiene skills

The eating environment

For many of our students their surroundings have considerable impact on their sense of wellbeing. Two connected dining areas ensure that all students have the opportunity to eat their midday meal in a setting best suited to their needs. Students have a 30 minute lunch session. Students who are slower eaters are given additional time and some students are given up to an hour to ensure they are able to finish their meals. Dining is split into three sittings so that groupings are smaller.

Where appropriate the students are allowed to choose where they sit, which encourages a social setting where they can eat with their friends. Students sit at large, circular tables to encourage conversation and a communal atmosphere. Students who prefer to sit alone or in a quiet setting may sit in the conservatory which has smaller, square tables.

We ask the students to respect the dining experience of others by keeping an appropriately low noise level, accepting difference in others' food, habits, etc. We also want the dining environment to be an attractive and inviting place to eat, where students are encouraged to interact with each other and enjoy their food. It is important that dinnertimes are a comfortable experience for all pupils.

All students are expected to collect their own meals and clear away after themselves. Students have a main and a dessert course which are collected separately to reinforce the social aspect of the

dining experience. Students are provided with daily menus on their tables, with symbols, so that all students can make an informed choice about what they would like to eat.

Teaching Assistants sit with many students and are aware of their important role as role models. Teachers are encouraged to sit and eat with their classes and SMT members are always present in the dining hall, whether on duty or eating with different classes.

Cooking lessons

Every student has a weekly cooking lesson where they learn how to prepare and cook a range of healthy snacks and dishes in our specialist food technology classroom. This is an opportunity for them to learn important life skills about nutrition and what to include in a healthy balanced diet, as well as being able to prepare themselves snacks and meals independently as they become young adults.

On Friday afternoons two cooking clubs are offered as part of our Special Interest offer. Students can choose to be part of the cooking club, and this is rotated each term to ensure fair access as it is a popular choice.

Rewards and Special occasions

Food is not used for rewards – instead we rely on praise, complimentary remarks, stickers, stars and celebration assembly certificates etc. Food is not used for end-of-term presents to pupils.

As our students thoroughly enjoy cooking lessons, additional cooking time is a motivating reward that is used when encouraging positive behaviour for some students.

For exceptional events such as school discos and cultural occasions, food rules may be relaxed with the consultation with the Head of School. On these occasions, healthy options will continue to be provided and encouraged.

On students' birthdays, students are allowed to bring in small food items to share with their classmates. These may include a small cake but should never include nuts. For the majority of our students, a birthday party is an aspirational event, and therefore students are given the opportunity to experience them if they so wish. Students are allowed to opt out of celebrations when they choose and there is no expectation that students will bring in food for others on their birthday.

Packed Lunches

We recognise that students with autism may have sensory issues which impact on their ability to enjoy a varied diet. Therefore, some families may choose to provide a packed lunch for part or all of the school week. Students may bring in food which is then re-heated by the kitchen or a cold packed lunch. We expect packed lunch to conform to the same healthy standards as our school dinners wherever possible and we will work with families to support students to develop healthier eating habits. Crisps, confectionary or sweets, including chocolate and chocolate covered products are not allowed nor are fizzy drinks or energy drinks. Students who bring in a packed lunch still have access to fruit and bread from the kitchen.

Students who bring a packed lunch eat alongside those having a school dinner.

Guidance on what to include in a healthy packed lunch is provided for parents and carers annually and on request.

Communication

Updated September 2023

Communication occurs through informal and formal meetings, phone calls, questionnaires, curriculum evenings, display boards etc. Parents are informed about the menu termly in a letter home as well as on our website and in our fortnightly newsletter. Students are regularly asked about the menu and their views are taken into consideration when each new menu is devised. At parents evening, the dining hall is open and a tasting menu is provided for parents to try out our food.

School food and drink provision

In order to provide good quality school lunch meals that are nutritious and healthy, Spa Education Trust made the decision to become meat free in 2019. Our school menu is comprised of plant-based dishes which reflect the culture and diversity of our students and local community.

Our desserts are fruit based and fresh fruit and yogurt are daily options.

The Requirements for School Food Regulations

The Department for Education have published the new school food regulations now to give schools, caterers, suppliers and food manufacturers time to familiarise themselves with the changes and to make any necessary preparations. The standards became statutory from January 2015.

The standards are based on the following food groups:

- Starchy food
- Fruit and vegetables
- Meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein
- Milk and dairy
- Foods and drinks high in fat, sugar and salt
- Plus, healthier drinks

The general principle of the standards emphasises the importance of providing a wide range of foods across the week. Variety is key – whether it is different fruits, vegetables, grains, pulses or types of meat and fish. Offering a wider range of different foods provides a better balance of nutrients.

We follow all advice as found: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools>

School House Café

Spa School Bermondsey benefits from an onsite working café which is open to the public during school hours. The café serves healthy vegetarian and vegan meals, snacks and drinks. The students in Key Stage 5 have the opportunity to do work experience in the café to build up their confidence in food preparation, food hygiene, health and safety, serving customers and developing communication skills.

Drinks

We recognise that low fluid intake can lead to reduced academic performance through poor concentration and lethargy, reduced physical performance and health problems. We encourage all students to drink water at regular intervals throughout the school day. Water is freely available to all members of the school community including visitors. Only water may be drunk during the school

day, except at lunchtime when students who bring a packed lunch from home may drink juice, squash or milk to drink.

Our food abides by the standards as set out below.

Monitoring and evaluation

Link to working with partner agencies policy

The Head of School meets weekly with the school cook to monitor school food choices and menu planning

There is monitoring of school food choices and incorporating this into menu planning

If pupils are noted to consistently choose/bring unhealthy packed lunches, parents are contacted to discuss and encourage other options.

Food concerns will be discussed with caterers, pupils, parents and staff as the need arises

Involvement of parents and carers

Parent and carer feedback of the Food Policy has been sought via questionnaires, newsletters and consultations throughout the consultation period. When reviewing the policy, views will be sought in a similar format. If pupils are noted to consistently choose/bring unhealthy packed lunches, parents are contacted to discuss and encourage other options.

Parents and carers are encouraged to taste samples from the school lunch menu at Parents Evenings and other events related to healthy lifestyles during Healthy Eating Week.

Meeting the needs of pupils with special dietary needs

Our school is a nut-free zone to control for to see with nut allergies. Student allergy information is posted clearly in the kitchen as well as in the school office. Allergy information is also part of every student's pen portrait.

Epipens are kept in the school office and training regular training is provided for staff. Staff attend regular allergies training

When pupils are enrolled, dietary requirements are requested via a questionnaire and catering are informed appropriate. Pupils with cultural diets are recognised by catering by photo's placed near the service area. In this way, catering staff can encourage appropriate meals and not exclude pupils in any way.

Links to other policies

- Behaviour policy
- Physical activity policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Equal opportunities and inclusion
- Working with partner agencies
- PSHE