

Newchurch St. Mary's CE Primary Academy
'Learning Through Faith'



Food and Nutrition Policy

Introduction

At Newchurch, St. Mary's we are committed to supporting children's health, development, and well-being through the provision of nutritious, balanced, and age-appropriate food. We follow the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the updated 2025 Nutrition Guidance for Early Years Providers to ensure the food and drink we provide meets the highest standards.

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.

The early years are a crucial time to reduce health inequalities and set the foundations for a lifetime of good health.

Our Values

We follow the statutory framework and guidance detailed in the EYFS using our extensive experience we observe, plan and teach children in early years.

"We aim to provide a learning environment in which everyone feels happy, safe and supported, where the evidence of God's love is ever present."

This policy reflects the school values and philosophy in relation to the teaching and learning of at St Mary's Newchurch-in-Pendle C of E Academy. It sets out a framework within which teaching and non-teaching staff can operate and give guidance so that all

children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life.

Aims:

- Promote lifelong healthy eating habits from an early age.
- Provide meals and snacks that meet children's nutritional, cultural, and dietary needs.
- Comply with statutory guidance on food and drink for children under five.
- Partner with families to support and respect children's individual food requirements.
- Encourage a positive, inclusive, and sociable dining experience.

We provide:

- Healthy, balanced meals and snacks based on the four food groups: fruit and vegetables, starchy foods, proteins, and dairy.
- Age-appropriate portion sizes.
- Water freely available throughout the day, and milk at designated snack times.
- Menus that rotate every 3–4 weeks and are reviewed termly.

We avoid:

- Foods high in sugar, salt, or saturated fats.
- Artificial sweeteners and sugary drinks.

Our food provision reflects the guidance in 'Example Menus for Early Years Settings' and supports healthy growth and development.

Cutting food safely when introducing solid foods

We will make sure to cut food to a size that's right for a child's size, age. This helps avoid choking.

Choking can happen with any food, but we will do everything we can to minimise the risks.

We will cut small fruits lengthways and then halve again (quarters).

These fruits include:

- grapes

- raspberries
- strawberries
- cherry tomatoes.

Foods to avoid :

- any sugar. Avoiding sugary snacks and drinks including fruit juice can help prevent tooth decay
- popcorn, raw jelly cubes, or whole nuts, which are all choking hazards

If your child prefers to have a packed lunch, please ensure that you follow the guidance above.

Paediatric first aid

A qualified paediatric first aider will be present at all times in the room during all snack and meal times.

Supervision when eating

An adult will always supervise children closely when they are eating. Staff will sit facing children while they eat to monitor for choking hazards, prevent food sharing and quickly identify any allergic reactions.

Special Dietary Needs and Allergies

- We maintain a current list of children's allergies, intolerances, and cultural dietary needs.
- Allergen information is displayed and followed in food preparation areas.
- All staff receive training in allergy management and emergency response.
- We work closely with parents and healthcare professionals to develop individual care plans as needed.

Learning and Mealtime Environment

- Mealtimes are a key learning opportunity and are used to teach children about healthy food, hygiene, and manners.
- Children are encouraged to try new foods and take part in preparing simple snacks or meals.
- We support children to serve themselves where appropriate, promoting independence.
- Positive role modelling and discussions about food and health are encouraged.

- Mealtimes are social, inclusive, and calm.
- Children sit together with staff who model positive eating behaviours.
- Independence is promoted by encouraging children to serve themselves where age-appropriate.

A healthy plate

We encourage children to eat a balanced diet containing a wide variety of foods. We plan meals and snacks that include a variety of food and drinks from the 4 main food groups every day. The more children try new foods, the wider the range of nutrients they will get from their meals. We will have children eat together in our setting. This encourages them to try foods that they might not try at home. For example, children who won't touch broccoli at home might happily try some if they see their peers eating it.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

- Menus are shared regularly with families and feedback is welcomed.
- We provide information on healthy lunchbox choices (for children bringing food from home).
- Families are consulted about dietary needs, food preferences, and cultural or religious requirements.
- We signpost parents to external guidance and support where appropriate.

Sustainability

- We aim to reduce food waste and promote recycling in food-related activities.
- Our menus favour seasonal, locally sourced, and sustainably produced ingredients where possible.

Cooking with Children

- Cooking and food preparation activities are part of our curriculum.
- These activities promote fine motor skills, maths, science, and cultural learning.
- Health and safety guidelines are followed at all times.

Celebrations and Special Occasions

- We celebrate in healthy and inclusive ways.
- Families are encouraged to share culturally significant foods that meet our nutrition and allergy guidelines.

Cultural and Dietary Preferences

- We respect and accommodate dietary needs related to religion, culture, and ethical beliefs.
- Parents are consulted to ensure inclusive meal planning.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

- This policy is reviewed annually or in response to updated statutory guidance.
- Menus and food practices are reviewed regularly and adapted based on feedback and nutritional standards.
- Compliance is monitored by the leadership team through regular audits.
- All staff are kept informed of any updates to guidance or training requirements.

Key References

- Statutory Framework for the EYFS (2024, effective September 2024)
- Nutrition Guidance for Early Years Providers (DfE, 2025)
- Example Menus for Early Years Settings (Public Health England, 2025)
- Food Standards Agency: Safer Food Better Business
- Eat Better, Start Better (Public Health England / Action for Children)
- Start for Life - NHS

Reviewed March 2026

Next Review March 2027