

FOOD AND NUTRITION POLICY

Stalmine School

Joanne Clarke September 2026

Stalmine Primary School

Introduction

At Stalmine we aim to implement a healthy eating approach in order to improve the health of children and their families. We will equip our children with the knowledge, understanding and skills that enable them to make the sort of choices that lead to a healthy lifestyle and develop to their full potential. In our setting children will be provided with a range of opportunities to learn about food and make healthier food and drink choices. Children have access to fresh fruit on a daily basis and fresh drinking water is available throughout the day for the children to help themselves. Children learn about the importance of eating five pieces of fruit and/or vegetables a day. They take part in cooking activities that are linked to the learning experiences given within the setting. Meals and snacks are seen as a fun opportunity to extend children's learning in a social situation.

Policy Aims

The main aims of our policy are:

1. To enable healthy food choices through the provision of information and development of appropriate skills and attitudes.
2. To provide healthy, balanced and nutritious food/drink choices throughout the day (or time children are in the setting) and ensure any food brought in from home compliments this.
3. To ensure that all aspects of food and drink promote the health and wellbeing of the children in our setting.

Equal Opportunities

We offer a balanced and nutritional menu over the day that takes into account all children's religious and medical needs.

Learning through Food

Within our daily routine we offer: morning snack and milk, school dinner and afternoon fruit. Children are able to bring a healthy snack from home for morning snack, milk and fruit are provided as part of the free schemes we are enrolled in.

School dinners follow the Lancashire 3 weekly rolling menu and children are able to bring a packed lunch from home.

Activities are offered regularly with the children such as food tasting, cooking, fruit kebab making and exploring textures of food through play. Encouragement to learn about growth and change of food through planting is explored with the children both indoors and out with planting and growing activities. As a school we value children's learning and development across all aspects of the curriculum and learning about food ignites interests and development within many areas such as Health and Self-care and physical development.

Resources/Teaching

We encourage children to be involved in activities surrounding food and healthy eating from including cooking and role playing with food in their everyday play. The children have access daily to role play scenarios involving food and are encouraged to prepare and cook a variety of different foods.

We promote positive attitude towards foods during meal times and have selected round tables to help with social communication during meal times.

Food Play

We ensure any food we use for play with the children is carefully supervised. We will also use the following procedures to ensure children are kept safe:

- Choking hazards are checked and avoided
- We will not use whole jelly cubes for play. If we do use jelly to enhance our play then all jelly will be prepared with water as per the instructions and then used
- Small objects such as dried pasta and pulses will only be used for older children and under supervision
- All allergies and intolerances will be checked and activities will be adapted to suit all children's needs so no child is excluded
- Any cooking activities will be checked prior to start to ensure all children are able to use all the ingredients based on their individual needs
- We will not use food in play unless it enhances the opportunities children are receiving from the activity.

Packed Lunches

On enrolment, parents are given the opportunity to choose whether they would like their child to have a school dinner or a packed lunch. We encourage parents and carers to provide children with packed lunches that complement our healthy food ethos.

Where parents have chosen to provide a packed lunch instead of a cooked lunch, the school will:

- inform parents of our policy on healthy eating;
- encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk based deserts
- discourage sweet drinks, we will provide children with water
- discourage packed lunch contents that consist largely of crisps, processed foods, sweet drinks and sweet products such as cakes or biscuits.

Use of Food as a Reward/Special Occasion

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 other achievements. Other methods of positive reinforcement are used. Equally withholding food will not be used as a punishment.

We encourage diversity around food and encourage everyone to share food customs at special occasions/special festivals.

- Children will be rewarded with praise, dojos and stickers. Food and sweets will not be used as a reward, only for birthdays and celebrations when provided by parents and carers.
- Birthdays will be celebrated in ways that don't involve confectionery, cakes or biscuits.

Special Dietary Requirements

The setting will provide food in accordance with children's religious beliefs and cultural practices as required.

Allergies / Preferences

We obtain necessary information from parents in advance of a child being admitted to the provision, including: the child's special dietary requirements or food allergies.

- Written parental permission will be requested at the time of the child's admission to the provision, regarding the seeking of any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment in the future.
- All practitioners are fully aware of children who may have allergies. Any special requirements are stated on the child's enrolment form that is filled in by the parents and we will work with the family to help provide the child with a healthy, balanced diet.

Special Diets/ Vegetarian Diets

A vegetarian option will be provided at meal times every day. Special Diets- Medical We recognise that some children may require special diets. In this case parents/carers are asked to make us fully aware of this. Individual care plans/menus need to be created for children with special dietary needs/requirements. These should document symptoms and adverse reactions, actions to be taken in an emergency, and emergency contact details, along with any particular food requirements e.g. for high-energy diets, allergies. Caterers will work closely with parents/carers and where possible meals will be provided. There may be occasions where parents/carers will be asked to provide the meals or food ingredients themselves.

The catering team have detailed lists of the children within the setting that have dietary needs and what these are, to use for when they are preparing the meals.

Food Safety - Milk and Food

Appropriate food safety precautions are taken when milk/food is prepared or stored. These vary depending on the food on offer and include: ensuring that adequate storage and washing facilities are available. Any food safety hazards are identified and controlled. Information is cascaded to everyone who is involved with food related activities in the setting.

The Food and Eating Environment

The school will provide a clean, sociable environment for children to eat their meals. Children will be encouraged to develop good eating skills and table manners and will be given plenty of time to eat. The use of praise and encouragement through stickers is

used for children who are reluctant to try foods and working closely with parents is important to us as a setting.

Our food, eating environment, activities and ethos aim to:

- promote healthy lifestyles through healthy eating and drinking
- present consistent, informed healthy eating messages.
- support and encourage good table manners and social eating skills.
- encourage children to exercise healthy choices with regards to eating and drinking
- have supportive staff who encourage children to observe the social rituals of mealtimes including the use of 'please' and 'thank you'.
- work with parents/carers around the provision of healthy food and drinks by making healthy eating information available such as leaflets, posters, policies and websites.

Leading by Example and Staff Training

Staff and caterers, have a key role in influencing children's knowledge, skills and attitudes about food, so it is important that they are familiar with healthy eating and nutrition guidelines. Any changes to guidelines regarding eating and nutrition will be cascaded to staff through staff training sessions and meetings.

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