

**Three Counties Academy Trust**



# Primary Food Policy

## #GN14

Last amended 26<sup>th</sup> June 2026 (v1.0)

Policy lifespan: 3 years. Subject to annual compliance check. Next full review 25<sup>th</sup> June 2029.

**Version history**

Date	Version	Details	Actioned by	PDF to Websites	Word to Governor Hub
26.06.26	1.0	Formatted to house style and checked against model for updates.	MF	✓	✓

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## Policy Abbreviations and Acronyms

<b>AIP</b>	Alliance in Partnership
<b>DfE</b>	Department for Education
<b>EYFS</b>	Early Years Foundation Stage
<b>IHP</b>	Individual Healthcare Plan
<b>PPDS</b>	Pre-Packed for Direct Sale
<b>SLT</b>	Senior Leadership Team
<b>TCAT</b>	Three Counties Academy Trust

**NB. Where the term “parent” or “parents” is used this includes those who act as carers or have parental responsibility.**

## Statement of intent

At Three Counties Academy Trust (TCAT), we recognise that healthy eating and good nutrition play a fundamental role in supporting pupils' physical health, emotional wellbeing, development and educational achievement. We are committed to creating school environments that actively promote healthy lifestyles, encourage positive attitudes towards food and nutrition, and enable pupils to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to make informed choices throughout their lives.

Across all TCAT primary schools, we will support pupils to eat healthily, remain appropriately hydrated throughout the school day and develop an understanding of the importance of a balanced diet as part of a healthy lifestyle. Healthy eating will be promoted through both the taught curriculum and the wider life of each school, ensuring that the messages pupils receive through learning are consistently reflected in the food and drink available on site, cooking activities, educational visits and wider school events wherever reasonably practicable.

TCAT recognises the strong relationship between good nutrition and improved concentration, behaviour, attendance, physical development and educational outcomes. We are therefore committed to fostering lifelong healthy habits by providing pupils with positive experiences of healthy food, encouraging informed decision-making and working in partnership with parents and carers to reinforce healthy lifestyle choices both in school and at home.

As part of our commitment to health and wellbeing, all food prepared, provided or served within TCAT schools will be of a high standard, meeting appropriate expectations for quality, nutrition, food safety and hygiene. Catering providers, school staff and all those involved in food preparation or service are expected to comply fully with all relevant food safety legislation, statutory guidance and national food standards. TCAT is committed to ensuring that food provision supports pupils' health, accommodates recognised dietary, medical, cultural and religious requirements where reasonably practicable, and promotes an inclusive dining experience for all.

This policy provides a clear framework to support schools, staff, parents, carers and catering providers in promoting consistent messages about healthy eating and healthy lifestyles. Through collaborative working and a whole-school approach, we aim to develop pupils who understand the importance of making healthy choices and who are equipped to maintain those choices throughout their lives.

Whilst the **Requirements for School Food Regulations 2014** apply only to academies established on or after 18 June 2014, Three Counties Academy Trust has adopted the principles and requirements of those regulations across all of our primary schools, regardless of their date of conversion to academy status. This ensures that every pupil attending a TCAT primary school benefits from the same consistently high standards of food provision, nutrition and healthy eating.

## **Member, Trustee, Local Governor and Staff Summary**

### **Purpose and Ethos**

- Promotes healthy eating and nutrition as fundamental to pupil health, wellbeing, development and attainment
- Commits all schools to consistent messages and environments that support lifelong healthy choices
- Adopts national school food standards across all primary schools regardless of status

### **Governance and Accountability**

- Trust Board retains overall responsibility for implementation, compliance and non-discrimination
- Leaders ensure effective day-to-day delivery, including menu quality, safety, and communication with parents
- Regular monitoring and review ensure continued compliance and policy effectiveness

### **Food Provision and Standards**

- All meals must be balanced, nutritious and reflect the four main food groups
- Food high in fat, salt and sugar is limited in line with healthy eating expectations
- Food must meet legal requirements for safety, hygiene and preparation
- Menus reflect diversity and cater for a range of dietary, cultural and religious needs

### **Inclusion and Safeguarding**

- Robust processes are in place to manage allergies, intolerances and medical needs
- Clear systems ensure staff are aware of allergens and safe food handling practices
- Reasonable adjustments are made to ensure all pupils can access suitable food provision

### **Staff Responsibilities**

- Staff model positive eating behaviours and support pupils to develop independence
- Training in food hygiene and safety is required where relevant

- Staff identify and communicate concerns about pupils' eating patterns appropriately

### **Parental Partnership**

- Parents provide accurate information on dietary needs and work collaboratively with schools
- Ongoing communication ensures consistency between home and school practices
- Parents are engaged in menu development and informed of any changes

### **Pupil Experience**

- Eating environments are safe, calm and supportive of social interaction
- Children are encouraged but never forced to eat; autonomy and wellbeing are prioritised
- Healthy habits are developed through consistent exposure, encouragement and modelling

### **Food Safety and Compliance**

- All food handling complies with food safety legislation and statutory guidance
- Clear hygiene practices are maintained and reinforced across all settings
- Systems ensure safe storage, preparation and consumption of food

### **Continuous Improvement**

- Policy is reviewed regularly with updates communicated across all schools
- Feedback from stakeholders informs ongoing development
- Central oversight ensures consistency across TCAT

## **Parent Summary**

### **Our Commitment to Your Child**

- We believe healthy eating is essential for children's physical health, emotional wellbeing and ability to learn
- Schools create a positive environment where children are encouraged to try new foods and make healthy choices
- The same high standards of food are applied across all TCAT schools

### **What Your Child Will Experience**

- Meals and snacks are balanced and designed to support growing, active children
- Fresh drinking water is always available throughout the day
- Children are encouraged to develop independence, including making choices and feeding themselves
- Mealtimes are calm, social and supportive, helping children build positive relationships with food

### **Supporting Different Needs**

- We take allergies, medical needs and dietary requirements seriously and work closely with families to manage these safely
- Food is prepared and handled carefully to reduce risks and ensure children's safety
- Cultural and religious dietary preferences are respected wherever possible

### **Working with Parents**

- You will be asked to provide clear information about your child's dietary needs and preferences
- Schools will keep you informed about menus, changes and how well your child is eating
- We encourage open communication so that home and school approaches are consistent

### **Healthy Habits for Life**

- Children are supported to try new foods and develop a balanced diet over time
- We do not force children to eat; instead, we encourage and support them in a positive way

- Food is not used as a reward, helping children build a healthy relationship with eating

### **Keeping Children Safe**

- All food is prepared, stored and served in line with food safety and hygiene standards
- Staff are trained to manage food safely and recognise any concerns
- Clear procedures are in place to respond to allergies and other dietary risks

### **Special Occasions and Food from Home**

- Celebrations focus on inclusive activities rather than foods high in sugar, fat or salt
- Healthier options are encouraged where food is brought into school
- Any food from home must be labelled, stored and handled safely

### **Ongoing Review**

- TCAT regularly reviews its approach to ensure children continue to receive safe, high-quality food
- Feedback from parents is welcomed and helps shape ongoing improvements

## 1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- [The Requirements for School Food Regulations 2014](#)
- [The Food Information \(Amendment\) \(England\) Regulations 2019 \(Natasha's Law\)](#)
- [Food Safety Act 1990](#)
- [School Standards and Framework Act 1998](#)
- [DfE 'School food in England'](#)
- [DfE 'School food standards practical guide'](#)
- [Public Health England 'Example menus for early years schools in England'](#)
- [DfE 'The school food plan'](#)
- [DfE 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'](#)
- [DfE 'Standards for School Food in England'](#)

Where legislation has been passed or updated during the shelf life of this policy, we will always apply the latest version available irrespective of the version quoted here.

This policy operates in conjunction with the following policies:

- EYFS Food and Nutrition Policy
- Whole-School Food Policy (CU4)
- Complaints Policy and Procedure (GN9)
- Health and Safety Policy (HS1)
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures (SG1)
- Allergen and Anaphylaxis Policy (SG17)

Central TCAT policies have the policy number identified, e.g. "SG1". Where no policy number is identified this indicates the policy is a school specific policy available from an individual TCAT school's website.

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

The Trust Board and where delegated, Local Governing Bodies, will be responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy
- Ensuring that this policy does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, or religion
- Handling complaints regarding this policy, as outlined in TCAT's Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Ensuring TCAT uses reliable suppliers for the food purchased.
- Informing parents who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in the individual school

School Leaders, in conjunction with Black Pepper School Lunches and Alliance in Partnership (AIP), are responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy
- Reviewing menus and meal times to ensure children's needs are being met
- Ensuring equipment is suitable for its use and providing separate facilities for hand-washing and for washing up in the kitchen area
- Ensuring all staff members are trained in basic food safety and hygiene
- Ensuring parents are given adequate notice of any changes to meals, food choices or any other aspect of food provision

All early year's staff are responsible for:

- Sitting with children while they eat, where required, and being advocates of healthy eating
- Discouraging children from sharing or swapping their food in order to protect those with food allergies
- Treating all children equally, taking account of the eating practices in their cultures
- Modelling good cutlery use and eating habits but not intervening physically to bring about change without parental consent
- Relaying through the school SLT any observed concerns with pupil eating habits and patterns to Parents and Carers and working collaboratively to make necessary changes where appropriate to do so

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing the school with information on their child's dietary requirements, preferences, and food allergies

- Providing specialist food for their child, where they may have an allergy, intolerance or medical need
- Giving consent for the school to give pre-made up milk to their child
- Working collaboratively with staff to make necessary changes to eating habits where appropriate to do so

### **3. Food and drink served**

All meals will include a variety of foods from the four main food groups:

- Starchy foods
- Fruits and vegetables
- Meat, fish, eggs, beans, and non-dairy sources of protein
- Milk and dairy foods

Foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar will be limited in line with TCAT's current Healthy Eating and Drinking Policy for the age group of the children concerned.

Portion sizes will be based upon the recommended intake for the age group of the children concerned.

Menus will reflect the diversity of the community, with a variety of flavours and textures.

Where children are sleeping during mealtimes, their meal will be covered, stored correctly and served when the child awakens.

Fridges and store cupboards will be cleaned regularly to ensure they are clean. Food stored in the fridge will be kept at 5°C or lower and, where necessary, reheated until piping hot throughout. Food will be stored in sealed plastic containers, and tin cans will never be stored in the fridge.

Menus will rotate and meal suggestions from parents are welcomed during the planning of these menus.

Fresh drinking water will be available and accessible at all times and children will be encouraged to drink regularly.

Milk will be offered with either the morning or afternoon snack for those eligible (children attending part-time will always be offered milk with their snack).

All dairy products will be full fat. Children over two will also be allowed semi-skimmed products. Soya drinks are only given as a substitute for cow's milk with the agreement of the child's parents.

Fresh fruit juice will be the only drink offered to children other than milk or water. Juice will be diluted to one parts juice to 10 parts water and will only be given with meals rather than in between.

Fresh and frozen breast milk, provided by parents, will be used within 24 hours and have the expressed date on the container. Fresh and frozen breast milk will be heated in warm water, not in the microwave, and tested before being given to children. Breast milk will be discarded after one hour of being heated.

Powdered milk will be made up according to the manufacturers' instructions and discarded within one hour of being made.

Staff will not consume carbonated drinks in the presence of children.

#### **4. Eating environment**

The eating environment will be comfortable and relaxed. Children will be given plenty of time to feed themselves and hold feeding utensils. Staff should model good eating behaviours but not intervene directly with pupils without prior parental consent. Concerns should be passed to school leaders who will contact Parents and Carers to work on a plan moving forward which may include limited assistance.

Children will be provided with utensils that are appropriate for their age and stage of development.

Staff will sit with children while they eat and encourage interaction at each table. Children will be observed to ensure they are drinking and eating enough, and staff will be aware of the behaviour that may suggest a child is thirsty or hungry.

Children will be encouraged to develop good eating skills and table manners.

Meals times will be used to help children develop independence, through making food choices, serving food and drink, and feeding themselves.

#### **5. Celebrations and special occasions**

'Party food' will not be permitted as it contains high percentages of salt, fat, and sugar. Each school will, instead, celebrate with the following:

- Craft activities
- Songs and stories
- Dressing up
- Decorating rooms
- Playing special games
- Encouraging children to find out about a wide range of events from a variety of cultures

Parents will be encouraged to bring in healthier food, or non-food items (such as stickers), instead of cakes or sweets for birthdays and other celebrations.

## **6. Allergies and special requirements**

Parents will make the school aware of any allergies their child has and the actions that need to be taken if a reaction occurs.

A protocol will be established and made accessible to all staff to ensure everyone is aware of a child's allergies and symptoms.

Where it is suspected that a child has an allergy, TCAT will encourage the child's parents to seek advice and diagnosis from their doctor.

TCAT will ensure children with allergies are not exposed to foods that trigger allergies. Appropriate alternatives will be identified to ensure the child still eats a balanced diet.

All staff will be instructed, where necessary, to ensure they understand how to identify which allergens are present in every meal and snack provided.

All food that is pre-packed for direct sale (PPDS) will have the name of the food and the full ingredients list, with allergens emphasised, e.g. in bold, italics or a different colour, clearly displayed.

All preparation of food containing common allergens, e.g. nuts, will be kept completely separate from other food preparation.

There will be a set of kitchen utensils that are only for use with the food and drink of the children at risk of allergic reactions. There will also be a set of kitchen utensils with a designated colour. These utensils will be used only for food items that contain bread and wheat related products.

Food items containing nuts, bread and wheat will be stored separately.

Learning activities which involve the use of food will be planned in accordance with children's' individual healthcare plans (IHPs), taking into account any known allergies of the children involved.

Children will be discouraged from sharing or swapping their food with other children.

Food provided for children with allergies will be managed in accordance with the Allergen and Anaphylaxis Policy.

Appropriate provision will be made for parental preferences, including cultural and religious food sensitivities, e.g. providing halal and kosher food as appropriate.

## **7. Food brought in from home**

Food that is brought into the school from home will comply with this policy and include the foods outlined in the 'Food and drink served' section of this policy.

Food and drink will be appropriately labelled with the child's details, safely stored until needed and heated properly, if necessary.

Any food that is not consumed during the day will be sent home with the child.

## **8. Eating habits**

All children will be supported to manage their own personal needs as far as possible, including understanding the importance of healthy food choices.

At meal times, fussy eaters will be seated with children that are more adventurous with their food to encourage the adoption of different food preferences.

Children will be regularly exposed to new foods in order to increase their liking for, and consumption of, a variety of new foods (providing these foods meet their specific dietary requirements).

Favourite foods will not be used as a reward to encourage children to eat foods they do not like.

TCAT is aware that some children will have allergies or different dietary requirements; this will be taken into account when encouraging children to try new foods.

Before a child is admitted, TCAT will obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences, and food allergies – this information will be recorded and acted upon as appropriate.

Children will **never be forced** to finish everything on their plate. Small servings will be given, with the opportunity to have second helpings if the first serving is finished. **Under no circumstances** must staff be assisting children to eat or physically intervening unless requested to do so by parents or in the instance of a medical emergency e.g., potential choking, and in that instance, they will alert a member of school leadership to the intervention who will make a record as such and inform parents.

## **9. Food safety and hygiene**

Food will be stored, prepared and presented in a safe and hygienic environment which is adequately equipped to provide healthy meals, snacks and drinks for children.

Where necessary, suitable equipment for the sterilisation of babies' food will be available.

Children will be taught basic hygiene, such as not eating food that has fallen on the floor and washing their hands before eating and after using the toilet.

All staff will receive training in food hygiene before preparing or handling food.

All staff involved in preparing food for young children, or helping them eat, will be aware of the requirements of the Food Safety Act 1990.

## **10. Communication**

Parents will be provided with information on the routine meals and snacks that their children are given.

Parents will be given a copy of this policy when their children start to attend the school and will be consulted via letter when the policy is updated.

Parents will be given regular feedback on how well, and what, their children are eating.

Menus will be distributed for all parents to see.

TCAT will consult with parents on the food that is provided and will ask them for feedback as the menus are developed and introduced.

TCAT will agree with parents on the methods used to manage fussy eating, ensuring they are consistent with those used at home.

Parents will be encouraged to attend events to celebrate special and cultural occasions.

## **Monitoring and review**

At any point this policy is updated or fully reviewed, it will be updated on the main TCAT website and will automatically update on all TCAT school websites simultaneously.

Where an annual check or other check results in minor changes, the Version History will be reviewed and updated with a change in the number following the decimal point, for example, v1.1 ⇒ v1.2. Where the policy is reviewed in full, then the number before the decimal point will change and reset, for example v1.4 ⇒ v2.0.

Any changes made by the CEO in collaboration with the Board Appointed Trustee will be passed to the Trust Board for ratification and subsequently be notified to Clerks to Local Governing Bodies and Headteachers/Heads of School.

The next scheduled full review date for this policy is 25<sup>th</sup> June 2029.

Date approved by the Board Appointed Trustee: 26<sup>th</sup> June 2026.

To be ratified and recorded in the minutes at the first Trust Board Meeting after 26<sup>h</sup> June 2026.

## Trust Glossary

<b>AA</b>	Admissions Authority	<b>H&amp;S</b>	Health and Safety
<b>AAI</b>	Adrenaline Auto-Injector (Epi Pen)	<b>HoS</b>	Head of School
<b>ACM</b>	Asbestos Containing Materials	<b>HSE</b>	Health and Safety Executive
<b>AHT</b>	Assistant Headteacher	<b>ICO</b>	Information Commissioners Office
<b>AIR</b>	Attendance Intervention Reviews	<b>IDSR</b>	Inspection Data Summary Report
<b>APDR</b>	Assess Plan Do Review Cycle	<b>IHP</b>	Individual Healthcare Plan
<b>APIs</b>	Application Programming Interfaces	<b>IRMS</b>	Information and Records Management Society
<b>ASC</b>	Autistic Spectrum Condition	<b>IWF</b>	Internet Watch Foundation
<b>ASP</b>	Analyse School Performance	<b>KCSIE</b>	Keeping Children Safe in Education
<b>ATH</b>	Academy Trust Handbook	<b>KS1/2/3/4</b>	Key Stage 1/2/3/4
<b>BAME</b>	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Backgrounds	<b>LAC</b>	Looked After Child
<b>BAT</b>	Board Appointed Trustee	<b>LADO</b>	Local Authority Designated Officer
<b>BCP</b>	Business Continuity Plan	<b>LGB</b>	Local Governing Body
<b>BFR</b>	Budget Forecast Return	<b>LLC</b>	Low-Level Concerns
<b>CEO</b>	Chief Executive Officer	<b>LSA</b>	Learning Support Assistants
<b>CFO</b>	Chief Financial Officer	<b>MASH</b>	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
<b>CIF</b>	Condition Improvement Fund	<b>MAT</b>	Multi-Academy Trust

<b>CIN</b>	Child in Need	<b>MFA</b>	Multi-Factor Authentication
<b>CLA</b>	Children Looked After	<b>MFL</b>	Modern Foreign Language
<b>CMIE</b>	Child Missing in Education	<b>NCSC</b>	National Cyber Security Centre
<b>COO</b>	Chief Operating Officer	<b>NoV</b>	Note of Visit
<b>COSHH</b>	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health	<b>NPQ</b>	National Professional Qualifications
<b>CP</b>	Child Protection	<b>PA</b>	Persistent Absence
<b>CPD</b>	Continuing Professional Development	<b>PAN</b>	Published Admission Number
<b>CPOMS</b>	Child Protection Online Management System	<b>PECR</b>	Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations
<b>CSCS</b>	Children's Social Care Services	<b>PEP</b>	Personal Education Plan
<b>CSE</b>	Child Sexual Exploitation	<b>PEEP</b>	Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan
<b>CTIRU</b>	Counter-Terrorism Internet Referral Unit	<b>PEx</b>	Permanent Exclusion
<b>CWD</b>	Children with Disabilities	<b>PP</b>	Pupil Premium
<b>CYPMHS</b>	Children and Young People's Mental Health Services	<b>PPG</b>	Pupil Premium Grant
<b>DBS</b>	Disclosure and Barring Service	<b>PSHE</b>	Personal, Social and Health Education
<b>DDSL</b>	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	<b>PSED</b>	Public Sector Equality Duty
<b>DfE</b>	Department for Education	<b>PTFA</b>	Parent, Teacher and Friends Association
<b>DHT</b>	Deputy Headteacher	<b>QA</b>	Quality Assurance

<b>DSE</b>	Display Screen Equipment	<b>RIDDOR</b>	Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations
<b>DSL</b>	Designated Safeguarding Lead	<b>RHE</b>	Relationships and Health Education
<b>DPO</b>	Data Protection Officer	<b>RPA</b>	Risk Protection Arrangement
<b>EAL</b>	English as an Additional Language	<b>RSHE</b>	Relationships, Sex and Health Education
<b>ECT</b>	Early Career Teacher	<b>SA</b>	Severely Absent
<b>EDIB</b>	Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging	<b>SALT</b>	Speech and Language Therapist
<b>EHA</b>	Early Help Assessment	<b>SARC</b>	Sexual Assault Referral Centre
<b>EHCNA</b>	Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment	<b>SBM</b>	School Business Manager
<b>EHCP</b>	Education, Health and Care Plan	<b>SCC</b>	Standard Contractual Clause
<b>EHE</b>	Elective Home Education	<b>SCITT</b>	School-Centred Initial Teacher Training
<b>ELSA</b>	Emotional Literacy Support Assistant	<b>SCR</b>	Single Central Record
<b>ESFA</b>	Education and Skills Funding Agency	<b>SDP</b>	School Development Plan
<b>EVC</b>	Educational Visit Coordinator	<b>SDQ</b>	Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire
<b>EWOSSO</b>	Education Welfare and Safeguarding Support Officer	<b>SEF</b>	Self-Evaluation Form
<b>EYFS</b>	Early Years Foundation Stage	<b>SEMH</b>	Social, Emotional, and Mental Health
<b>FBV</b>	Fundamental British Values	<b>SENCO</b>	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
<b>FFT</b>	Fischer Family Trust	<b>SEND</b>	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

<b>FGM</b>	Female Genital Mutilation	<b>SIP</b>	School Improvement Partner
<b>FGMPO</b>	FGM Protection Order	<b>SLA</b>	Service Level Agreement
<b>FOI</b>	Freedom of Information	<b>SLCN</b>	Speech, Language and Communication Needs
<b>FSM</b>	Free School Meals	<b>SLT</b>	Senior Leadership Team
<b>FTS</b>	Find a Tender Service	<b>SPOC</b>	Single Point of Contact
<b>GAG</b>	General Annual Grant	<b>STEM</b>	Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths
<b>GDPR</b>	General Data Protection Regulation	<b>TA</b>	Teaching Assistant
<b>GIAS</b>	Get Information about Schools	<b>TAC</b>	Team Around the Child
<b>HASH</b>	Herefordshire Association of Secondary Heads	<b>TCAT</b>	Three Counties Academy Trust
<b>HBA</b>	Honour Based Abuse	<b>TUPE</b>	Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)
<b>HR</b>	Human Resources	<b>VSH</b>	Virtual School Headteacher