Food Policy

July 2026
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1. Introduction

1.1 This policy was updated in July 2026
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1.2 Ethos and Values

This policy covers all aspects of food provision at Polegate School. Our aim is that food provision and teaching and learning about food and healthy eating are consistent and relate closely to the ethos, values and aims of the school.

We would like all of the children in our school to have access to safe, nutritious and enjoyable drinks, snacks and meals. Similarly, we endeavor to ensure that teaching and learning about food, whether it concerns how to cook and prepare food, hygiene and safety issues, or diet and healthy eating considerations, is thoughtfully planned, leading to challenging, engaging and memorable learning experiences. The importance of a balanced diet as a part of a healthy lifestyle will be emphasised. We will also do everything possible to ensure that food provision and teaching about food addresses and reflects the medical, nutritional, ethnic, cultural and religious needs of our school community, in line with our Equal Opportunities Policy.

2. Aims:

- To provide access to safe, tasty and nutritious food across the extended school day for all children and adults;
- To ensure that there is a supply of safe, clean, palatable drinking water available to pupils, staff and visitors, as required;
- To give children and parents clear information about possible food choices and the skills they need in order to be ‘food literate and numerate’, for example reading food labels, how to create healthy meals on a limited budget;
- For children to understand the importance of a healthy, varied and balanced diet and how this impacts on their well being;
- For pupils to have a growing awareness of the relationship between diet and fluid intake on learning and body functioning;
- For pupils to know how to handle and prepare food hygienically and safely;
- For pupils to know where different foods come from and how they are produced;
- For pupils to begin to understand the importance of environmentally sustainable food production and farming techniques.

3. The Curriculum

3.1 Learning and Teaching

Teaching about food crosses over several curriculum boundaries.
Food is mainly taught through:

- Design and technology: Cooking and nutrition;
- Science;
- Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE).
- Forest School

Physical education also plays an important part in pupils' health and wellbeing.

However, across the school we approach teaching through a more holistic approach, where children are taught through a topic based curriculum. Teachers will teach children about food through making meaningful links between the different areas of children's experience.

Other relevant cross-curricular links within and beyond food provision will also be made as they emerge, for example opportunities to taste locally grown, organic and seasonal produce or to consider why fruit skins are placed in the compost bin. We have a school orchard, and children will be actively involved in caring for the fruit trees, monitoring their growth and, in the summer, eating some of the fruit! Other opportunities to reflect on the growth cycle of food, for example, vegetables from the school garden being cleaned, prepared and eaten as part of sandwich making, will also be incorporated into planning, as appropriate. Opportunities for children to learn about the role of food in community activities and across a variety of cultures and times will also form a key element of teaching about food.

A wide variety of teaching approaches will be used to develop children's, skills, knowledge and understanding in this area and full details can be found in our Teaching and Learning policy..

The following are recommended to support planning for food and nutrition lessons across the school.

https://www.foodafactoflife.org.uk
Food – a fact of life (FFL) is a comprehensive, progressive education programme which communicates up-to-date, evidence-based, consistent and accurate messages around 'food' to all those involved in education.

FFL is managed by the British Nutrition Foundation (BNF), in partnership with the Agriculture & Horticulture Development Board (AHDB).

The programme:

- is UK curriculum compliant and supports key ‘food’ qualifications;
- is based on a progressive framework of knowledge and skills;
- provides editable resources, allowing teachers to modify them to better suit the needs of their pupils;
- supports a range of learning styles and approaches;
- provides professional development for trainee and practicing teachers;
- has been developed by former teachers, as well as qualified nutrition and agriculture experts;
- has oversight from four Education Working Groups who review work and help set future development.

Objectives

- To help individuals recognise that food is a basic requirement of life and should be enjoyed.
- To help individuals develop an understanding of the underlying scientific principles upon which current issues in nutrition are based.
- To inform about methods of food production and processing in domestic and commercial situations.
- To encourage an awareness of social, economic and cultural aspects of food choice.
- To enable individuals to demonstrate and apply appropriate knowledge of concepts and principles when planning and preparing meals and when making food choices.

Progression

To support excellence in food teaching and learning, the materials provided on the FFL website have been developed to support the curricula and qualifications in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. In addition, the Core Competences for children and young people aged 5 to 16 years have been used as a guide to support progression from 3 to 16 years.

3 to 14 years

For each age phase, i.e. 3-5, 5-7, 7-11 and 11-14 years, a progressive learning framework has been constructed to support learning around the following key learning areas: healthy eating, cooking, where food comes from and food commodities. Learning progresses from one age phase to another, consolidating prior learning and extending to include new concepts, knowledge and skills. Progression can be mapped via age or learning areas.

The framework provides a journey to support a child's food learning throughout their school career. For the teacher, it provides a series of activities and lessons, supported by classroom appropriate resources.

It is recognised that some pupils will require further support and others may need additional 'stretch'. Therefore, the ages on the website act only as a guide; for example, resources in the 11-14 years area could be used in a primary school to challenge more able pupils or resources from the 7-11 years area used to support older pupils with special education needs. The choice and use of resources is at the discretion of the teacher who will use their professional judgement and knowledge of their pupils' abilities.

- 4. Food and Drink Provision

4.1 School Meals

The continuing implementation of a healthy menu by the catering contractor offers healthier school meal options. The menus are designed to meet the government's nutritional standards for school meals. As well as the regular hot meal, with vegetables, and pudding choices (including fruit) each day, pupils are also able to choose from a jacket potato with a daily choice of fillings. Salads are also available on most school days.

We have a good uptake of school meals generally and ensure that all pupils who are entitled to a free school meal receive one. Once a year all pupils are be given an opportunity to 'try a school meal' for free. The Local County will be carrying out a survey to find out from parents their views and feelings on school meals. This will be something we follow up on in school. Other relevant initiatives will be tried in the future as we work towards this aim.

4.2 Special Dietary Needs

We appreciate that our pupils may have a wide range of dietary needs and we ask parents to provide us with this information when children first start school. We ask parents to provide us with details about allergies, food intolerances or particular medical needs, and whether the child has any cultural or religious beliefs that may impact on the food they are able to eat. This information is shared with all staff members who work with the child, the school meals staff, as relevant, and a copy of this information is kept on Medical Tracker and Arbor. Where a child has a serious allergy or medical need, such as a nut allergy, this MUST be made known and adequate training provided for staff by the school.
No nuts are allowed in school.

4.3 Packed Lunches

Another key aim of our food provision has been, and continues to be, making the contents of children's packed lunches as healthy as possible. We are working closely with our parents to realise this aim. Previous surveys of children's lunch boxes (reception, Year 2, Year 3 and Year 6) have demonstrated that many children are eating lots of processed, salty and sugary foods. Action has included issuing leaflets for parents and planning activities focusing on developing the contents of children's lunch boxes in reception and Year 3.

4.4 Drinks

Children in reception are able to bring plastic bottles of water, and in special circumstances diluted fruit juice, to school. They are also able to choose from milk or water at snack time. For older children, plastic bottles of water are permitted, and it is an agreed approach across the school that children have regular access to these. Although this does take different forms in various classes (boxes on tables, one box containing everyone's bottles) it is common practice. Water is taken out during PE sessions and lunchtimes. We have water fountains outside for access in both infant and junior playgrounds.

4.5 Celebrations, Treats and Rewards

We acknowledge that food is a significant aspect of cultural events and celebrations and include this within our teaching. The key role of the adults in our school as positive role models for children is also well known. Therefore, we would like the adults in our school to consistently model healthy eating practices and although we all enjoy 'treat foods', care should be taken in avoiding eating these in front of children so that we do not give out 'mixed messages'. Similarly, sweets and crisps must not be given to children as a reward for good work. We ask parents not to send sweets into school as a means of celebrating birthdays. This decision was made due to the vast amount of sweets that were coming into school and seeing children coming out of school clutching a chocolate bar or lollipop was undermining our healthy eating message!

4.6 Snacks

Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 children have a piece of fruit or a vegetable every day through the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme. In Key stage 2 we provide a 'healthy tuck shop' called Tuity Fruity at break times. A range of fruit is now available every day.

4.7 Dining Environment

The school hall is used as a dining hall. Meals are served on a self-service basis and children have access to cutlery and water at their tables. Children who have packed lunches also eat in the hall. We set the hall up in a calm, welcoming manner with grouped tables, tablecloths and plants to encourage a social and well-mannered experience for the children.

5. The Extended School Day and Social Activities

5.1 Breakfast Club and After School Provision

The children are provided every day with a healthy hot breakfast. There is also fruit and cereal always available. This also shares the schools aims for school provisions. An induction booklet is also given to parents outlining choices of food and drink.

At the Afterschool Club children have a choice of fruits and healthy snacks. They are also offered water or fruit juice to drink.

5.2 Partnership with Parents

We work in partnership with our Parents and Friends Association (PFA) and the Think Tank group to ensure a consistent approach to food provision.

6. Health and Safety

When planning for cookery and practical food activities, teachers will need to consider significant health and safety issues, assess potential risks and do everything possible to safeguard the safety and well-being of their pupils. Further information is contained in the school Health and Safety Policy. Within lessons, pupils should also be taught the health and safety practices that will enable them to assess potential risks and to take steps to safeguard their own health and well being. These will include washing hands before handling food, keeping surfaces and utensils clean and avoiding cross-contamination through storing cooked and uncooked meat separately, the role of cooking, preserving, chilling or freezing foods, as appropriate.

Staff members should not carry open cups containing hot liquids around the school when there are pupils present. Care also needs to be taken when carrying trays of hot food between the hall and the staff room. Issues surrounding safe use of cookers, sharp knives and other cooking implements is covered in the ‘Design Technology: Health and Safety’ booklet

7. Continuing Professional Development

We will provide training and support for all staff and governors, as required, to ensure that they have the confidence and skills they need in order to implement this policy. Visits to other schools or from professionals who work with food, such as parents who are chefs, will also be utilised, as appropriate.

8. Monitoring, Review and Implementation

This policy will be implemented and delivered by all staff in the school. Subject leaders, as appropriate to their areas of responsibility, will monitor and evaluate its impact and effectiveness. The appropriate link governor may also be involved in the monitoring and evaluation process. Monitoring may take the following forms:

- Review of planning and guidance;
- Liaison with class teachers and subject leaders;
- Classroom observation in line with other areas;
- Carrying-out a regular audit of provision in order to ensure we are meeting the needs of all our pupils and delivering an effective programme.

Appendix :
Healthy Eating web sites

BBCi Health http://www.bbc.co.uk/health

British Nutrition Foundation http://www.nutrition.org.uk

Children First http://www.childrenfirst.nhs.uk
A site where children are able to access health information and advice at a simple level, for example there is an animation designed for Key Stage 1 children that shows a bullying incident and how it was resolved.

Eat Smart Play Smart
http://www.food.gov.uk/healthiereating/eatsmartplaysmart/
This is a resource site for teachers of Key Stage 1 pupils. There are fifteen session plans: eight focusing on healthy eating and seven on physical activity. The first session is about discussing the nature and meaning of health and well being with children. Later sessions look at the various forms of physical activity and how they impact on health.

European Food Information Council http://www.eufic.org/gb/home/home.htm

Feel Good site http://www.ngfl.gov.uk/feelgood/
The National Grid for Learning "Feel Good" site includes a quiz, health check and health "maze" game suitable for Key Stage 2 children. This could be used independently by upper junior children as a follow up to healthy living discussions in class.

Five a Day the Bash Street Way http://www.food.gov.uk/interactivetools/educational/bashstreetdiet/
The Bash Street Kids promote fruit and vegetables! This site introduces the Bash Street Kids materials available for use with 7-11 year olds, for instance the "Fruity Veggy News" book.

Flour and Grain Education Programme http://www.flourandgrain.com

Food Standards Agency http://www.food.gov.uk

Further information and policy development

Health Education Trust http://www.healthedtrust.com/
There are many examples of healthy eating good practice on this site, particularly to do with the work of School Nutrition Action Groups (SNAGs).

Food in Schools http://www.foodinschools.org/curriculum/index.php
This is a DfES site with a wealth of information about school food policy, healthy eating, partnerships and training.

Wired for Health http://www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk

For Jamie Oliver fans! Details of his work in schools and plans for the future
http://www.feedmebetter.com/