

School Food Policy

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

1. Introduction

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School is dedicated to providing an environment that ensures the healthy choice, is the easy choice for all children. We promote healthy eating and enable pupils to make informed choices about the food and drink they consume. Through effective leadership and a strong school ethos, we take a whole school approach by bringing all elements of the school day together to support the health and wellbeing of all children. We recognise that we are invaluable role models to pupils and their families regarding food and drink choices and healthy living.

2. Food Policy Champions

A successful school food policy uses a whole school approach to formulate a policy that is agreed upon by everyone at the school including staff, caterers, pupils, parents, and governors to ensure it encompasses the overall ethos and environment of the school. To ensure our food policy is an embedded element of our school, it was formulated and then developed following consultation with the following groups:

- Our pupil School/Eco Council
- Parents
- Staff
- Caterers
- Governors

3. Policy Aims & Objectives

Our school food policy aims to ensure that all aspects of food and nutrition promote the health and well-being of pupils, staff, and visitors at our school.

The objectives of our school food policy are to:

- Provide a range of healthy food choices throughout the school day that are in line with the mandatory school food standards.
- Ensure that food provision in the school reflects the cultural and medical requirements of staff and pupils.
- Make the healthy choice, the easy choice.

- Ensure that our caterers uphold high standards and continue to actively consult with relevant stakeholders to improve the food provision.
- Work with students and the catering company to make sure the pupils feel listened to and see their choices in the food on offer.

4. Food & Drink Throughout the School Day

All staff who serve food across the school day are trained in food safety and hygiene.

Our kitchen lunchtime assistants have all completed the Food Safety & Hygiene Level 2 Course for Catering which is renewed at least every 3 years.

At our most recent local environmental health check we were awarded a Food Hygiene Rating of 5 (out of 5). You can view further details on the Food Standards Agency website:

<https://ratings.food.gov.uk/business/1777518/st-marys-catholic-primary-school>

4.1. Breakfast and After School Club

We offer a breakfast club which serves a range of nutritious, school food standard compliant food (including wholemeal carbohydrate, fruits & protein-based foods) to support children's health and concentration to ensure they have fuel for learning, play and social interaction.

Both our breakfast and after school clubs are run by an external agency called School Friend Clubs.

For more information about these clubs including a link to their Nutrition Policy please click:

<https://www.schoolfriendclub.com/about-us/nutrition/>

Our school's Senior Management Team has checked the club's menu and regularly monitors the food served to ensure it complies with the School Food Standards, under the section, 'Food other than lunch' [Appendix 1].

To ensure their menu was compliant, the School Friend Club has enlisted the services of a paediatric nutritionist called Mairi Huntly. Mairi has over 20 years' experience working in the NHS as a clinical dietitian. The main specialities include Gastroenterology, Obesity and Diabetes. In 2015, she set up her own freelance dietetic practice. As well as one to one patient consultation, she developed the BDA FODMAPs course in 2017. She also provided the dietetic support for schools working for Cambridge Catering Services. This post involved providing special diets for the top 14 allergens, nutritional analysis of the menu and providing a helpline for parents.

4.2. School Lunches

Our school meals are provided by an external catering company called Accent:

<https://accentcatering.co.uk/#welcome>

The meals are cooked at our host kitchen, at Botwell Catholic School, and then transported to St. Mary's. Our meals change each week based on a 4-week rotation. The menus are then updated based on ongoing feedback and seasonal produce available. Food waste is weighed at the end of service to help analyse which options children have enjoyed. This is used alongside pupil surveys and meetings with our School Council. Accent Catering has employed a nutritionist to ensure all menus comply with the school food standards [Appendix 1].

As our school is Catholic, we do not have meat on the menu every Friday.

Desserts:

To ensure balance within our lunch offering, we offer a range of nutritious dessert options. We serve chopped fresh fruit daily to help pupils achieve their 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day. When cakes and biscuits are offered, they often contain hidden vegetables e.g. carrot, beetroot and many of our desserts contain at least 50% fruit.

Dining environment:

Pupils have the opportunity to sit with their friends at lunchtimes. They are expected to stay in their seat and put up their hand when they have finished eating. We encourage pupils to use cutlery and to put their knife and fork together on their plate when they have finished eating. Our school caterers lead 'Knife and Fork' workshops for our Early Years pupils, in the Autumn Term, teaching them how to use a knife and fork correctly. This is then reinforced by our lunchtime staff throughout lunchtimes. All staff who eat their lunch with pupils are provided with a free school lunch. Our Senior Management Team are present in the Hall at lunchtimes and they regularly review the dining environment to ensure it is fit for purpose. Our teaching assistants, and additional lunchtime assistants, are responsible for lunchtime supervision and they are managed by members of our Senior Management Team. If a SEND child requires extra support at lunchtimes, as specified in their EHC Plan, we deploy extra adult supervision as required.

Feedback and consultation:

Prior to each term, our pupil School Council are consulted regarding changes to our 4-week menu. After speaking to their classmates, pupil representatives from each class also give feedback on the food items provided as well as our dining room environment.

Parents are invited to annual 'taster sessions' with our caterers and there is the opportunity to give feedback. We have recently updated our School Lunch Box Policy based on parent feedback given in a survey sent home.

Free School Meals:

Every child in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 in state-funded schools is entitled to a free school meal. The mayor of London Sadiq Khan has also extended funding for universal primary free school meals (including pupils in Years 3 to 6) into this academic year 2024 to 2025.

All pupils are entitled to a free school meal but this needs to be ordered in advance through Accent's online meal ordering system called iPay:

<https://www.ipayimpact.co.uk/IPI/Account/LogOn>

4.3. Packed Lunches

Packed lunches include those brought from home as well as those provided by the school, or by parents, for trips.

What should a packed lunch consist of?

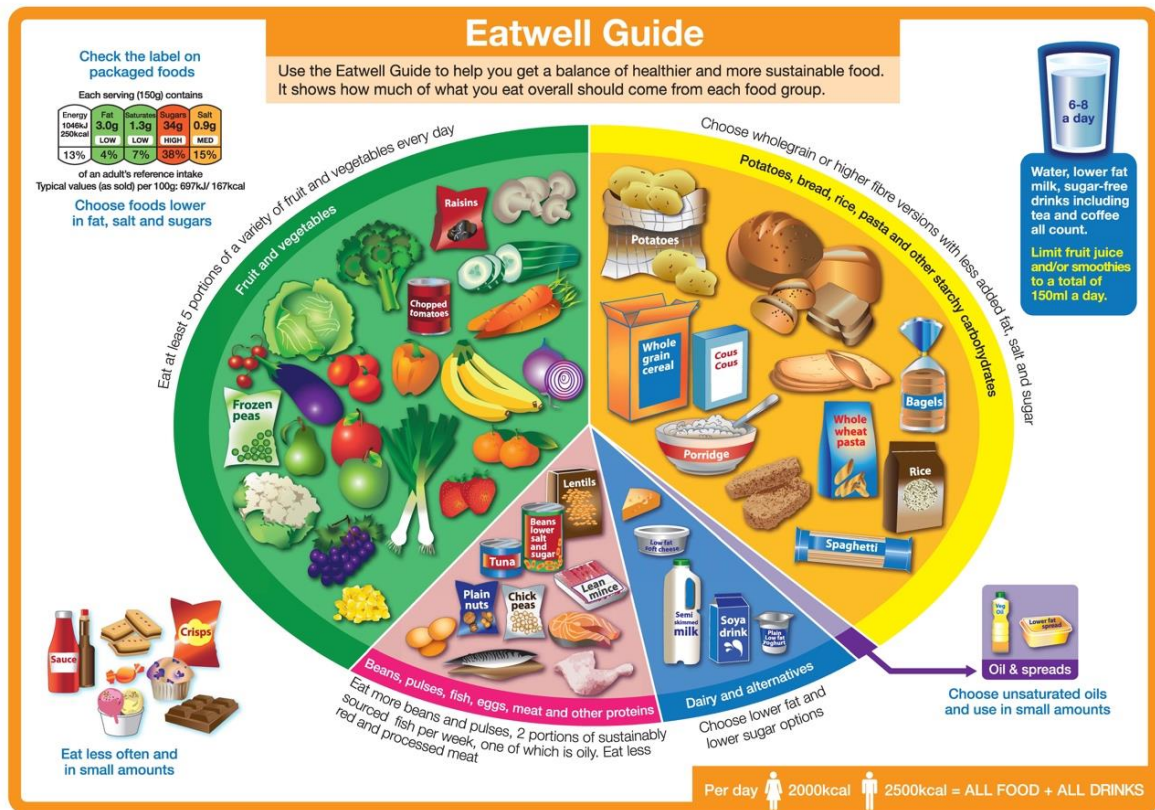
Lunch Box Policy

Never allowed in Lunch Boxes ✕

- Sugary soft drinks including squash, juice and fizzy drinks (we are a 'water only' school – see further details below).
- Confectionery such as chocolate bars or sweets. Cakes, biscuits or cereal bars containing or coated in chocolate.
- Crisps
- Hot food/drinks, items of food on skewer sticks and meat on bones e.g. chicken drumsticks (due to health and safety reasons)
- Nuts (including Nutella chocolate spread)
- Fruit Winders
- Prawns/shellfish

Grapes: Please cut in half length-ways due to the risk of choking

See the Eatwell Guide Below, for government guidance on what a balanced diet looks like:



Source: Public Health England in association with the Welsh Government, Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland

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What happens if a child's packed lunch does not meet our school's policy?

[The School Food Standards](#) are government guidelines outlining which foods can and cannot be served at schools in the UK (see Appendix 1). Here at St. Mary's, all food served throughout the school day (including our hot lunch service) is compliant with the School Food Standards. To ensure all children at St. Mary's are eating a nutritious and balanced diet whilst at school, we encourage all packed lunches brought in to reflect these school food standards. This means including certain food groups in packed lunches every day, limiting the amount other food groups are included, and also prohibiting certain food items from being brought in entirely.

Our midday supervisors informally check packed lunches daily. Should a child's lunch box contain an item that does not adhere to this policy then the child will be asked to keep the food item in their lunch box and to bring it back home at the end of the school day. Where necessary, staff will supplement the lunch with food from our school canteen to ensure students have access to a nutritious meal. Should a child be sent into school with such items repeatedly, the teacher may then speak to parents directly after school.

4.4. Food Brought In

Food brought in covers many different times within the school food environment and covers anything brought in by children, as well as provided by parents or staff. We strive to ensure that food brought into the school complies with the school food standards (see Appendix 1).

Pupils in Early Years and Years 1 and 2 are entitled to a free piece of fruit at break times. Pupils in Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6) can bring in a single piece of fruit from home to eat during their morning break. Pupils are not allowed to eat any other snacks at break times.

This policy also applies to packed lunches sent into school for trips.

4.5. Water Only

We are a 'water only' school. Being water only means making sure that water (and plain semi skimmed or skimmed milk, lactose free or soya milk) is the only drink in our school. Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, has called for primary schools across the capital to adopt a "water-only" policy in a bid to tackle child obesity. By choosing water, this means children are not drinking sugary drinks which contribute to many preventable health conditions like obesity, tooth decay and type 2 diabetes.

What's more is that London's tap water is excellent and one litre of tap water costs less than a fifth of a penny, 500 times less than bottled water and by using reusable water bottles we can help cut single-use plastics.

This 'water only' policy applies across our school day and includes packed lunches.

We ask that pupils only bring in water to school in a refillable 'sports style' water bottle. Pupils can drink from these water bottles throughout the day including lunchtimes. They can be refilled using the drinking water taps in classrooms. We also have jugs of water available on the lunch tables in our school hall.

Pupils may also bring in plain semi-skimmed or skimmed milk, lactose free or soya milk in their lunch boxes.

We will consider exceptions to this policy for a medical condition e.g. a diabetic child.

4.6. Reward Culture

Studies have shown that rewarding with food can have a negative impact on a student's relationship with food. It can increase preferences for sweets, lead to overconsumption, teach students to eat when they are not hungry, and contribute to problematic thoughts and behaviours for those who are predisposed to disordered eating.

Taking this into consideration, our school avoids using food as a reward and asks staff to follow this policy. As alternative we use a positive praise system where students receive postcards, additional trips, stickers, extra breaks, stampers, certificates etc. This was decided after a consultation with our pupil School Council.

4.7. Allergies & Special Diets

When talking about allergies and special diets, we are inclusive of all allergies, intolerances, cultural and religious diets as well as medical requirements such as diabetes or blended diets.

Parents are asked to provide detail of allergies (considering the 14 major allergens), intolerances, and special diets when their child starts our school. This information is added to our school meals ordering website (iPay) so that parents cannot order items that their child is allergic to. Our kitchen and salad bar staff are provided with a list of allergies (including the 14 major allergens), intolerances, and special diets in each class. This information is also given to class teachers. All staff receive annual training, from our NHS school nurse, around allergy management.

5. Food Education

Cooking and Nutrition is a compulsory subject within the Primary Design & Technology curriculum [Appendix 3]. We teach this at an appropriate level throughout each key stage. There are opportunities for pupils to develop knowledge and understanding of health, including healthy eating, food provenance as well as practical skills such as designing, preparing, and cooking food. Students are also taught about food and health through weekly PSHE and Science lessons and they look at where our food comes from in Geography lessons. We have a volunteer who leads a gardening club at break times – this includes growing fruit, vegetables and herbs for cooking. Our school caters also lead annual 'Eat the Rainbow' healthy eating sessions with each class.

6. Equal Opportunities

We recognise the importance of all pupils, staff and visitors having equal access to inclusive opportunities. We want to ensure that everyone is catered for and feels valued when food and drink is provided in school, and across all aspects of food education.

- We practise vigilance, noting and acting if we see signs that any student is not eating well/is not well-nourished.
- Free school lunches are available to all pupils.
- We ensure that the food offer considers our pupils' ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds and their varying medical / dietary needs some may have.

7. Staff & Visitors Expectations

All adults, including staff and external visitors, influence pupils' knowledge, skills and attitudes towards food and drink. Therefore, it is important that they have a positive attitude and are healthy role models. At every opportunity they should promote healthy choices and reflect our philosophy and approach to food and nutrition. We ask that staff/visitors only eat the foods and drink the drinks, specified in this policy) in front of the students.

This applies in pupil facing circumstances and across all areas of school (except our staff room area). We actively encourage all staff to drink water within the classroom environment.

10. Monitoring & Evaluation

At each review point, we will identify any areas of improvement to ensure that we maintain a balanced and wholesome approach to food & drink in our school. We will consider take up of school food, student/parent feedback and our ever-changing student population during each review.

1. Appendix

Appendix 1:

The revised standards for school food came into force on 1 January 2015 and are set out here:

[School food standards practical guide - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[School-Food-Standards-Guidance-FINAL-V3.pdf \(schoolfoodplan.com\)](http://schoolfoodplan.com)

Appendix 2:

[Free school meals: guidance for schools and local authorities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Appendix 3:

[National Curriculum - Design and technology key stages 1 to 2 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)