

Rationale

The school is dedicated to providing an environment that promotes healthy eating and enabling pupils to make informed choices about the food they eat. This will be achieved by a whole school approach to food and nutrition documented in this policy.

Immersing children within a provision rich in forward-thinking attitudes towards food helps to engender a positive disposition towards healthy life-style choices in later life. Children should learn that such attitudes towards food run in tandem with those towards exercise and physical activity - essential to good promoting health and physical well-being.

The nutritional principles of this policy are based on the findings of the National Diet and Nutrition Survey of 4 to 18 year olds; the 1991 Dietary Reference Values for Food Energy and Nutrients for the UK; and the Balance of Good Health (BOGH). The lunchtime provision at Thames View Infants is run by Juniper Pursuits Ltd. Juniper maintain and staff the school's kitchen, which offers full catering facilities.

Purpose

1. To enable pupils to make healthy food choices through the provision of guidance, close care, information and the nurturing of a positive healthy-disposition within later life.
2. To provide healthy food choices throughout the school day.
3. To work in partnership with parents to adopt healthy food choices within the home.
4. To understanding that children require a balanced diet in order to thrive – which, as part of this, may include carbohydrates and sugary drinks.
5. To acknowledge that a variety of very complex social, emotional and cultural underlying reasons culminate in perceived 'unhealthy' attitudes towards food, which needs careful understanding in order to ensure successful redress.
6. To ultimately challenge traditionally held dispositions to eating and food choices.

1. Equal Opportunities

In healthy eating, as in all other areas of the curriculum, we recognise the value of the individual and strive to provide equal access of opportunity for all. Most young children enjoy sharing and tasting different foods, including those from different cultures and this is a good vehicle to help explore, share and celebrate the diversity within the school community. As always, careful attention needs to be given to the needs of individuals and a careful understanding of underlying circumstances linked to perceived attitudes towards food habits and choices. These might be deeply-rooted and governed, for example, by

pre-existing medical conditions, emotional-needs, religious belief, social-economic circumstances, cultural legacy, misinformation or simply habitual-patterns passed through generations of a family. It is essential, therefore, to be sensitive to these underlying circumstances and paramount to work alongside parents as partners when attempting to change behaviours and perceptions towards food.

As part of the current Government's policies, all children in Reception to year 2 are eligible and receive a free school meal. Children who attend Nursery full-time/30 hours are offered either: a paid for school dinner, or can bring in a packed lunch from home. The Nursery menu differs from the main school menu, offering younger children a more easily accessible range of "finger" foods they are familiar with. School lunchtime staff support children in the same way as outlined in the rest of this policy, including; building resilience to trying new foods, using cutlery, good table manners, and eating a healthy balanced diet.

2. Curriculum

Positive attitudes towards adopting healthy food choices is taught both formally and informally throughout the school.

This is addressed through:

Learning

Within Key Stage One, children are formally taught about healthy food choices within Science, PSHE (SEALs), Design and Technology, Geography, History, RE and PE lessons. Within the Foundation Stage, important learning takes place within the Understanding of the World, PSED and Physical Development provision. Effective teaching requires pupils to develop their own understanding of healthy eating issues and appropriate skills and attitudes to assist them in making informed decisions. Teaching strategies adopted offer a rich variety of opportunities for participatory learning and include rich first-hand experiences (educational visits, tasting and sharing food), second-hand experiences (watching media and researching on-line), group discussions and role-play. Important learning takes place within assemblies, which challenges issues identified and fed-back by lunchtime staff – including for example, "*trying different foods*", "*table manners*" and "*using cutlery correctly*". An extended provision, including "Cooking Together", and shared family lunches at special occasions (e.g. religious celebrations), help to address this further.

Maintaining a Personalised Provision

The degree of success is linked, in part, to maintaining a complex personalised and risk-free learning culture, enabling staff to build upon their own strengths, orchestrating learning opportunities tailored to their ever-growing understanding of the needs of individuals and groups of children within their care.

This includes, for example:

- The Headteacher and Office staff working very closely with Catering Staff, ensuring that food choices meet local expectations and service and support for children and families are carefully tailored and meet individual needs.
- Encouraging staff to pursue their own areas of interest and share these skills with peers and the greater school community. *(For example, staff pursuing “Cooking Together” (whole class healthy-cooking drop-in) or shared family in-school lunches fuelled by an interest in cooking from home).*
- Maintaining a fully “joined-up provision”, in which the Strategic Leadership Team have a good knowledge of children’s needs and responsively draws upon this and other school data when considering how to address attitudes towards amongst specific individuals.
- Implementing a very comprehensive lunchtime provision, offering healthy set-meal choices. Empathetic lunchtime staff carefully monitor children’s food habits and, where appropriate, are empowered to intervene (supported by the Headteacher) in order to implement a very responsive support mechanism process, which may result in children being offered replacement, alternative or supplementary food options where shortfalls, inadequacies or imbalances are identified.
- A highly personalised “Lunch Club” provision supports children who have been identified by teaching and lunchtime staff whom require an increased level of support with their eating. A dedicated member of the lunchtime team works with these children closely, in conjunction with the School’s Leadership Team, Catering staff, and Class Teachers.

Community Cohesion/Parental Events

Juniper Pursuits Ltd have on-line menus for parents to peruse at home and there are links to this from the school’s website. Maintaining an established ethos of celebrating different cultures through performances, assemblies and community-based events heavily lends itself to enriching children’s exposure to foods. For example, parents bring home-cooked food in whole-school Diwali and Eid events, to share with other families and children. Catering Services also promote themed meals, which are sometime supplemented by the school. These include, for example, a “St George’s Day”, “Diwali”, “Chinese New Year”, “Easter”, “Christmas” and “Eid”.



Thames View Infants Whole School Food Policy

A free taster session is offered to the parents of children in Nursery and Reception in the first weeks of the school year, allowing them to sample a range of the food prepared by the Catering staff. This helps relieve anxiety of parents (and their children) in the first few weeks of joining school.

A Learning Community

All staff have a key role in influencing pupils' knowledge, skills and attitudes about food, so it is important that they are familiar with healthy eating guidance. Training takes place both formally and informally. In addition to formal training during regular staff & team meetings, the Headteacher and key members of the school's leadership team work have high-profile roles during lunchtimes and responsively address strategic training needs as they arise in an informal manner.

Resources

Resources for the teaching of healthy eating have been selected to complement the delivery of the curriculum in other subject areas. These are stored centrally in school, as well as electronically.

Assessment for Learning

The school fully embraces the principles of Assessment for Learning. The healthy eating aspects of the National Curriculum are assessed through formative and, where applicable, summative assessments - in line with the school's Assessment Policy.

A rich culture of dialogue centred around learning takes place across school amongst staff at all levels. This information is also drawn upon when complementing formative assessments, implementing a personalised provision and having "joined up discussions" about individual support.

Other aspects of healthy eating work are evaluated through activities, which have been built into the programme, as part of the planning and school evaluation process.

3. Food and Drink Provision Throughout the School Day

Breakfast

Breakfast is an important meal that should provide 25% of a child's energy requirement and contribute significantly to their vitamin and mineral requirements.

The school operates a breakfast club that provides a nutritious meal for pupils before the school day. It also helps support busy commuting parents. The breakfast menu includes; toast (with a range of

toppings), cereal, and milk. The club runs for all pupils from Reception. Parents are informed that all children who attend must eat breakfast.

Parents who work or have been identified as in need of the additional support Breakfast Club can bring are prioritised as space is limited. There is currently a charge of £2 per day. Parents are encouraged to pay in advance. However, the school allows parents to “pay-as-you-go” to provide for families who may require support in a time of need.

National Nutritional Standards for School Lunches

National Nutritional Standards for school Lunches became compulsory in April 2001. Food prepared by the school catering team meets the National Nutritional Standards for School Lunches.

Links to Lunchtime Menus are made available via the school website.

At Thames View Infants, children are provided with a set-menu, although they are supported to choose wisely from within these options. All children undertaking a school meal will be provided with a choice of:

- “main item” (*for example, salmon fish cake*),
- a complementary *carbohydrate* (*for example, mash potatoes*),
- a choice from two vegetables (*for example, carrots and broccoli*),
- a wide variety salad dishes (*for example, mixed salad, rice salad*),
- slice of bread,
- a desert (*for example, yoghurt, sponge cake or fruit*)
- and a drink (*water or milk*).

Snacking

The school understands that snacks can be an important part of the diet of children and can contribute positively towards a balanced diet.

The school participates in the National Fruit and Vegetable Scheme and all children receive at least one piece per day (and more if required). Staff are encouraged to be vigilant and report children who seem overly hungry or adopting unusual behaviours towards foods (whether during snack time or lunchtime) to the Headteacher and/or school’s Child Protection officer as this could be sign of neglect or underlying medical condition.

The Use of Food as a Reward

The school does not encourage the regular eating of sweets or other foods high in sugar or fat, especially as a reward for good behaviour or academic or other achievements. Other methods of positive reinforcement are used in school.

Drinking Water

The National Nutritional Standards for Healthy School Lunches recommend that drinking water should be available to all pupils, everyday, and free of charge. The school agrees with this recommendation and provides a free supply of drinking water. Children come to school with a named re-useable water bottle which can be refilled in school when required. Children are permitted to drink as they need. Children are offered milk and water with their school dinner. Water is available throughout the lunchtime period. Parents are only permitted to provide drinking water and sugary drinks should not be brought into School.

4. Food & Drink Brought into School

Packed Lunches

Packed lunches prepared by the school caterers adhere to the National Nutritional Standards for Healthy School Lunches. Under the current funding (UFSM) all children receive a free school meal and therefore School operates a no packed lunch policy.

5. Special Dietary Requirements

An Inclusive Provision

The school adopts an inclusive approach to dietary requirements. Catering Services offer food in accordance with pupils' religious beliefs and cultural practices. For example, Halal food is prepared to strict guidelines. Identical Halal and non-Halal options are available too. Vegetarian options are also available at lunch every day. (When necessary the school also provides vegan options). Non-vegetarian children are also able to try vegetarian options if they wish. Catering staff are encouraged to engage with individual pupils at the servery and partake in a quality dialogue about food choices.

All children wear a coloured band at lunch time to identify their dietary requirements when they reach the dinner hall and serving hatch:

Blue – Halal

Green – Vegetarian

Yellow – No beef or pork

White – No specific dietary needs

Children with a diagnosed allergy to a food substance wear a red lanyard, that outlines their allergens and identifies the child with a photo and their name. Posters in the kitchen, and in every room around the school highlights these children, their allergens, and if they have an EpiPen in school. This alerts all members of staff to potential allergic reactions.

Caring lunchtime staff are ever-mindful of children's individual attitudes towards food, behaviours and eating-patterns and are skilled at supporting carefully and whistle-blowing concerns to the Headteacher or other Strategic Leadership Team members.

Not all pupils have similar appetites and some children take longer to eat than others. This individuality is respected and accommodated wherever possible. If for example, after "*trying*" a child does not like the taste of something, they may change it. Within a closely supervised and carefully supported environment, if *genuinely* not hungry, it is acceptable for a child to leave their lunch.

School staff are wise to the importance of identifying "hidden" meat or dairy products found in other food stuffs (such as gelatine-based sweets) and the implications of these for Islamic families or vegetarians

Individual care plans are created for pupils with food allergies. These document symptoms and adverse reactions, actions to be taken in an emergency, and emergency contact details. School caterers are made aware of any food allergies/food intolerance and requests for special diets are submitted according to an agreed process. Parents with children recuperating from illness are offered the opportunity to bring in nourishing food e.g. soup from home, which staff will heat up, to support children's return to school. Children with significant additional needs can also bring some food brought from home which supports extremely limited diets or food aversions.

6. Food Safety

Appropriate food safety precautions are taken when food is prepared or stored. These vary depending on the food on offer and include: ensuring that adequate storage and washing facilities are available; that food handlers undergo appropriate food hygiene training; and that suitable equipment and protective clothing are available. Any food safety hazards are identified and controlled. We consult our local Environmental Health Department about legal requirements. Pupils are encouraged to wash their hands before eating their dinner and this is reinforced within Assemblies, Science and PSHE lessons.

7. The Food Eating Environment

The School values the importance of engendering a positive eating environment. Lunchtime is an important social event during the school day. Children are able to sit wherever they like in the dinner hall, mixing with their peers – regardless of year group. In achieving this, higher than average ratios of lunchtime staff are employed to listen to and support children. The Headteacher and other Strategic Leadership Team members contribute to lunchtime duties to help make crucial decisions and offer



Thames View Infants Whole School Food Policy

important child-specific advice, culminating in a calm and child-friendly learning environment being perpetuated. This presence is essential in helping to raise the profile of individuals requiring additional or long-term support and ensuring this information gets passed on in a “joined up manner” to other key staff within school.