

Middleton School

Healthy Eating Policy



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Why a policy is needed?

For the vast majority of pupils who attend Middleton School, Healthy Eating is not simply about a balanced and considered diet but also about far wider connotations associated with food, drink and positive social participation. At Middleton we recognise the important part a healthy diet plays for a child's wellbeing and their ability to learn effectively and achieve. For some pupils this may be about understanding the function and also joy associated with eating and drinking as well as nutritional value associated with choices that they make. We also recognise that dietary needs and differences may be vast across our pupil population and we strive to encourage pupils to have a positive relationship with food and drink. We believe that the school, in partnership with parents and carers, can make a major contribution to improving children and young people's health by increasing their knowledge and understanding of food and helping them to make healthy and varied food choices.

We aim to ensure that healthy food and drink options are provided at all times of day, taking account of individual needs (e.g. cultural, ethical, medial), reflecting nutrition and healthy eating messages in the curriculum, and with the support of the whole school.

This policy explains

- How we promote healthy eating
- What we do to provide healthy balanced food throughout the school day
- How we help pupils to eat healthily
- What we teach so that pupils know how to make healthy food choices

1. Aims, purpose and responsibility

Why children need to eat well.

- The content and diet of what children eat today shapes how they are likely to eat for the rest of their lives.
- It is important that children have access to a balance of the right foods to eat – and eat in moderation the foods that do not help keep them healthy.
- When children eat better, they perform better – they're in better shape and more able to reach their full potential.
- Being able to cook is an essential life skill: it all starts with getting children excited about food.
- Eating good food is one of life's real pleasures: every child should know how it feels to enjoy a tasty meal with people you love.

- Many children with ASD experience restricted diets and are limited also in their social interactions with others. Eating and drinking are basic functions for human survival, but also fulfil a range of other needs including those of a social nature and sensory pleasurable fulfilment.

This policy covers all food provided and consumed in school including before, during and after school and on school trips and as part of extra-curricular events.

We aim to

- Increase knowledge and awareness of a healthy diet through the Middleton curriculum.
- Provide safe, tasty, varied and nutritious food that promotes health.
- Enable all pupils to have access to a healthy school meal.
- Make healthy eating enjoyable and the norm.
- Provide safe, easily accessible water throughout the school day.
- Promote healthy eating/healthy food choices and encourage pupils to try new food experiences.
- Be a role model for healthy eating.
- Monitor healthy choices, including packed lunches.
- Ensure consistent messages regarding healthy eating, and positive relationships with food, are reinforced throughout the school day.
- Promote social opportunities through the appropriate use of food and drink.
- Teach pupils valuable life skills and prepare them for optimum independence as young adults.

Responsibility:

It is the responsibility of all staff including teaching, support staff and catering staff to implement the Healthy eating policy and to actively act as role models to demonstrate positive attitudes towards healthy eating. This includes widening food experiences and opportunities as well as developing pupils' awareness and understanding of how to make healthy food choices:

Senior Members of staff lead on the development and monitoring of Health Education and its implementation within their department. Staff across the school liaise with the lunchtime meals supervisor, cook, kitchen staff and food contractor.

The subject leaders of PSHE, PE, Science and DT are jointly responsible for what is taught about healthy eating and practical food education in the curriculum. This is evident through our curriculum planning documents.

The lead governor on health and safety ensures the policy is implemented.

Caterers (HCL.) and kitchen staff are responsible for providing high quality food that complies with the national nutritional standards for school food and contributing to a welcoming and positive eating environment.

Parents receive the catering menu for the term and this is shared with the children in advance.

Food in the curriculum

Food, its production and preparation is an important part of the curriculum for all pupils and is taught across all components of the Middleton Curriculum. We ensure that pupils are taught cooking (Food Technology) from Reception up to Year 6, in line with the new national curriculum, developing their understanding in food related issues including food hygiene and safety issues. All food preparation is healthy.

This policy will contribute towards a range of other policies and curriculum intentions in the following ways:

Behaviour: Children who eat healthily are more focussed on their work and behaviour is positively impacted.

PSHE: Healthy food choices and practical food education is included in the curriculum. Independence and personal well being is encouraged through weekly food technology lessons. Social aspects of cooking, eating and celebrating together are beneficial to the delivery of the PSHE curriculum.

Science: Healthy eating and nutrition is an integral part of the science curriculum

Off site learning: Pupils engage in a weekly offsite learning programme, preparing pupils for a world beyond the school environment and optimum independence as young adults. On occasions this may involve food sourcing, preparation and consumption. Pupils may visit a range of eating establishments as part of this cross curricular learning process.

Maths; Pupils experience a range of mathematical concepts through their food technology lessons. They learn about quantity, ratios and weight when exploring the topic of healthy eating.

English – Pupils explore and experience text, symbols and logos through the exploration of Healthy Eating programmes.

Humanities – An element of the Humanities curriculum involves exploring food from a range of cultures and historical eras.

Enrichment: Hands on opportunities for children to prepare, cook, serve and consume food within a social group

Equality: We take account of the needs of all our children, including those with disabilities, differing religious beliefs, food intolerances and allergies

Curriculum assessment

Children's learning about healthy eating is assessed in line with the school's M scale assessment framework; largely through science, technology and PSHE.

3. School lunches

All our school meals are provided by a contracted caterer, who acts in accordance with the School Food Standards. A copy of the weekly menu is on display on the school website, and is sent home, via email, termly. The menu is also available via the School Office if required. The menu is shared visually with the pupils daily and they make their own lunch choices, supported by pictures, sign and symbols where appropriate. The dining area has a calm and positive atmosphere where children socialise and enjoy the dining experience. Pupils are encouraged to make individual choices and communicate this to others. Staff monitor food choices and encourage pupils to try new foods. The school encourages all parents to take free school meals, where there is an entitlement.

4. Packed Lunches

Content of packed lunch food;

This applies to all pupils and parents providing packed lunches to be consumed within school or on school trips during school hours.

Packed lunches should **not** include:

- Food or drink which is required to be reheated on the school premises. .
- Confectionery such as chocolate bars, multiple chocolate-coated biscuits, chocolate spread, sweets and chewing gum.
- Fizzy or sugary drinks.
- Products which contain nuts.

These expectations are monitored by lunchtime staff, who communicate with parents when necessary. In cases of repeated concerns, these are communicated and logged through the school's safeguarding procedures.

Special diets and allergies

The school recognises that some pupils may require special diets that do not allow for the standards to be met exactly. In this case parents and carers are urged to be responsible in ensuring that packed lunches are as healthy as possible. For these reasons pupils are also not permitted to swap food items.

Packed Lunch Containers

Pupils and parents/carers are responsible for providing a packed lunch container where food items can be stored securely and appropriately until the lunchtime period.

Monitoring the content and choices of school lunches and packed lunches

To promote healthy eating we will regularly monitor the content of both selections made for school dinners and the content of packed lunches. We involve pupils in the consideration of alternative choices and the opportunities to try something new. We will talk to parents and carers where necessary and offer advice and guidance on bringing healthy packed lunches and the consideration of expanding a child's dietary choices. Healthy choices must also be balanced alongside a pupil's ability to eat a meal with some calorie content, particularly in the cases of individual pupils who follow targeted and personalised feeding programmes.

5. Snacks

All pupils have the opportunity to consume a morning break time snack of fruit, vegetables, bread sticks or similar. In KS1 these snacks are provided but in KS2 we request these snacks are brought in from home.

Milk is provided free for under-fives (and those who qualify for income based free school meals) and is available at cost for those over five in the rest of the school.

As part of promoting healthy eating children are encouraged to eat fruit and vegetables of their choice. They are also encouraged to try fruits and vegetables that are new to them. Children are not permitted to bring snacks into school which contain nuts. On occasions, the pupils may be offered a plain biscuit as a treat – particularly if offsite where food preparation opportunities are limited. As part of the Middleton curriculum, there are occasions when pupils are given responsibility for preparing a snack for others and for helping to clear it away. For example, in some classrooms this may take the form of a 'Toast Café' where pupils make choices and communicate them to others, prepare and serve food and clean the environment once finished.

Nut allergies

We are a nut free school but we cannot guarantee that food products are totally nut free. Parents are asked to refrain from providing food products, which may contain nuts, in

packed lunches or any other food brought into the school and children with a nut and/or peanut allergy have an individual management plan. Staff are trained to recognise and manage allergic reactions.

Partnership with parents and carers

We inform and involve parents and carers about healthy eating through the school website and newsletters. The concept of healthy eating for many of our pupils includes the development of broadening diets and trying a range of new food tastes and textures. The partnership of home and school is critical in shaping how children and young people behave, particularly where health is concerned.

Parents and carers are updated on our policies through school newsletters and on the school website. We ask parents and carers not to send food or drinks which conflict with our food policy and we remind them that only water, low sugar juices or milk be consumed during lunch time.

Events and Celebrations

Many of the pupils who attend Middleton School do not have a range of typical social opportunities outside of school. For example, they may not be hosting or attending birthday parties in the same manner as their mainstream peers. We aim to give our pupils the experience of a birthday celebration as part of the school day when appropriate. Some families like to send a small birthday cake into school so that their child and their peers are able to celebrate these occasions with a small social gathering. We ask that parents and carers who wish to send in birthday cakes or a celebratory treat consider the ingredients and support our 'no nuts' policy. If there are pupils with food intolerances, please make this known to the staff team so that these occasions can be managed safely. Parents may wish to supply an alternative 'treat', suitable for their child to eat, which can be stored in school and served to their child as part of the social celebration.

There may be a small number of occasions throughout the year when pupils are rewarded with a special treat – perhaps an ice lolly or similar. Staff will be aware of individual food allergies and intolerances and ensure that all pupils receive a safe and appropriate substitute on these occasions.

Water for all

During school meal times only water is served at the school dining tables. Drinks which comply with the School Food Plan guidelines may be brought in from home; including water, low sugar fruit juice and milk. If children bring in a sugary drink they will be asked to take it home and we talk to parents and carers and remind them of the food policy. Pupils have regular access to water stations and children are encouraged to drink water regularly throughout the day. Pupils are encouraged to have their own water bottles in class. Cooled water is available to staff and visitors in the staff room and to pupils in the Upper School shared area.

8. Disseminating the policy

Key information from this policy will be incorporated into the following documents

- ☐ School Handbook / Prospectus
- ☐ Staff Handbook
- ☐ Governor Handbook

☐ School website

A full copy of this policy is freely available to parents on request. Copies are supplied to other professionals whose work relates to healthy eating or who may be involved in its delivery.

This policy will be reviewed every two years and ratified by the Governing Body.