

FOOD IN SCHOOLS

School Food Policy – background:

In May 2006 the Government announced new standards for school food. There are three parts, to be phased in by September 2009. Together they cover all food and drink sold or served in schools: school lunches, breakfast, tuck shops, vending machines, mid-morning break services and after-school clubs.

Our **School Food Policy** has been drawn up in consultation with the Health Promoting Schools Adviser, with the following guidelines as a background.

WHY is the Government setting standards for school food?

- **“By 2020 it is predicted that half our children will be either overweight or obese and this can bring massive health problems like type 2 diabetes and heart disease in later life.”** (Royal College of Physicians, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health and the Faculty of Public Health (2004). Storing up problems: The medical case for a slimmer nation. London: RCP Publications, p 4.)
- These standards are designed to promote overall health, including helping pupils to control their weight, promote healthy teeth and in the longer term protect cardiovascular health.
- We know from research that children and young people need a great deal of help and guidance to eat healthily at school – not just in their learning but also by exposing them to good food environments. Messages need to be consistent with the sorts of food they see around them. These new standards reflect and support the principles of a whole school approach to healthy eating.
- Feedback from teachers suggests that when pupils eat better they do better in the classroom – behaviour and performance both improve.

School lunches provided by CCS, fully comply with the relevant standards. The latest food-based standards – in place from September 2007 are for all school food other than lunches.

WHAT do the new standards say?

MORE OF THESE HEALTHIER ITEMS:

More fruit and Vegetables

Fruit and vegetables must be provided in all school food outlets. These can include fresh, dried, frozen, canned and juiced varieties.

Drinking water

Free, fresh drinking water should be provided at all times.

Healthier Drinks

The only drinks permitted during the school day are plain water (still or sparkling), skimmed or semi-skimmed milk, fruit juice, vegetable juice, plain soya, rice or oat drinks enriched with calcium, plain yoghurt drinks, or combinations of the above. Tea, coffee and low calorie hot chocolate are also permitted.

RESTRICTED OR NO LONGER ALLOWED

No confectionery

Confectionery such as chocolate bars, chocolate coated or flavoured biscuits, sweets and cereal bars must not be provided.

Salt and Condiments - Restricted

Salt must not be provided at tables or service counters. Condiments, such as ketchup and mayonnaise, must only be available in sachets or individual portions of not more than 10g or 1 teaspoonful.

Snacks - Restricted

Snacks such as crisps must not be provided. Nuts, seeds, vegetables and fruits with no added salt, sugar or fat are allowed.

No cakes and biscuits

Cakes and biscuits must not be provided (except at lunchtime).

Deep fried food - Restricted

Two deep-fried foods per week are allowed across lunch and all other food services.

Starchy food - Restricted

Starchy food cooked in fat or oil must not be used in the cooking process more than three times a week across lunch and all other food services.

Meat products - Restricted

A meat product (manufactured or homemade) from each of the four groups below may be provided no more than once per fortnight, providing the meat product also meets the standards for minimum meat content and does not contain any prohibited offal:

Group 1: Burger, hamburger, chopped meat, corned meat;

Group 2: Sausage, sausage meat, link, chipolata, luncheon meat.

Group 3: Individual meat pie, meat pudding, Melton Mowbray pie, game pie, Scottish (or Scotch) pie, pastry or pastie, bridie, sausage roll.

Group 4: Any other shaped or coated meat product.

Our **School Food Policy** covers the taught curriculum as well as outlining school policy and practice with regard to all food and drink related matters. The following paragraphs are taken directly from the policy - a full copy is available from the school office if you are interested.

Aims and Objectives

- ❖ To ensure that we are giving consistent messages about food and health
- ❖ To give our pupils the information they need to make healthy food choices
- ❖ To promote health awareness
- ❖ To contribute to the healthy physical development of all members of our school community
- ❖ To encourage all children to make healthy food choices

Break time Snacks

We actively encourage children to eat a snack at morning break time, to support concentration. Our policy allows fruit, vegetables, plain biscuits and cheese. Through participation in the National School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme we provide a free piece of fresh fruit or vegetable to every child in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, each day. This is eaten at snack time immediately before morning break. 1/3 pint cartons of milk are available for all pupils at break time. These are ordered and paid for on a Monday and are delivered to classes before break time.

School Dinners

All our school meals are provided by Cambridgeshire Catering Service (CCS) whose policy ensures that food purchased for school meals meets all quality standards. A hot two course meal, plus a salad selection, bread and fresh fruit are served every day. Vegetarian options are always available and only vegetarian cheese, oils, margarine and shortenings are used in cooking.

CCS excludes the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) from school menus and they do not knowingly purchase products containing nuts or traces of nuts. They do not purchase any products containing Mechanically Recovered Meat (MRM) and endeavour to select products that do not use unnecessary e-numbers. In particular, tartrazine and sunset yellow are avoided. Beef is always sourced from fully traceable, known origins and comes from animals under 30 months old. All animals are identity assured, with the meat coming from boned out joints.

Packed Lunches

Many children bring packed lunches to school, which are eaten in the school hall, alongside school dinners. As with break time snacks, sweets, chocolate and fizzy drinks are not allowed at lunchtime. Lunchtime supervisors endeavour to monitor the contents of lunchboxes and food consumption at lunchtime. Parents are reminded of the school's policy in this regard through newsletters and the school prospectus.

Water in School

We are aware of the positive effects of regularly drinking water on health and well-being. Water is freely available throughout the school day to all members of the school community. A water cooler is situated in the staff room for staff and visitors. There are 3 drinking fountains installed on the school site and all taps providing drinking water are clearly marked. Children are encouraged to bring water bottles to school daily. They may drink their water at any time during lessons, in line with school guidelines – "Water in Class". Drinking water is also available for all children eating in the dinner hall.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

The home-school partnership is critical in shaping how children behave, particularly where health is concerned; each must reinforce the other. This is not always easy, but our school is well-placed to lead by example. Parents and carers are regularly updated on our water, snack and packed lunch policies through school newsletters.

Although fundraising activities are exempt from the Government's 'Food-based standards for all school food other than school lunches', **Over school PTA** supports the school's aim to encourage healthy eating. Since the standards came into force, sweets and fizzy drinks are not provided or available for purchase at PTA events. Wherever possible, fruit squash is from the healthy options available.