



Preschool Healthy Eating Policy

Gainsborough Primary
School

PRIMARY
ADVANTAGE

SCHOOLS ACHIEVING
MORE TOGETHER

Primary Advantage

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Healthy Eating Policy

We recognise the importance of a healthy diet in children's development. The impact a poor diet has on the health and general wellbeing of children has been well documented. What children eat plays an important part in keeping them happy, healthy and growing and developing properly. We will continually strive to promote a healthy lifestyle for the children in our care. We do this through our own provision (healthy menus and activities such as cooking and physical activities) as well as information and support for parents, e.g. healthy menu ideas, information on local support services (such as HENRY) and dedicated breastfeeding friendly areas for nursing mothers as well as signposting to breastfeeding support services.

Healthy Eating – Water and Drinks

We ensure water and fruit is available for children at all times in all rooms throughout Preschool and children are encouraged to drink water.

- Other drinks on offer should be full fat milk and diluted fruit juice (recommended 1 to 10 parts water). Fruit juice should only be given at mealtimes.
- All other drinks such as fruit juice drinks, squash, cordial, and milkshake syrups are discouraged.
- Cups with non-drip lids should not be used; the sucking method used can delay the development of muscles used for chewing and speaking, and dental care.
- Staff ensure that children under a year old have appropriate food and fluids to meet their nutritional needs.

Healthy Eating – The Food Provided

We provide children with meals and snacks that are healthy, appetizing and that meet their nutritional needs. When children start with us we gather key information on their diet and any specific cultural, religious or medical requirements. A weekly menu is on display and parents/carers are informed each day via a daily log of what food and what amounts their child has eaten. Our menu reviews may invite parent contributions. We ask parents for their ideas and information when celebrating cultural festivals relevant to them as well as via newsletters and our usual review meetings with them. Our “All about me” settling in form asks key questions about their child’s dietary preferences and requirements (including cultural and medical) as well as any personal and developmental information about their child (bottle fed / use of cutlery / high chair etc).

Menus will be planned to meet the minimum food requirements, *voluntary food and drink guidelines for early years settings in England*, and are reviewed by a nutritionist. Our menus are reviewed and changed every term. Menus will be displayed for parents and staff.

A wide range of healthy, additive free food will be available. This should include foods to meet the dietary, religious and cultural requirement of all children including, vegetarian, halal and kosher as appropriate.

Children who have dairy free diets should be offered suitable calcium enriched alternatives. Where children have specific food allergies, every effort will be made to replicate the snacks and meals on offer in the preschool to ensure that children do not feel that they are being treated differently e.g. gluten free breadsticks will be provided if the children are having breadsticks during snack time.

Our routine is organised as follows:

- Breakfast 8.00am
- Morning snack 10.15am
- Lunch 11.45am to 12.30pm
- Afternoon snack 2.15pm

- Tea 5.00pm

Parents and Carers will be informed of the healthy eating policy from the beginning and consulted on their child's dietary needs regularly. They will be advised if their child is not eating well and when their child tries something new.

Special Dietary Requirements

Parents with children on special diets will be asked to provide details on any special food needs; this must include food groups or items to be avoided as well as naming those items which should be included in the child diet. Any child with diagnosed allergies will have an allergy action plan: <https://www.bsaci.org/professional-resources/resources/paediatric-allergy-action-plans/> parents are regularly asked by staff to update any dietary changes in order to safely meet children's needs.

Food Hygiene

We will provide food to children which has been stored, prepared and served in a safe, hygienic manner and to promote hygienic food practices.

- All staff should have an awareness of safe food handling and hygiene and should promote good practice to children by example; e.g. wash their hands before handling food or eating meals and snacks.
- Staff receive regular training updates in food hygiene.

Healthy Eating – The Ethos and Environment

We provide culturally appropriate foods and an eating environment that promotes family values such as eating together, sharing food, and promoting good communication and table manners. Preschool provides children with learning experiences about food and nutrition:

- All rooms should incorporate food awareness in their Foundation Stage frameworks; in long, medium and short term planning and for their plans for individual children. This may include role play, planting and growing activities as well as cooking activities. Some local outings may involve buying foodstuffs or fruit for snacks.
- Practitioners should set an example by eating the same food as the children and sharing in this social time. Only food available for the children should be consumed during group meal and snack times (with medical exceptions).
- Practitioners keep abreast of local and national initiatives to promote healthy lifestyles, involve other partners to incorporate them in the centre curriculum and provide information for parents and carers. They use their updated knowledge to inform policy reviews.
- Preschool and its staff work with partnership agencies to promote a healthy environment and healthy lifestyles in the Early Years setting to all children and their families.

Healthy Eating – Encouraging fussy eaters to eat well

All children are offered a wide range of foods (dependent on medical, religious and cultural requirements). Children are encouraged but never forced to try new foods. We encourage children to serve themselves which creates a sense of independence and ownership of the choices they make – this leads to more opportunities for them to try new foods in their own time. We aim to always have something the child enjoys along with anything new. If they don't like something they are allowed to spit it out! Staff respect when a child has tried something but doesn't like it. Staff praise children for trying.

Page 51 of the practical guide includes examples of simple strategies to manage fussy eating and the HHRL website has some good links:

<https://www.hackneyservicesforschools.co.uk/extranet/eat-better-professional-resources>

Children that are naturally more resistant to trying new foods or are generally fussy eaters are sat with children who are more likely to eat healthily and try new foods. Staff sit with the children at mealtimes and talk about the foods generally, never forcing children to eat something that they don't want.

Healthy Eating – Food brought in from home

We do not encourage foods to be brought in from home as meals are provided for the children on a daily basis. However, we understand that the weaning process for babies can be a difficult one. We encourage parents to work with staff during this process and we will try to accommodate parents requests where appropriate.

Birthdays, festivals and special occasions are celebrated in numerous ways within our setting. These details will be shared with parents particularly if there is an element of food sharing as part of the celebration.

Milk can be brought into the setting as per the parents' requests. This will be stored in the appropriate way.

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| Policy written: | April 2020 |
| Amended/Updated: | July 2025 |
| Adopted by Governing Body: | April 2020 |
| Review date | July 2027 |

The Federated Governing Body has reviewed this policy with careful consideration of our approach to equalities as outlined in the Equalities Policy, January 2020.

We would like to acknowledge the work of other colleagues in drafting this policy. We have drawn on a range of sources including policies from other schools, good practice guides, published schemes and LA and Statutory guidelines where appropriate.

