Abbey Academies Trust

Every Child Matters

POLICY

For

Food in School

Policy Revised: Autumn Term 2025
Review Date: September 2026

Every Child Matters within a loving and caring Christian environment

Striving for Excellence, Caring for All

Unicef Articles:

Article 1: All children under 18 have rights.
Article 6: All children have the right to life and to be healthy.
Article 17: Every child has the right to accurate information
Article 24: Every child has the right to good food, clean water and health care.
Article 29: Every child has the right to be the best they can.
Article 36: Every child has the right to be protected from doing things that could harm them.

Background:

Abbey Academies Trust (AAT) believes that good health and well-being is central to effective learning and preparation for successful, independent living We recognise that everyone is created in the image of God and encourage them to make choices that enable them to thrive. We are committed to the fact that healthier children learn more effectively. It is important that AAT ensures that an awareness of healthy eating is promoted to all members of the Trust community. Through effective leadership and the school ethos and curriculum, all staff can bring together elements of the school day to create an environment which supports sustainable, healthy eating habits as part of a healthy lifestyle.

"Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can." John Wesley

The policy was formulated through consultation between members of staff, trustees, governors, parents, carers and pupils.

The principles of this policy incorporate those outlined in the School Food Plan http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/ Compliance with the requirements for School Food Regulations 2014 is mandatory for all maintained schools, academies and free schools.

The nutritional principles of this policy are based on the 'eatwell plate' http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/eatwell-plate.aspx and the School Food Standards https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/standards-for-school-food-in-england

Through a whole-school approach to healthy eating, we can contribute significantly towards better health for the next generation.

Rationale

Dear friend, I hope all is well with you and that you are as healthy in body as you are strong in spirit. John 1:2

Learning in health and wellbeing ensures that children and young people develop the knowledge and understanding, skills, capabilities and attributes which they need for mental, emotional, social and physical well-being now and in the future. Schools should have a role to play in supporting children to be resilient. (Public Health England)

Aims

The main aims of Abbey Academies Trust's food policy are:

- To ensure that all aspects of food and nutrition in school promote the health and wellbeing of the whole school community
- To ensure that members of the school community are able to make informed choices and are aware of the importance of healthy food, where food comes from and the need to support sustainable food and farming practices
- To enable pupils to make healthy food choices through the provision of information and development of appropriate skills including food preparation
- To ensure that the mandatory food-based standards are implemented
- To teach the skills and knowledge to pupils for them to develop crucial life skills that enable them to feed themselves and others affordably and well, now and in later life
- To ensure that the school follows the principles laid out in the School Food Plan and encourages the take up of school meals
- To take a whole school approach to healthy eating to ensure that messages taught in the curriculum are echoed and reinforced by the type of food and drink provided in school

School Food Plan

The School Food Plan is an agreed plan which was updated in January 2013 with the support of the Secretary of State for Education and the diverse organisations who can support headteachers to improve the quality and take-up of school food and put the kitchen at the heart of school life. The plan outlines how schools should improve their attitude to school food by:

- Adopting a 'whole-school approach': integrating food into the life of the school: treating the dining hall as the hub of the school where children and teachers eat together; lunch as part of the school day; … and food as part of a rounded education
- The headteacher leading the change
- Concentrating on the things children care about: good food, attractive environment, social life, price and brand
- Encourage take up of school meals to improve school food economics and in particular encourage take up of the Universal Free School Meals for all KS1

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.

Curriculum

Food and nutrition are taught at an appropriate level throughout each key stage. Cooking and nutrition was brought in as a compulsory part of the national curriculum from September 2014. Schemes of work at all key stages reflect the whole school approach to healthy eating and incorporate the DFE statutory guidelines:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-design-and-technology-programmes-of-study/national-curriculum-in-england-design-and-technology-programmes-of-study

This is addressed through:

Teaching methods
Effective teaching requires pupils to develop their understanding of healthy eating issues and appropriate skills and attitudes to assist them in making informed decisions. Schemes of work at all key stages reflect the whole school approach to healthy eating, food hygiene and healthy lifestyle.

Cooking and nutrition
As part of their work with food, pupils are taught how to cook and apply the principles of nutrition and healthy eating. Learning how to cook is a crucial life skill that enables pupils to feed themselves and others affordably and well, now and in later life. All pupils are taught the basic principles of a healthy and varied diet, to prepare simple dishes and understand where food comes from. Older pupils are taught about seasonality and a range of cooking techniques. Pupils are given opportunities, where possible, to plant and/or grow ingredients to be used in cooking activities.

Cross Curricular
The school recognises that food has a great potential for cross curricular work and it is incorporated in teaching of a variety of subjects in addition to DT and PSHE.

Staff training
School staff including teachers, TA's and Midday Supervisors have a key role in influencing pupils' knowledge, skills and attitudes about food and healthy eating, so it is important that they are familiar with healthy eating guidelines. To facilitate this staff will receive regular information via the food and wellbeing team as well as appropriate CPD during staff meeting times.

Visitors in the classroom
The Trust values the contribution made by outside agencies in supporting class teachers. It is the responsibility of each school to ensure that the contributions made by visitors to the classroom reflect our own philosophy and approach to the subject. The status of visitors to our schools is always checked ensuring that the content of the visitor's talk is suitable for the ages of the pupils.

Resources
Resources used to deliver healthy eating are current and up to date and all staff are consistent in the resources used throughout the curriculum. These reflect the 'Eatwell Plate' where appropriate.



<u>Food and drink provisions throughout the school day</u>
Food Standards
National Nutritional Standards for school lunches became compulsory in 2009.
As a result of the School Food Plan, the standards were reviewed and new Food Standards for school lunches came into force in January 2015. Together with existing standards they cover all food sold or served in schools: breakfast, lunch and after-school meals; and tuck,

vending, mid-morning break and after-school clubs. For our EYFS children including those enrolled at Kids Club and Nursery we use the '*Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Nutritional Guidance 2025'* to inform our menus.

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. Breakfast is provided **only** for pupils attending Breakfast club as part of Kids' Club and Nursery.

Lunch
Food prepared by the school catering team Ideal School Meals meets the National Nutritional Standards for school lunches.

The standards include:

- That starchy food cooked in fat or oil must not be provided on more than two days each week
- To promote variety, three or more different starchy foods provided weekly, including at least one wholegrain variety
- At least three different vegetables and three different fruits are provided each week
- The revised standards are more specific about the provision of protein i.e. meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources. The revisions are designed to ensure adequate levels of protein, iron and zinc and increase the variety of foods on offer
- A portion of dairy food to be included every day and that lower fat milk and lactose reduced milk are made available

Universal Free School Meals
Since September 2014, all children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 in state-funded schools in England have been eligible for free school lunches. AAT fully supports this initiative, encouraging children to have their free school meal. Research shows that a school lunch is nutritionally superior to most packed lunches and can lead to improved behaviour attainment.

Fruit Scheme (KS1 only)
The school is part of the National Fruit and Vegetable Scheme. Nursery and Reception children have a piece of fruit at snack time, sat on appropriately sized chairs. KS1 children eat socially outside as part of their morning break time.

Milk

For children under the age of five, semi-skimmed milk is provided through the Cool Milk scheme where parents choose to participate. For children aged five and over, parents and carers are offered the option to purchase milk for their child at snack time at a subsidised rate through Cool Milk.

Snacks
The school understands that snacks can be an important part of the diet of young people and can contribute positively towards a balanced diet. The school only permits fresh or dried fruit at break times for pupils. EYFS and KS1 children are provided through the fruit scheme. This does **not** include high sugar fruit-based snacks or cereal bars containing fruit e.g. Go Ahead bars, fruit winders etc.

Snacks provided by Kids' Club follow nutritional guidelines and EYFS Nutrition guidance as listed above. (see Kids' club policies)

Tuck Shops
We do not offer a tuck shop at the present time at any school within the trust. However, we operate a weekly 'Fruity Friday' scheme to KS2 pupils at Bourne Abbey. The PTFA sell on pre-packed fresh fruit snacks which have been donated by a local food manufacturer. These packs are sold at a heavily reduced cost (approximately 10% of the RRP) Any excess stock is sold to parents/carers at the end of the day.

Vending machines
We have no vending machines on any site.

The use of food in school as a reward
The Trust 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.

Children are rewarded with praise, stickers, dojo points, visits to other classes to celebrate their work, Golden Book Assemblies, Reward days (Y5 and 6), Golden Afternoons (whole school).

During SATs week all Year 6 pupils are offered free healthy breakfast. This is also offered to Year 6 pupils attending SAT booster sessions.

Some year groups have sessions of food tasting as part of their topic work or as part of charity days such as Nyansakia Day. This offers pupils the opportunity to try multicultural foods and pupils are encouraged to try new tastes.

Drinking Water
Hydration is vital for staying alert and focused, can improve cognitive functioning and can help keep children's bodies at a safe and healthy temperature. As part of our aim to promote healthier individuals and better learners, fresh, filtered drinking water is available free of charge to all pupils, everyday. Pupils are given their own named water bottle which is washed regularly. Pupils are not permitted to have squash, juice or anything other than water in their classroom water bottles.

Food and drink brought into school

Packed lunches are not prepared by the school caterers unless pupils who are entitled to free school meals, are attending a school visit. These lunches then adhere to the Government Food Lunch Standards and EYFS Nutritional Guidance. There is a roll or baguette option on the daily menu choices.

The school encourages parents and carers to provide children with packed lunches that complement these standards. This is achieved by promoting healthy packed lunch options using the principles of the 'Eatwell Plate' and the NHS Change for Life campaign. Pupils are encouraged to have water with their packed lunches as part of a healthy lifestyle. However, pupils may bring in squash or fruit juice to have with their packed lunch. Fizzy drinks are not permitted.

Parents are encouraged to follow Health and Safety guidance regarding the safe storage of food detailed in the EYFS Nutrition guidance. Perishable items, including dairy products, cooked meats, and filled sandwiches, should be packed in an insulated, sealed lunch bag with an ice pack to maintain an appropriate temperature. Where ice packs are not available, guidance from the Food Standards Agency states that certain ready-to-eat foods, such as cooked meats, soft cheeses, and pâté, should be consumed within four hours of being

removed from refrigeration to reduce the risk of Listeria. These foods must not be re-chilled after this time.

https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIsc3kg-aN6AIVTLDtCh06Fwv5EAAYASAAEgL6efD_BwE&gclsrc=aw.ds

Special dietary requirements

Medical Diets

Individual care plans are created for some pupils with medical dietary needs/requirements. These document symptoms and adverse reactions and actions to be taken in an emergency. Staff training is carried out with the support of the school nurse. Pupils with allergies are given a shield shaped badge at Bourne Abbey so catering staff are aware of the presence of an allergy. At Bourne Elsea Park and at Colsterworth badges are not necessary as the schools are smaller and all staff are aware of pupils with allergies and what they are allergic to.

Cultural and Religious Diets

Many people follow diets related to their culture or religious beliefs and the school will make every effort to provide meals for all children. The school has a robust procedure in place for both parents/carers to inform the school of a special diet and for identifying children to ensure that every child receives the correct meal, particularly as many of these children are very young and eating school meals for the first time.

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 and food allergy 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.

All children are encouraged to wash their hands before eating their lunch.

The school operates a nut free policy across school including no peanut butter, cereal bars or nut as snacks.

The food and eating environment

We have implemented the following measures to improve the dining experience for all pupils in school:

- We offer online booking so parents/carers can choose food their children enjoy. Pupils wear badges to show which choices they have selected
- There are 5 choices of meal a day – 2 meat choices, 1 vegetarian choice, jacket potato and a baguette/roll
- There is a ‘Finer Diner’ table where children who are selected by earning a ticket for excellent lunchtime behaviour and then being drawn from a prize draw box, eat their lunch.
- The ‘Finer Diner’ table has a table cloth, flowers and other table decorations
- At Christmas tables are decorated for our Christmas Dinner.
- Children who have packed lunches join the children eating hot school meals in the dining hall.

- Once a year, consideration will be given to Year 2 parents/carers being invited to share a meal with their child/ren in the dining hall
- Parents/carers of pupils in Abbey Ark are able to order hot school meals that are delivered to their setting

Celebrating Special Occasions

Families may wish to celebrate their child's birthday or other significant occasions within the setting. However, frequent celebrations can result in children being offered sweets and cakes on multiple occasions each week. To support healthy eating habits and in accordance with the EYFS Nutrition policy food items and alternative treats must not be brought into the setting for celebrations across school.

EYFS – Nutrition Guidance April 2025

In EYFS staff use the 'School Food Standards Guidance' and the 'Early Years Foundation Stage Nutritional Guidance' to inform our menus and that children are kept safe. We also use this guidance to support parents in healthy food choices in their packed lunch box and food intake over the day.

Before a child arrives to the setting, we obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and intolerances that the child has, and any special health requirements. Parents must inform us of any changes and food allergy plans are created as necessary throughout their time with us.

We provide healthy snacks that are prepared in accordance with the Food Standards Agency (FSA) guidance. Our snack offerings are balanced, including a variety of fruits and carbohydrates, and we ensure diversity across a 3-weekly basis. New menus are introduced at least twice a year to include seasonal produce. All staff involved in food preparation and handling are trained in food hygiene. We follow the '*Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Nutritional Guidance'* to inform our menus and to ensure children's safety. Food is appropriately prepared to suit the age and individual needs of each child. During mealtimes, children are seated safely in age-appropriate chairs to promote a secure and comfortable eating environment.

Please also see our EYFS Policy.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Parents/carers are invited to contribute to a healthy eating approach where appropriate via the parent/carer questionnaire
- Pupils have the opportunity to share views on school food via student council meetings
- There are termly Midday Supervisor meetings where any issues concerning lunchtimes are raised and these can be resolved. Any changes or adaptations are relayed to pupils through special assemblies which the Midday Supervisors are invited to attend
- SLT carry out regular monitoring of the dining arrangements and these findings are put into a MSR to implement changes and shared with appropriate persons