

Madeley Nursery School

Bridle Road, Madeley, Telford, TF7 5ET, UK

Policy:

Food and Healthy Eating

Member of staff responsible: Helen Torr & Victoria Waring

October 2022

Review date: October 2025

“Children’s early years provide an important foundation for their future health and strongly influence many aspects of well-being. Children’s food preferences and eating habits are also formed early in life with consequences for a range of health and development outcomes in later life. It is therefore important that the food provided in early years settings provides appropriate amounts of energy and nutrients and supports development of healthy eating habits in young children, both to support individual children’s growth and development, and as part of national priorities to reduce childhood obesity and ensure every child has the best start in life.”

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/658870/Early_years_menus_part_1_guidance.pdf

Public Health England November 2017

Context

Following the Government's policy on nutritional standards for lunches in schools, the Children's Food Trust was set up in 2005 to make recommendations for all food available during the school day.

They support schools in developing a whole school approach to food and health. The school environment, behaviour of staff and the messages that children receive through the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) curriculum, all play a vital role in influencing children's knowledge and understanding of health and nutrition.

“Every child has a right to nutritious food. When children eat better, they do better: they’re in better shape to reach their potential. By getting them eating well today, we’re creating the healthier adults of tomorrow: adults who are less likely to suffer health conditions linked to poor diet. “

Children's Food Trust (2016)

At Madeley nursery we believe the principles of healthy eating include eating a wider range of healthy food, providing a balance of nutrients and establishing good habits for the future. The children have opportunities to find out the origins of certain foods, to explore through their senses, to prepare healthy snacks for their peers and share together in good company as a nursery community.

The aims, objectives and statements in this policy apply to all children, staff, parents, and visitors to our school. This way we can develop a coherent whole school ethos about food and healthy eating practices for all.

Aim

At Madeley Nursery School, we recognise that snack and lunch times are an important part of a child's day. It is a social time for children to enjoy food.

We aim to provide healthy, balanced, varied and nutritious food and drinks which meet the children's needs, encouraging them to develop healthy lifestyles and promote well-being throughout their life.

We aim to work with parents and carers to provide a varied, nutritious and health meal is their child stays for lunch.

We meet the welfare requirements outlined in the EYFS on food and drink:

“Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, they must be healthy, balanced and nutritious.”

EYFS 2021



Objectives

- For children to be offered the opportunity to try a wide variety of healthy snacks.
- For children to have the opportunity to experience foods which raise their awareness of other cultures.
- For fresh drinking water to be always available.
- For staff to sit with children while they eat and provide a good role model for healthy eating and social conventions around a table.
- For staff to engage children, parents, and carers in open discussion about the importance of healthy eating habits and encourage the provision of healthy packed lunches for children who stay for lunch
- For children to be encouraged to develop good eating habits and given plenty of time to eat.
- For children to be taught about the importance of washing hands prior to eating
- To practice how to use good manners.
- For children to be given the opportunity to prepare healthy snacks and serve their peers.
- Parents and carers of children who are on special diets or have allergies, to be asked to provide as much information as possible about suitable foods, and in some circumstances to provide the alternative food themselves.
- For healthy food options to be used in all activities whenever possible: in play, language, cooking and other events.
- For staff handling food to have appropriate food hygiene training and certification.
- For the food storage and preparation area to be kept in a hygienic condition.
- Fridges to be checked daily to ensure that they are at the correct temperature.
- To clean fridges at least one per half term or as needed if spillages or soiling occurs.
- For children's lunches to be stored safely.

Our café area offers children the opportunity to be involved in the wider preparation and eating of healthy food. Throughout the year, each group will be based in the Café space, and we use this opportunity to broaden the children's experiences of food preparation including other those of different cultures.



At Madeley Nursery School we use 'Eat Better Start Better – Voluntary Food and Drink Guidelines for Early Years Settings in England – A Practical Guide' from the School Food Trust (updated 2017) to guide our food and drink provision and portion sizes.

<https://foundationyears.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Eat-Better-Start-Better1.pdf>

Our children are regularly involved with preparing healthy snacks through a carefully planned learning intention. The staff consider the needs of the current children through regular staff meetings and observations and will focus the learning intention on specific food types, food preparation, food from other cultures, seasonal, and traditional foods. The children will also experience the history of food, the process of growing and harvesting food as well using recipes.

The children may also serve their peers and are encouraged to discuss healthy eating and practices with them, for example asking if they have washed their hands.

Children are encouraged to be independent in making healthy choices about their diet and using utensils such as spoons for stirring, jugs for pouring and cups for drinking.

We offer our children a healthy, nutritious, and balanced diet daily in our nest spaces. Snacks which avoid large quantities of fat, salt, sugar, artificial colouring, additives, and preservatives are chosen, alongside fresh fruit and vegetables.

Information for parents on the food provided to children is shared at intervals in our celebration book updates or through our Facebook groups.

A selection of snacks encourage children to be independent in making choices about their diet. A drink of milk or water is available which overtime children are encouraged to pour for themselves.

Allergies and Dietary and Sensory requirements

We work closely with families to support children with allergies or intolerances. Before children attend, at induction / home visits, we obtain information about children's special dietary requirements – including food allergies and intolerances and record and act on the information provided about children's dietary needs.

There is a protocol in place which is accessible to all staff, to ensure everyone is aware of individual children's allergies and symptoms. We store this information in each child's central record and the information, including the child's name, date of birth, photograph, allergy, intolerance, requirements, symptoms, and course of action if a child is exposed to their allergen is displayed in the area in which the child's group is situated. This information is shared with all staff including, supply staff, volunteers, and students.

Understanding which allergens are present in every meal and snack you provide is an important step in providing food which is safe for children with food allergies and intolerances. Since 2014, all food businesses, including early years settings, have been required by law to give details about the allergens in the food they provide.

In cases of known anaphylaxis risks we will undertake EpiPen training by a health professional.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/weaning-and-feeding/food-allergies-in-babies-and-young-children/>

Snacks offered are all vegetarian.

We will endeavour to cater for any special dietary requirements.

Parents, who wish to bring in food from home due to dietary requirements, may do so in consultation with the child's key worker, to ensure food is nutritious and well-balanced. This food will then be stored safely according to food hygiene regulations.

Keyworkers will make agreements through a child's individual education programme for children who need adaptations to their diet due to their sensory needs. These will be monitored and discussed regularly with parents and carers.

Packed lunch boxes

If children bring a packed lunch due to their childcare arrangements, we will store them safely according to food hygiene regulations.

Water

Fresh drinking water is freely available throughout the day. There is a cooled water dispenser in the piazza area which staff can access to fill children's drinks bottles. We encourage and support children to drink throughout the session, particularly during hot weather.

Birthdays and special occasions

Food and drink often play an important role at birthdays and special occasions. However, many foods and drinks served at these celebrations can be high in saturated fat, sugar, and salt, and therefore have limited nutritional value for young children.

With the number of children that we have in nursery, there can be many birthdays or special occasions in a short period of time, and so children are eating these sorts of food frequently.

We celebrate each child's birthday in group time by singing to them, giving them a birthday badge and a special present from the 'Birthday Box'.

Parents and children are not permitted to bring sweets or birthday cakes in from home to share out; however, a contribution of fruit, vegetables, or natural resources to decorate the tables would be appropriate.

Environment for eating

Hygiene

At Madeley Nursery School food hygiene is considered of utmost importance. Staff who handle or serve food hold a food hygiene certification which is renewed every 3 years.

Food is stored, prepared, and presented in a safe and hygienic environment. This is especially important when providing food for young children, as they may have a low resistance to food poisoning. It is also important that children are taught basic hygiene themselves, such as not eating food that has fallen on the floor and washing their hands with soap and warm water before eating meals or snacks and after going to the toilet or handling animals.

All food is stored safely in accordance with environmental regulations. Fridge temperatures are monitored daily.

Food that requires cooking will be cooked until steaming hot to kill harmful bacteria and is then cooled sufficiently before giving it to infants and young children.

Preparation areas are cleaned with environmental regulation cleaner.

We wash all surfaces for preparing or eating food, especially chopping boards, with hot soapy water (and keep pets away from them). We make sure all cups, plates, bowls, spoons, and other cutlery are washed with hot soapy water and once a term they are taken home by a member of staff to have additional cleaning in a dishwasher.

Tea towels, kitchen cloths or sponges can harbour lots of germs, so we wash them regularly.



Safety

All sharp knives are kept on a high shelf or cupboard out of reach of our children.

Knives used by children in the preparation of snack are of a serrated type and are designed particularly for use by children.

We also use peelers and graters in the preparation of vegetables. Children are taught to use these appropriately.

Children are always supervised when using tools in the preparation of fruit and vegetables.

Children are never left unsupervised when eating or drinking.

All staff refreshments are transported within a sturdy bowl to reduce the risk of spills. Staff refreshments are kept out of reach of children and staff drink them in that location. The kettles are kept on a high surface out of reach of children. They are switched off at the wall between use and unplugged at the end of the day.

We will reduce the risk of choking by following the following guidance when preparing food in school and when monitoring and supervising packed lunches from home.

- Food preparation:
- remove any stones and pips from fruit before serving
- cut small round foods, like grapes, strawberries, and cherry tomatoes, lengthways and into quarters
- cut large fruits like melon, and hard fruit or vegetables like raw apple and carrot into slices instead of small chunks
- sausages should be avoided due to their high salt content, but if offered to children these should be cut into thin strips rather than chunks and remove the skins
- remove bones from meat or fish
- do not give whole nuts to children under five years old
- do not give whole seeds to children under five years old
- cut cheese into strips rather than chunks
- do not give popcorn as a snack
- do not give children marshmallows or jelly cubes from a packet either to eat or as part of messy play activities as they can get stuck in the throat
- do not give children hard sweets
- <https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/safeguarding-and-welfare/food-safety#what-it-says-in-the-EYFS-framework>

'Fussy eating'

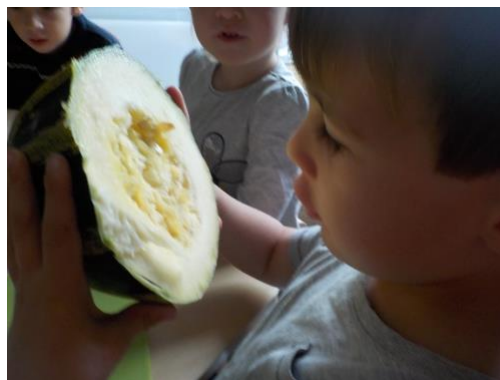
'Fussy eating' is part of children's development and affects 10-20% of all children under five. We recognise this and encourage children to try foods in a variety of ways:

- By involving the children in the preparation of healthy food
- by sitting children around a table, so that fussy eaters are modelled good eating by their friends.
- by giving children a smaller portion of a new food to try.
- by regularly serving a new food for children to try.
- by praising children who try something new; and
- by never forcing children to eat.
- by staff eating snack with the children.

We give feedback to parents how well their child has eaten.

Learning through food

At Madeley Nursery School we integrate learning about food through the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum in the following ways.



Personal, social, and emotional development.

Snack times offer children experiences to taste different foods, overcome dislikes and learn how to share. Cooking activities offer opportunities for learning through working with others and increasing self-esteem.

Communication and language. Through sitting children around a table to eat, we can develop children's conversational skills. Also during preparation and serving, children develop their speaking and listening as they ask each other questions and express their opinions.

Literacy. Many stories involve food. We use these to teach children about ingredients, where food comes from and about food from different cultures. Language is developed and senses explored through discussing and describing the taste, texture, size, look and smell of food.

Mathematics. We use opportunities such as counting out cups or pieces of fruit at snack time to support numeracy skills. Also weighing and measuring quantities of food when following recipes. Through sorting and matching foods into different types we encourage organisational skills and reasoning.



Understanding the world. Through exploring the seasons, we explore where food comes from, we learn about life cycles, gardening and how to care for plants. We grow our own fruit and vegetables which we serve in the café. In learning about the world, we also explore whether food comes from other countries and food from different cultures. We use ICT to support children's knowledge and understanding of where food comes from and about the importance of eating healthily.

We also focus on what happens with our leftover food. The children are involved in collecting the waste food and depositing it into our composting bins. The compost which is generated is used in the garden ready for planting our seeds.

Physical development. Fine and gross motor movements are developed through activities such as pouring drinks, using spoons and knives, preparing food, washing and gardening.

Expressive arts and design. Through creative activities we can engage children with food, exploring colour, shape, pattern, form, and texture.



Partnership with parents and carers

Our food and healthy eating policy is written in consultation with parents through our governing body. We consider the partnership of home and school important in promoting a healthy lifestyle. During the admission process we talk to parents and carers about our healthy school ethos. We encourage parents and carers to talk to us about any issues they may have regarding food and healthy eating in school. We use our newsletters, celebration book entries and Facebook groups, to keep parents and carers updated on current food and healthy eating developments occurring in nursery.

We ask parents and carers to support our healthy school ethos by not allowing their child to bring sweets to nursery or give them sweets when collecting them from nursery. This is detailed in our prospectus.

At the end of term and when children leave nursery, we are aware that some parents like to show their appreciation for their child's time in nursery through gifts for nursery staff. A non-food item would be considered most appropriate as a gift. Governors support this view and recommend that parents and carers perhaps use the opportunity to give a gift that could be used in nursery in the future, such as a story book. We wish to stress that parents and carers should not feel obliged to give gifts.

Role of Governors

Our food and healthy eating policy is written in consultation with Governors. Governors monitor and check that the policy is upheld through monitoring activities including visits to the school and during termly meetings.

Role of staff

Our food and healthy eating policy is written in consultation with staff. The deputy head teacher (Helen Torr) is responsible for supporting colleagues in the delivery of this policy.

All staff will be involved in regular updates on food hygiene and healthy eating practices.

Useful websites

www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk

This is the organisation which provides guidance on food in schools. We use their ideas and portion sizes for snacks. There are pages particularly for parents on these websites.

www.healthystart.nhs.uk/

This is an NHS website. It provides information on healthy choices, gives tips, recipes, vouchers, and information on vitamins.

www.nhs.uk/Planners/birthtofive/Pages/Vitamins.aspx

This is an NHS article on vitamins for children under five. It gives guidance and links to other information about health for young children.

www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/food-labelling.aspx

Again, this is an NHS article which explains food nutrition labels. There are links to other food related topics.

www.rhs.org.uk/Children

This is the website for the Royal Horticultural Society (gardening). It has activities for families, fun children's activities, ideas for what to grow and resources you can buy online.

www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/eatwell-plate.aspx

This is an NHS article about portion sizes. It shows the 'eat well plate' which splits a dinner plate up into sections for different types of food. This page gives links to other food and healthy lifestyle topics.

If you require a copy of this procedure in a particular format, for example in large print, please contact the school.

Status	FINAL
Agreed at:	Full Governors meeting
Effective from:	November 2022
To be reviewed by:	General Purposes
Date of review:	Autumn Term 2025
Responsible person:	Helen Torr

Signature:

Wet signature copy held in school.

Role in school:

Deputy Head