

Food Policy

April 2021

Policy available to parents: on website and on request

Policy to be reviewed: April 2024

Parayhouse School recognises the significance of a healthy diet and lifestyle for the successful development of our students and the impact this can have on their learning and wellbeing now and in the future.

We are committed to fostering an environment where healthy eating and a positive attitude to food and physical activity are embedded in the ethos and culture of the school. Included in this is a dedication to providing a strong food education programme and an environment where good practise and examples are set.

The school adopts a Healthy Schools policy which is communicated to staff, parents and students. All staff and visitors are expected to adhere to the policy when eating with the children inside and outside of school.

Aims

- ✓ To improve the health of students, staff and their families by offering advice and guidance on healthy eating habits and raising awareness and knowledge of food issues, healthy eating, hygienic food preparation and safe storage methods
- ✓ To ensure students are well nourished at school, that every student has access to safe, tasty and nutritious food, and that all students have free access to clean drinking water.
- ✓ To make provision and consumption of food an enjoyable and safe experience.
- ✓ Where possible, to increase students' knowledge of food production, manufacturing, distribution and marketing processes, and their impact on both health and the environment.

1. Food and Drink Provision

Breakfast Club

The school is aware of the value of a nutritious breakfast in preparing the students for the day's learning. We acknowledge that many of our students may travel a long distance to school and be picked up very early. We are also aware that many families in the UK today may struggle to access or afford sufficient food. The school offers a free breakfast club from 9-9.20am where students are offered a range of cereals and toast when they arrive. This is offered in agreement with parents to ensure students do not double up on breakfast.

Snack

Students are offered a piece of fruit at snack break which takes place mid-morning. The school has no vending machines or tuck shop as we believe this makes it easier

to manage the food needs of our students and encourage adherence to the school policy.

Water

Fresh drinking water is available around the school for the students and staff to access freely during the day

Lunches

The school is committed to ensuring all students can access a healthy, nutritious lunch. The students may choose from a cooked school lunch or to bring a packed lunch in line with school guidelines.

Visual menus are provided to students and parents at the beginning of the year. Students eat together whether they are eating school or packed lunch. All staff on duty will eat with the students to model good eating habits and share in the lunchtime experience. However, school lunches are also available to buy for all staff.

The school uses lunch times to broaden the range of foods that students have access to and will eat, in particular encouraging the consumption of fruit and vegetables. This is especially true for those students who may have rigid and limited eating patterns due to their specific learning needs.

- **School Lunches**

The school lunch is provided via Hammersmith & Fulham College whose food provision is contracted to Impact Food Group. Impact Food Group are committed to ensuring fresh, balanced and nutritious food is offered by its kitchens in line with Government guidelines. For more information please visit: <https://impactfood.co.uk>

Lunchtimes are split into two sittings. Willow, Ash and Elm are served first with Oak and Lime afterwards. All classes sit in the school hall and lunch is served by our lunchtime supervisor. They choose from a vegetarian or meat option each morning which is then placed as an order in the canteen and brought down by trolley.

When the school's Occupational Therapist is present, she supports in these lunch sessions and advises on any eating and drinking skills.

We understand the importance that the dining environment can make to the overall lunchtime experience. In order to ensure an optimum environment which is pleasurable for students and assists staff in managing behaviours and maintaining a calm atmosphere, the following steps are taken:

- Unobtrusive, relaxing music is played in the background
- Students are grouped over 5 tables allowing for personal space to be maintained

- Staff members are present on each table to encourage and support interaction and acceptable behaviour
- Students go up to collect their food one table at a time

Although the school hall is used for other purposes throughout the week, during lunchtimes it is used solely for dining to ensure the atmosphere is not disrupted.

- **Packed Lunches...**

Parents are advised on the school's expectations relating to packed lunches and ensuring they are healthy.

All parents are provided with an information and guidance sheet regarding healthy packed lunches when their child joins the school. It is then sent out again at the beginning of each year. (see Appendix A)

The school works with parents to address any issues relating to the contents of packed lunches and gives guidance on healthy choices.

During all lunch sittings social skills and language development is supported and encouraged.

All students have access to free drinking water during lunch.

School Trips

When students are taken on school trips they may bring their own healthy packed lunch or have one provided by the school via Impact Food Group. This includes a bottle of water, choice of sandwich and piece of fruit.

School Events

On occasion food may be provided as part of a school function and event and the school acknowledges that this may sometimes include food which would not be in line with Healthy Eating guidance however these events are occasional celebrations and therefore food may also be 'celebratory' in moderation.

Where food is provided by parents as part of a school function or event, the school will ensure that parents are aware of all allergy restrictions and that the ingredients are provided in advance.

A Sugar Smart School

The school understands the growing nationwide issues related to excessive sugar consumption in young people and the serious health problems this can contribute to. We are aware that the biggest source of sugar in a child's diet is sugary drinks, followed by sugary snacks. The school makes every effort to contribute towards reducing this intake for our students and undertakes the following measures:

- Information from Change4Life is shared with parents

- The school operates a packed lunch policy in which sugary drinks and snacks are not allowed
- Information on healthy foods and the dangers of sugar are highlighted in cooking lessons
- Dental check-ups are arranged at school (with the agreement of parents) to ensure all children have access to oral health checks

All students are weighed in September and March and their BMI calculated. This allows us to identify students who may have a BMI in the low or high range. Key Teachers can then discuss with parents how the problem may be addressed through diet and exercise.

2. Food and the Curriculum

Students are taught about food, nutrition and health through Lifeskills, PHSCE and Science lessons at an appropriate level for each class.

One module of Lifeskills lessons per year is focused on cooking, again at a suitable level for the students involved. For this, the students access an adapted kitchen in the attached college's Inclusive Learning Centre.

3. Special Dietary Requirements

The school is aware of all food allergies/intolerances and preferences (including those of a religious nature or vegetarian/veganism) of students and these are made clear to all staff at the time of joining or diagnosis. These are listed on each student's information form which is updated by parents annually.

For all students who suffer from an allergy and require an epi-pen, these are kept in the school office (or on the child if necessary) and all staff are trained in their administration.

Religious food preferences are identified on student's information forms. The school is aware that all food provided for lunches is Halal.

Some of our students have food requirements that are linked to their medical needs (e.g. Epilepsy, Type 1 Diabetes). All staff are aware of these needs and specific staff are identified to monitor and oversee food intake. Where relevant, these staff undertake all necessary training and liaise with parents and medical professionals.

4. Food Safety

The school ensures adequate resources are in place to ensure food safety during lunchtimes and cooking lessons.

Staff supporting during cooking lessons are well trained and experienced and ensure that the children are aware of all safety risks and precautions in the kitchen. Any potential risks are outlined on planning and staff made aware.

Serving staff, whether in the canteen or school hall, wear appropriate clothing.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

The school will continue to review its food policy and healthy eating plans on an annual basis and in line with any new guidance and legislation. This review will be undertaken by the Senior Leadership Team. The policy will be shared with all staff and Governors upon update and with parents by request.

Appendix A

Parayhouse holds a Healthy Schools Bronze Award and is committed to ensuring our students eat a healthy, balanced diet.

As part of this we have a Healthy Packed Lunch policy which we ask all parents to support us with.

Guidelines for a healthy lunchbox:

- ✓ may be based on **starchy carbohydrates** (bread, potatoes, rice, pasta)
- ✓ should include fresh fruit and vegetables/salad
- ✓ should include a source of protein such as **beans and pulses**, eggs, fish, meat, cheese (or dairy alternative)
- ✓ possible desserts could include a lower-sugar yoghurt (or non-dairy alternative), plain rice/corn cakes, sugar-free jelly or a piece of fruit
- ✓ include a drink such as water, skimmed or semi-skimmed milk, sugar-free or no-added-sugar drinks

Parayhouse asks that packed lunches do not include:

- X salty snacks such as crisps and nuts
- X sweets, chocolate, biscuits and cakes
- X Sugary drinks such as carbonated soft drinks, sugary fruit waters or juices

We understand that some students may have specific needs relating to their diet and interaction with food. We encourage parents to liaise with the school to discuss any individual requirements or issues.

For future information and tips please visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/change4life-beta/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes>

