

Food Policy

Approved by: Governing Board

Date: May 2024

**Next review due
by:** May 2027

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 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 are collected very early from home. 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 9.00 am - 9.20 am where students are offered a range of cereals when they arrive. This is offered in agreement with parents to ensure students do not double up on breakfast.

Snack break

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 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 a cooked school lunch or 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.

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. All students have access to free drinking water during lunch.

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

Cooked School Lunches

The school lunch is provided via Hammersmith & Fulham College whose food provision is contracted to Aramark Limited. Aramark Limited 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://www.aramark.com/industries/education>

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 our lunchtime supervisors serve lunch. They choose from a vegetarian or meat option daily each week, 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 during 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. The following steps are taken to ensure an environment that is pleasurable and calm for students, and therefore assists staff in managing behaviours:

- 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

We ensure all student dietary requirements are met and that there is a range of foods provided for students with such requirements, such as a gluten free and/or dairy free diet, and others.

We also ensure students with feeding requirements due to dysphagia have a range of foods to enjoy at lunch and snack to meet their requirements.

Packed Lunches

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

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

School Trips

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

School Events

On occasion, food may be provided as part of a school function / event. 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 by undertaking 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 lessons

2. Food and the Curriculum

Students learn about food, nutrition and health through PSHE lessons at an appropriate level for each class.

In year 11, students work with the OT and OT assistant to make their own lunch once a week.

In the summer term, the Year 11 students on the formal pathway go to the college canteen to order their lunches; this is to support their Life skills and preparation to going to college.

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 that is updated by parents annually.

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

Religious food preferences are identified on student's information forms. School lunches provided by the college are Halal.

Some of our students have food requirements that are linked to their medical needs (e.g. Dysphagia, 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

Parayhouse is a nut free school; this is communicated to parents in the welcome booklet and annually at the beginning of the year.

Parayhouse School is a nut free school and cannot have nuts in school in any form. Children who suffer from nut allergies can develop a severe, potentially life-threatening allergic reaction. If someone has a nut allergy it is not just eating nuts that can cause a severe reaction, just being touched on the skin or smelling the breath of someone who has had nuts or a product containing nuts can trigger anaphylactic shock (which can cause breathing and swallowing difficulties).

We ask that you have no nut products in the lunch boxes or brought into the school as treats.

For example:

- × Peanut butter sandwiches
- × Chocolate spreads
- × Cereal bars
- × Some granola bars
- × Cakes that contain nuts
- × Biscuits / Cookies that contain nuts
- × Peanut butter cakes
- × Sauces that contain nuts

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

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 are 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 and ideas for a healthy packed lunch:

- ✓ Base the main lunchbox item on foods like bread, rice, pasta and potatoes. Choose wholegrain where you can.
- ✓ Cherry tomatoes, or sticks of carrot, cucumber, celery and peppers all count towards their 5 A Day.
- ✓ Try chopped apple, peeled satsuma segments, strawberries, blueberries, halved grapes or melon slices to make it easier for them to eat.
- ✓ Swap cakes, chocolate, cereal bars and biscuits for malt loaf, fruited teacakes, fruit breads or fruit
- ✓ Pop in low-fat and lower-sugar yoghurts or fromage frais
- ✓ Bottle of water instead of a fruit juice

Please Note: Parayhouse is a nut free school

We ask that packed lunches do not include:

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

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.

More tips on healthy packed lunches can be found here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes/>