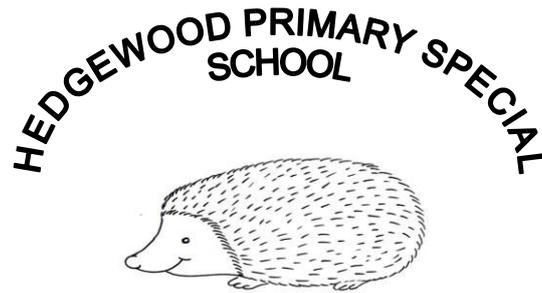




HEDGEWOOD SCHOOL

# Food and Nutrition Policy

2020 - 2021



## **FOOD AND NUTRITION POLICY**

### **RATIONALE**

At Hedgewood we recognise the difficulties our pupils may face when trying to establish a varied, healthy diet. Pupils often have preferences for particular taste, textures and colours which makes it challenging to try foods outside of their preference range. We understand that the parents work hard to ensure their children are eating and hydrated throughout the day and we would like to support our families by taking a strong stance on healthy eating by being positive role models and ‘ambassadors for ‘healthy eating’ for all pupils.

We ensure that, with the support of the whole school and staff, healthier food and drink options are provided at all times of the day reflecting the key nutrition and healthy eating messages in the curriculum. It is the responsibility of all staff including teaching, support staff and catering staff to implement the food policy and to demonstrate positive attitudes to healthy eating so that pupils’ awareness and understanding of how to make healthy food and lifestyle choices are developed.

We are a **nut-free school** as a protective measure for pupils and staff who may suffer an anaphylactic reaction if exposed to nuts. Parents are asked to refrain from providing food products, which may contain nuts, in packed lunches. This includes but is not limited to:

- Packs of nuts
- Peanut butter sandwiches
- Fruit and cereal bars that contain nuts
- Chocolate bars or sweets that contain nuts
- Cakes made with nuts
- Nut based hair and body lotions

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This policy aims to ensure that we recognise the importance of a healthy lifestyle, good diet and give our pupils the knowledge and skills to establish healthy eating habits for life. This policy states the ways in which our school community supports students to develop their knowledge and understanding of the importance of a healthy diet. This policy also describes how the school community helps pupils to develop the skills and attitudes that will help them make healthy choices both in and out of school. In order to reflect the importance of healthy eating, this policy specifies the types of food and drink that may be provided in school and the foods that students are encouraged to bring in, as agreed with the school.

The aims of the Food and Nutrition policy are to:

- Ensure that all aspects of food and nutrition promotes the health and wellbeing of all our pupils.
- Encourage pupils to make healthy choices about what they eat and drink and to adopt healthy eating habits that will support their future health and well-being.
- To provide healthy food and drink choices throughout the school day and support healthy food choices through the provision of information and development of appropriate skills and attitudes.
- Ensure consistent messages regarding healthy eating are reinforced throughout the school day.
- Increase knowledge and awareness of a healthy diet through workshops and our PSHE and Science curriculum.
- Provide safe, easily accessible water during the school day to all pupils.
- Encourage all adults to support healthy eating and advocates for healthier alternatives.

## HEALTHY EATING ACROSS THE PATHWAYS

The broad range of pupil needs are met through three identified curriculum pathways, allowing for further personalised learning to ensure the best outcomes for all children according to their unique needs in line with their diagnosis of autism.

For our most complex pupils our **Essentials for Living** (EfL) communication is key and pupils are taught to make requests for highly preferred items to build their understanding of two-way communication. At times, the preferred item is a tangible toy or object like a trumpet or an iPad. At other times, the preferred item is a biscuit or sweet. In the grand scheme of enriching the lives of our most complex students, their preferred item is allowed as a vehicle to developing a deeper understanding of the world. Our highly trained team understand the needs of the pupils very well and work closely with the parents to ensure the pupils are recipients of quality education and care. The ultimate goal of EfL is to fade out the highly preferred items so that pupils can access more leisure and learning opportunities without the need for a strong positive reinforcer.

Pupils accessing the EfL curriculum are given ample opportunities to be independent, particularly when preparing their own foods. Pupils are guided to make healthier choices by the EfL team and take part in programmed daily routines which offers them opportunities for exercise, socialising and building independence. The curriculum is set

to allow pupils to begin developing an awareness of themselves and others and acquire strategies to self-regulate.

The **Foundation for Life** pathway(F4L), builds on the skills in the EfL curriculum. Pupils learn the functional independence skills in Phase I of the F4L curriculum. Pupils are also provided with opportunities to develop personal tolerances towards new foods. In Phase II of the F4L curriculum, learning continues as pupils are taught about the production and preparation of foods and healthy eating behaviours. Food and cooking sessions are used in a variety of ways to widen the pupil's experience. They are given the opportunity to touch, taste and smell a variety of foods through sensory food group activities. We regularly review our curriculums to ensure we are teaching in line with most up-to-date government guidelines.

Pupils in **Core Curriculum** (CC) develop a deeper awareness and understanding of how foods affect our bodies and the importance of making healthy choices for ourselves. Through the Science, PSHE and PE curriculums, pupils are exposed to the different ways we can live a healthy lifestyle. We teach children to take ownership of their bodies and their choices and teach them about healthier alternatives and ways to incorporate our favourite foods into a balanced diet.

### **BREAKFAST CLUB**

Our breakfast club offers an opportunity for pupils to eat a healthy breakfast and to socialise with other children and adults. Our breakfast menu offers a range of cereals, fruits, yoghurts and toast/bagel options as well as milk and milk substitutes.

### **SOCIAL TIME AND LUNCH TIMES**

Daily social time present opportunities to develop our pupils', independence, social understanding and collaboration. We use this time effectively by modelling healthy living habits (regular physical activity, singing and movement) to our pupils as well as introducing healthy food and vegetables that may be new to them. Parent /Carers will receive a parent mail communication advising on how they can support this mid-morning activity.

We have established a Fruit/Vegetable of the Week; whereby we introduce a new fruit or vegetable to the pupils each week for pupils to explore through taste, smell and transform (chop, cut etc.). This is also an opportunity to teach pupils how to utilise cutlery appropriately which will help increase their tolerances to new foods and independence with their cutlery skills. For those pupils with significant sensory processing issues smells, textures and taste, we will supplement the general support with sensory food sessions. Pupils will be able to explore a range of foods in a pressure-free environment.

Hedgewood, long famed for its total toast addiction has gone cold turkey or rather cold toast and, other than breakfast club, is now one of Europe's first Toast Free Zones [TFZs]

### **Health and Safety**

**All medical needs in relation to eating (i.e. difficulties with swallowing, chewing, dysphagia etc.) are recorded by the school. Please be sure to inform the school in relation to any concerns in this area.**

**Food allergies and sensitivities are recorded. Please be sure to inform the school in relation to any concerns in this area.**

**Grapes, strawberries and cherry tomatoes are always to be cut in half or quarters. The use of implements is always carefully managed.**

We monitor the school lunches to ensure that the pupils are being offered a balanced and healthy meal in line with government guidance. The provider of our school lunches is Colham Manor School Kitchen. Lunches are ordered through ParentMail on a half termly basis. We require parents to complete the 3 forms for the 3-week rotation (for the following half term) before each half term holiday. All allergy information has been shared with our lunch provider. Gluten free, dairy free and halal options are available on request.

### **HYDRATION**

We are fortunate that everyone has access to clean drinking water and we believe that it is our responsibility to encourage pupils to be hydrated and happy throughout the day. However, if a pupil has difficulties drinking water, parents are able to send in an alternative drink for their child. Please click on the link to the [Change4Life](#) website which offers healthy alternatives for common packed lunch foods.

### **CELEBRATIONS**

We understand the importance for the pupils take part in celebrations to mark a religious, social or cultural event. Pupils can celebrate these occasions with their class in a way that complies with our healthy eating policy. Fruits and healthy snacks for birthday parties will be supplied by the school to ensure that all pupil and their dietary requirements are honoured with healthy alternatives.

**We would encourage parents to donate a reading book to their child's class to mark their birthday. This is to replace the usual cake or sweet treat bags.** Any such donation will be greatly appreciated with a notation in the book as well as being referenced in our half termly newsletter.

Parents who then wish to supply store bought treats for birthday parties will be directed to a page on our school website which details items that we can accept and items that would not be acceptable in accordance to this policy (see Table A below).

**Table A**

Items we can accept	Items we kindly decline
<b>Reading book</b> Colouring books Fidget toys Collectible cards Small notepads/drawing pads Playdoh Bubble wands Stickers	McDonalds and other fast food restaurants Balloons or Party poppers Slime

We are also aware that some families do not celebrate birthdays.

## **DISSEMINATION OF THE POLICY**

This revised policy will be shared with staff and implemented immediately. It is important that all members of the school community are aware of its purpose.

- A summary of the Food and Nutrition policy will be sent to new parents through Seesaw.
- The Hedgewood website will be updated to include more information on healthy eating eg. links to advice pages eg. NAS & Change 4 Life.
- Training on Eating & Swallowing Difficulties will be given to a select group of staff members who will then complete in-house training for the rest of the school.

We are also aware that creating opportunities for pupils to exercise we are supporting the health of our pupils. This information is detailed elsewhere, for example, in our PE, Science and Outdoor Learning.

## **POLICY REVIEW DETAILS**

Document Reviewed by SLT/GB annually or in response to changed government advice and school development needs.

Readers are: staff, parents, governors, others

Adopted by GB in Summer Term 2020  
Revised in Autumn Term 2022