

ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Food – Including Food Allergy Awareness Policy



MISSION STATEMENT

We follow in St. Joseph's footsteps, building a community of love, trust, respect and learning.

Introduction

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School actively supports healthy eating and drinking throughout the school day.

Our aim is to:

- ensure that all aspects of food and nutrition in school promote the health and wellbeing of pupils, staff and visitors to the school;
- actively support the '5 a day' campaign to encourage children to eat 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day;
- be a 'Nut Aware' school (refer to the Nut Allergy Awareness section included in this Policy);
- provide nutritious, healthy school meals cooked freshly each day;
- promote consumption of healthy lunch box food by providing guidelines for parents/carers;
- provide a clean, safe and enjoyable environment for pupils, staff and visitors to enjoy their food;
- ensure that there is access to a safe, easily available water supply;
- ensure that food provision in the school reflects ethical and medical requirements.

In line with 'Natasha's Law', in the unlikely event that food made for direct sale will be available to the children, it will be **fully labelled with all ingredients and allergens** - including food produced and sold within the school.

Examples of these foods include: fruit and breakfast pots, packaged sandwiches, burgers and salad boxes, and boxes of chips or chicken nuggets placed under a hot lamp

Meals prepared on the school site

Lunch options are selected each morning during registration. School meals are then freshly prepared on site by our school catering team. The menus provided adhere to Government guidelines and recommendations. Menus are changed regularly and the catering team reserve the right to make alterations as necessary. Parents are notified of these changes via the newsletter and/or school website or app. The school catering team are given a list of all those eating a school meal each day which includes information about special dietary requirements and/or allergies and intolerances.

Every Key Stage 1 (KS1) pupil is entitled to a free school meal as part of the Universal Free School Meal scheme. We hope that everyone will take advantage of this offer as a nutritious hot meal in the middle of the day can only be of benefit to the children.

Packed lunches

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School recognises the benefits of a well-balanced school meal for the children in the middle of the day and recommends to parents that this is the best option. Should parents wish to provide a packed lunch from home we expect it to be healthy and provide a balanced meal and we request:

- all lunches must be brought to school in a clearly named container;
- an ice pack is used during the warmer months;
- no sweets, chocolate or nut products are included; this includes peanut butter and Nutella type spreads (In line with our Nut Allergy Policy)
- processed foods are to be kept to a minimum.
- Any meat products must be boneless to minimise choking hazard.
- no more than: 1 small individual biscuit (Club/Penguin size) or a small bag of mini biscuits or one small cake (no nuts or sweets) or one nut free cereal bar
- Foods such as grapes and cherry tomatoes should be cut in half and ideally quartered to minimise choking hazard.
- 1 bag of crisps or savoury snacks. (no bigger than the average 25g size pack)
- a drink should be included, although children do have access to water in the dining hall. Children also have access to their water bottles at lunch/break especially during warmer weather. Fizzy drinks are not allowed.

Lunchboxes are stored on trolleys in the corridor outside the child's class.

We may write to parents/carers individually if a child's lunchbox regularly fails to meet the requirements outlined within this policy.

Eating arrangements

St Joseph's Catholic Primary school will provide a clean, sociable environment in which to eat. Children are given the option to eat outside if they prefer. (Weather permitting) We expect the children to follow these guidelines when eating

- The children must sit at a table to eat their lunch (Exceptions may be made on special 'picnic' days when food may be eaten outside).
- Children are required to try to eat most of the food provided for them.
- They **must not** share food with others.
- Mid-day assistants will assist any child who needs help or has additional needs during meal times. If a child requires assistance they should raise their hand and wait for a mid-day assistant to come to them. Older children are encouraged to help younger children to open packets and so on.
- Children are expected to behave well and to be polite and helpful to their peers and adults.
- Children must leave the area where they have eaten their lunch in a reasonable, clean and tidy condition.

If eating a packed lunch from home pupils are expected to take any food that is left and the packaging home with them so that parents/carers can see what has been eaten. Pupils should only place food from home in the bin if it exceptionally messy i.e. half full yoghurt

Water

Pupils should bring a bottle to school with them every day to be kept in class. This may only contain water and this can be re-filled from the water taps. Fresh water is also available throughout the school day from the water fountain and at lunchtime in the dining hall.

Break time snacks

Children in KS1 will benefit from the Governments Fruit and Vegetables Scheme. These children will be encouraged to eat their piece of fruit or vegetable as part of their daily break time. To ensure consistency across the school KS2 children will also be encouraged to eat fresh fruit or vegetables at break time which they can bring in from home or a alternative 'healthy' snack. KS2 are not allowed any other snacks. If pupils are found bringing in items other than fresh fruit, vegetables or a 'healthy alternative for snack time they will not be able to eat them during the school day.

Food 'treats'

Because we recognise that there is no such thing as 'bad food', we teach the children to enjoy treats in moderation during out of school events, such as school fetes, discos, fund raising events etc. On occasions where parents are not on site the allergy list will be available to the organisers and they will be encouraged to consider this policy in the range of refreshments offered to the children.

Food Allergy Policy

Food allergies and intolerance (Information provided by Essex County Council)

An allergy is an inappropriate response to a usually harmless substance. Four to five percent of young people in the UK have severe food allergies. Approximately 10 deaths each year are caused by food allergy.

An allergic response can be caused by tiny amounts of the allergic food. The reaction may cause the mouth and throat to swell, making breathing difficult, while the blood pressure drops suddenly causing the sufferer to collapse and become unconscious. This condition is called Anaphylaxis.

School staff are aware of the children who suffer from allergies and know how to deal with them.

Intolerance to foods is thought to affect at least 20% of children and young people. This sensitivity is not life threatening but can cause illness.

If your child has an allergy or intolerance to certain foods we ask that you inform the school as soon as possible and that you provide the school with any medication necessary to manage the condition. Care plans and risk assessments will be completed as necessary and arrangements can then be made to manage the child's condition.

School catering staff receives notification each day as to which pupils with allergies or special dietary requirements are eating a school meal and prepare their meal appropriately. Allergy lists are available in the main school office, kitchen and every classroom.

Nut Allergy Awareness

This part of the policy has been introduced as we have children in school with nut allergies. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to

- Raise awareness about allergies to all our school community
- Ensure we provide a safe learning environment for all
- Give assurance to those children/families with severe allergies that we take the management of these seriously.

Aim

We are not a nut-free school but we aim to be as nut-free as we can. There are many foodstuffs that do not contain nuts, but which are labelled as being produced in factories handling nuts, or that cannot be guaranteed nut free. It cannot reasonably be expected that all these items be kept out of school. Therefore it is impossible to provide an absolute guarantee that no nuts will be brought onto the premises but we will strive to minimise this as much as we can.

Management

We ask that all members of the school community manage the day to day application of this policy in the following ways:

- Parents and carers are requested NOT to send food to school that contains nuts. This includes all types of nuts, peanut butter, Nutella, cereal/chocolate bars and any other food containing nuts.
- Staff will be alert to any obvious signs of nuts being brought in, but they will not inspect all food brought into school.
- Children that DO bring in food that does contain nuts or nut products will be asked to eat that food away from any child with a nut allergy and to wash their hands before going to play.
- If any actual nuts are found, they will be bagged up and sent home and this child will be asked to eat lunch away from other children and wash their hands before going out to play.
- Children are asked NOT to share food.
- Children will be encouraged to wash hands before and after eating.
- Most staff are trained in understanding and dealing with Anaphylaxis (severe allergic reactions) and will use this training should the need arise.
- The school dinner providers will ensure all cooked food is nut-free.

Staff are also requested NOT to bring foods that contain nuts in to school

Promotion and Communication

The policy will be promoted and communicated by:

- Staff being informed and provided with training opportunities.
- Children being informed via teachers and support staff.
- Regular reminders in the school newsletter
- Publication of this policy on the school website.
- Issue of the policy in the new admission packs.

- Signs in and around the school to promote healthy eating habits and to remind pupils and adults to be 'Nut Aware'.

Approved by Governors:

Reviewed: Autumn term 2024

To be reviewed: Spring term 2026