

**Food policy**  
**The Federation of Abbey Infant & Junior schools**



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Date	By Who	Comment
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### **1. Introduction**

Abbey is dedicated to providing an environment that ensures the healthy choice, is the easy choice for all children. We promote healthy eating and enable pupils to make informed choices about the food and drink they consume. Through effective leadership and a strong school ethos, we take a whole school approach by bringing all elements of the school day together to support the health and wellbeing of all children. We recognise that we are invaluable role models to pupils and their families regarding food and drink choices and healthy living.

This policy will be reviewed annually to incorporate any new developments.

### **2. Policy Aims & Objectives**

Our school food policy aims to...

- Ensure that all aspects of food and nutrition promote the health and well-being of pupils, staff, and visitors at our school.

The objectives of our school food policy are to:

- Provide a range of healthy food choices throughout the school day that are in line with the mandatory school food standards.

- Ensure that food provision in the school reflects the cultural and medical requirements of staff and pupils.
- Make the healthy choice, the easy choice.
- Ensure that our caterers uphold high standards and continue to actively consult with relevant stakeholders to improve the food provision.
- Work with students and the catering company to make sure the pupils feel listened to and see their choices in the food on offer.

### **3. Food & Drink Throughout the School Day**

Our catering provider is Leicester Traded Services. Their staff are trained by Leicester County Council in food safety and hygiene. There are a number of school-based staff trained to food hygiene level 2 standard. Those in breakfast and after school club must be trained.

#### **3.1. Breakfast Club**

We offer a breakfast club which serves a range of nutritious, school food standard compliant food (including wholemeal carbohydrate, fruits & protein-based foods) to support children's health and concentration to ensure they have fuel for learning, play and social interaction.

- Our breakfast club is run by school-based staff.
- The snacks and food comply with the food standards.
- We have a separate guide for parents explaining how our Playden (wrap around care) works.

#### **3.2. School Lunches**

- Meals are provided by Leicester Traded Services.
- There is a cycle for the menus used.
- These are available to 'pre-book' meals for children by parents. This ensures that children get the meal they want every time. This manages food waste and is strong contributory factor to managing allergies.
- The meal supervisors ensure that there is a rota in place so that different classes attend different sittings to ensure fairness and equality.
- The catering provider ensures the menu meets the food standards. They have home economists that ensure a broad and balanced meal is available daily.
- Pupils wear three coloured bands that match their meal choices.

Environmentally friendly:

- The school meals cater for any dietary requirements. Where children have specific need a bespoke menu is put in place.
- Food waste is monitored and a separate bin used for food waste.

Desserts:

To ensure balance within our lunch offering, we offer a range of nutritious dessert options. Fresh fruit and yoghurt is available every day, with other days offering cheese and crackers or a 50% fruit-based dessert.

Free School Meals:

From September 2014 every child in reception, year 1 and year 2 in state-funded schools is entitled to a free school meal. The government also provides funding for all children from low-income families to access a free school meal [Appendix 2].

- When families admit their child to school we offer and complete an FSM eligibility check with the local authority.

### **3.3. Packed Lunches**

Packed lunches include those brought from home as well as those provided by the school or by parents for trips.

- Children are encouraged to take up a school meal rather than a packed lunch in the first instance.
- Whilst school does not dictate what a packed lunch should contain parents are encouraged to ensure the lunch is balanced.
- School does not accept 'deliveroo' or other fast food meals being sent to school for lunchtime. Parents are asked not to bring in fast food lunches for children as a 'packed lunch'.
- School does not have the facilities to heat up lunches for children at dinnertime.

### **3.4. Afterschool Club**

We have an afterschool club serving nutritious, tasty, and school food standard compliant food.

- Our after-school club is run by school-based staff but the food is prepared by Leicester Traded Services.
- The snacks and food comply with the food standards.
- We have a guide for parents explaining how our after-school club runs.

### **3.5. Food Brought In**

Food brought in covers many different times within the school food environment and covers anything brought in by students, as well as provided by parents or staff. We strive to ensure that food brought into the school complies with school food standards [Appendix 1].

- School provides fruit as part of the national fruit scheme for EYFS/KS1 pupils.
- Children also bring in water from home and top up in school.
- Fizzy drinks are not allowed.

- Toast is provided for Year 6 pupils at SATs testing time.
- We discourage bringing in treats on their birthday to share with the class; we try to encourage healthy eating. We write to parents to consider alternatives.

This applies to the following occasions:

- Breaktimes
- Sports days/events
- School council meetings
- Exam or test days/weeks
- Discos
- End of term
- School trips
- Birthdays
- Proms

We also strive to ensure that healthy food and drink options are available at the following school events and celebrations:

- Fundraising events
- Seasonal celebrations [Christmas, Easter, Eid etc.]
- Summer and winter fair
- International events/Cultural week
- Charity weeks: E.g., Macmillan coffee morning

### **3.6. Water Only**

We are a water only school.

- We believe that drinking water is a healthy option. Fizzy drinks are not allowed. Children may bring fruity water into school if they wish.
- Breakfast and after-school club may have a glass of squash.
- Squash is also provided at after school events e.g. film night
- Staff and pupils are encouraged to drink water regularly.
- If required for a medical condition (diabetic children), specific plans are in place for individuals.

### **3.7. Reward Culture**

Studies have shown that rewarding with food can have a negative impact on a student's relationship with food. It can increase preferences for sweets, lead to overconsumption, teach students to eat when they are not hungry, and contribute to problematic thoughts and behaviours for those who are predisposed to disordered eating.

Taking this into consideration, our school avoids using food as a reward and asks staff to follow this policy. As an alternative, we use a positive praise system, where students receive postcards, additional experiences and praise.

#### **4. Allergies & Special Diets**

When talking about allergies and special diets, we are inclusive of all allergies, intolerances, cultural and religious diets as well as medical requirements, such as diabetes or blended diets.

- Care plans are completed for children with specific allergies.
- All staff complete the virtual response training annually.
- We are a 'nut free' school, encouraging parents not to send nut products into school and being mindful of ensuring nuts are not shared.

#### **5. Food Education**

Cooking and Nutrition is a compulsory subject within the primary Design & Technology curriculum [Appendix 3]. We teach this at an appropriate level throughout each key stage. There are opportunities for pupils to develop knowledge and understanding of health, including healthy eating, food provenance as well as practical skills such as designing, preparing and cooking predominantly savoury food.

- The cooking curriculum is progressive and planned by our Art and DT subject lead, meeting the requirements of the national curriculum whilst linking with the overarching theme of the unit.
- Food and healthy eating are also taught across the science and PSHE curriculum.

#### **6. Equal Opportunities**

We recognise the importance of all pupils, staff and visitors having equal access to inclusive opportunities. We want to ensure that everyone is catered for and feels valued when food and drink is provided in school, and across all aspects of food education.

Here are some example bullet points you could use:

- We practise vigilance, noting and acting if we see signs that any children are not eating well/is not well-nourished.
- We ensure that the food offer considers the diverse ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds of our students and the varying medical / dietary needs some may have.
- We ensure children and staff who are fasting are supported, allowing all to flourish spiritually and academically.
- We ensure pastoral and safeguarding staff know the signs of eating disorders and can signpost children and their families to help.

#### **7. Staff & Visitors Expectations**

All adults, including staff and external visitors, influence pupils' knowledge, skills and attitudes towards food and drink. Therefore, it is important that they have positive attitude, healthy role models. At every opportunity, they should promote healthy choices and reflect our philosophy and approach to food and nutrition.

## **10. Monitoring & Evaluation**

At each review point, we will identify any areas of improvement to ensure that we maintain a balanced and wholesome approach to food & drink in our school. We will consider take up of school food, pupil/parent feedback and our ever-changing student population during each review.

## **11. Appendix**

### **Appendix 1:**

The revised standards for school food came into force on 1 January 2015 and are set out here:

[School food standards practical guide - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[School-Food-Standards-Guidance-FINAL-V3.pdf \(schoolfoodplan.com\)](http://schoolfoodplan.com)

### **Appendix 2:**

[Free school meals: guidance for schools and local authorities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

### **Appendix 3:**

[National Curriculum - Design and technology key stages 1 to 2 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)

### **Appendix 4: Assurances from LTS**

Leicester Traded Services (LTS) have implemented a standard procedure that will be activated during the mobilisation period enabling parents to have direct access to our dietitians. They will provide parents with the necessary forms to enable any special dietary requirements to be highlighted and communicated with our onsite teams. Our procedure regarding allergen management is as follows:

- We request that a Medical Diet Referral Form is completed on our online portal along with documented medical evidence. This is an industry-wide standard and is essential for safeguarding children with an allergy who require a medical diet.
- We recognise that some parents may not have access to the internet or may find it difficult to make an application online. In this case, we will attend the school in the mobilisation week at the start and end of the school day, to allow parents to complete applications alongside our staff.
- Once the referral form has been received, an individualised meal plan and single choice menu will be created by our qualified dietitian to meet the needs of the pupil. A meeting will take place between the school, LTS Catering and parent/carer if required.

- A copy of the approved menu will be issued to the school, parent and kitchen.
- Our Area Manager will then brief the Head of Kitchen of the agreed medical diet menu and agree a date for when this will become effective.
- When the menu is updated, the pupil's medical diet menu will automatically be reviewed and updated.

Our policies and procedures are implemented in partnership with school cooperation, which will include ensuring that a photo of each pupil with an allergy is placed behind the service counter (with permission from pupil parents/carers) with details of the food exclusion required, to help with identification of the pupil during service delivery, via a visual prompt. Our dietitians use Saffron Spice, a specialised programme that manages the allergen process and creates a bespoke allergen matrix per site. All ingredients are logged in the system, along with any allergies contained within them, in line with Food Information Regulations 2014. When compiling menus/recipes, the Saffron system instantly highlights and reflects the allergen content within each meal, ensuring we can be accurate and consistent with meals we deliver, understanding which allergens are present, and creating alternative, allergen free options where possible.

We have developed a great working relationship with our suppliers who understand the importance of communication to our dietetic team if food items or specifications change. This enables us to update the system in real time and communicate all changes to our school kitchens via our Cypad Kitchen Manager system. Our units have restricted order forms per site so they can only order approved items, which enables us to control and monitor ingredients being used within our special dietary requirements. Our internal auditor checks that all special diets are being provided, and all the correct procedures are being adhered to.

In addition, the use of a pre-ordering system further supports effective allergen management as meal choices are made in advance, with allergens flagged at the time of ordering, ensuring pupils are only able to select meals that are suitable for them. Alongside the pre order system (and with agreement of the school), we implement bands. These are worn by the pupils and identify the meal choice selected for the day, we would implement a purple band for the medical diet pupils this then would highlight to the kitchen staff upon service that that particular child has a tailored menu. The bands are very discrete, but are invaluable in ensuring that our staff never inadvertently serve an incorrect meal to a child.

We have a process in place in all of our production sites which demonstrates who prepares the medical diet and who then serves to the pupil, this allows kitchen staff to take full responsibility and we have a full audit trail on our Cypad Kitchen Manager system, details of the completed form can be exported and provided to schools/parents if required.

## Provision of nutritional support

All of our catering teams participate in an extensive special diet training programme, ensuring that our staff are familiar with the various special dietary needs they may encounter and are aware of the 14 allergens, ensuring they are sufficiently knowledgeable on the subject to advise pupils appropriately. In addition to this training, our catering teams are also supplied with reference materials and a range of sample recipes to ensure they can prepare alternative menu items that meet the specific requirements of individual pupils and advice to pupils at the point of service.

If a student does raise a query regarding allergens, staff are able to provide specific information regarding meals being served each day. As part of a daily briefing before service, an allergen summary form will be completed, which will detail which allergens are present in every item on offer, including garnishes. This information will be communicated with all staff to ensure correct information is given out to students. They are also able to physically show the allergen matrix to the student as up to date evidence of checks completed.

In addition, our dietitians are happy to consult with any parent/carer regarding allergens or special dietary requirements within our service provision, ensuring we provide the most effective nutritional support to pupils at all times.

We are committed to providing inclusive meal options that cater to the diverse dietary needs of all pupils and staff. We have a comprehensive approach to ensure that un-stunned halal meat, vegetarian and vegan meal options are available each day as well as accommodating special diets for ethnic, cultural, religious beliefs and medical dietary needs.

## Provision of Un-Stunned Halal Meat

- **Sourcing and Certification:** We source un-stunned halal meat from certified suppliers, our main supplier being Spice Time who adhere to rigorous halal standards, this ensures that the meat provided meets the religious requirements of Muslim pupils and staff, information about the halal products can be accessed through link <https://halalhmc.org/>
- **Segregation and Preparation:** Kitchens that provide halal provision have dedicated areas and utensils for the preparation of meals to avoid cross-contamination. Staff members handling halal meat are trained in the specific requirements of halal food preparation.
- **Menu Options:** Halal meal options are clearly marked on menus with a specific colour coded line, making it easy for pupils and staff to identify and choose these options.

### Vegetarian and Vegan Meal Options:

- **Menu Design:** We offer a variety of vegetarian and vegan meal options daily. These meal options are designed to be nutritionally balanced and appealing, and also offering a satisfying healthy choice
- **Ingredient Sourcing:** We only source high quality plant-based ingredients to create tasty and nutritious meals. Suppliers are selected based on their commitment to sustainability and ethical practices.

### Special Diets for Ethnic, Cultural, and Religious Beliefs:

- **Diverse Menu Offerings:** Our menus include a wide range of dishes that reflect the cultural and religious diversity of our pupil population, this includes meals that are suitable for various ethnic cuisines. We can work with individual schools to develop the menu that best fits the pupils' requirements, we can offer a non-pork, non-beef menu and with the expertise of the school cooks further develop our Asian vegetarian offer.
- **Community Engagement:** We engage with pupils, parents and community leaders to understand the specific dietary needs and preferences, feedback received is then used to inform menu planning per site and ensure cultural sensitivity.