

The Drive Primary School

Healthy Eating and Drinking Policy

September 2026 – September 2027

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Statement of intent

At The Drive Community Primary, we will support pupils to eat healthily and keep hydrated while in school. We also aim to teach pupils to make healthy food and drink choices using the curriculum and to reflect these principles in the school's food menu and cooking provisions.

We acknowledge the important connection between a healthy diet and a pupil's ability to learn, concentrate, and achieve high standards in school. We are, therefore, committed to promoting a lasting healthy lifestyle for everyone.

As part of our healthy eating and living campaign, our catering will uphold the highest standards of quality, nutrition and cleanliness; adhering, without exception, to food standards and legal obligations. As such, this policy has been implemented to help staff and parents deliver consistent messages to pupils, enabling them to develop a positive and independent approach to a healthy lifestyle.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Requirements for School Food Regulations 2014
- The Food Information (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2019 (Natasha's Law)
- Food Safety Act 1990
- School Standards and Framework Act 1998

This policy operates in conjunction with the following non-statutory guidance:

- DfE (2021) 'School food in England'
- DfE (2021) 'School food standards practical guide'
- The School Plan (2014) 'School Food Standards: A practical guide for schools, their cooks and caterers'

2. Our aims

The school will adopt the following aims:

- Integrate a whole-school ethos towards healthy eating; therefore, helping both staff and pupils to perform well, concentrate better and improve general wellbeing.
- Ensure all pupils to be well nourished and hydrated, and to ensure they have access to nutritious food and safe drinking water during the school day.
- Encourage pupils to make informed food and drink choices in school and at home, contributing to life-long healthy eating habits.
- Use the curriculum to teach pupils safe, hygienic methods of preparing, handling and storing food, and to inform them about the benefits of choosing healthy options.
- Ensure there are consistent messages about healthy eating throughout the school.
- Keep food, health, and nutrition aspects of the curriculum up-to-date.
- Ensure the school reflects the ethical, medical, and religious dietary requirements of staff and pupils, and that suitable provisions are available.
- Celebrate diversity with cuisines from different cultures and other individual choices, e.g. vegetarianism, encouraging pupils to learn about and try new foods.
- Encourage fluid intake and help pupils keep hydrated, maintain concentration, reduce lethargy, and learn effectively.
- Inform staff and parents which provisions are permitted in school and to ensure they can effectively monitor what pupils are eating.
- Encourage staff to participate in our healthy eating ethos and act as role models to pupils.

3. Healthy eating statement

The school uses healthier cooking methods to contribute to healthy eating, such as the following:

- Using less fat in cooking
- Baking foods rather than frying them

- Where fats are used, increasing the use of healthier varieties
- Reducing the use of sugar in recipes
- Avoiding using additional salt in cooking processes
- Increasing the use of food items containing high amounts of fibre

All menus are developed in accordance with the nutritional standards set by The School Food Plan in 'School Food Standards: A practical guide for schools, their cooks and caterers', which are outlined in the Whole-school Food Policy.

The school encourages pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles, both through a nutritional diet and regular exercise, and during assemblies, PE lessons and PSHE.

The school adopts a healthy eating strategy and embeds its principles throughout the curriculum.

4. Drinks

The school teaches pupils the importance of drinking plenty of fluids and how hydration helps contribute to effective learning, good health and improved physical performance.

The school provides safe drinking water throughout the school day. This is available via drinking fountains around the school, in water jugs placed on dining hall tables, and from taps labelled 'drinking water'. Staff have access to drinking water via a water cooler in the staff room.

Semi-skimmed and lactose-free milk is available to drink once a day at lunchtime.

The school encourages pupils to consume extra fluids on hot days and during and after physical activity, e.g. PE and sports days.

Pupils are encouraged to bring bottled water with them to school. This can be consumed in the classroom and in the dining hall.

Pupils are permitted to refill water bottles via drinking fountains during the school day.

Drinks with added sugar are not available with school meals.

The school does not permit fizzy drinks in bottles or cans on the premises at any time. These items will be confiscated by staff and returned to the pupil at the end of the school day.

The school understands the importance of healthy development for pupils under the age of five in an early years setting. In line with the Nursery Milk Scheme set by the Department of Health and Social Care, one third of a pint of milk will be offered free of charge, once per day, for all pupils.

5. Breaktime snacks

The school encourages pupils to eat a snack at breaktime. As part of our healthy eating ethos, this will be a piece of fruit or vegetable without added sugar, fat or salt.

The school does not permit any other snacks to be eaten at breaktime. Snacks that are not in line with our Healthy Eating and Drinking Policy will be confiscated by staff and returned to the pupil at the end of the school day.

In line with the government's 'School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme', a piece of fresh fruit or vegetable is available to pupils aged four to six at morning breaktime.

6. Lunch

All school meals meet the national guidelines for nutritional standards and food safety regulations. Our meals are supplied by Gateshead Local Authority School Meal Service and prepared by fully trained catering staff.

School meals include two portions of fruit, vegetables or salad per meal.

Portion sizes are in line with the School Food Standards to help provide pupils with a nutritionally balanced meal and prevent excessive calorie intake. Portion sizes and food groups are outlined in the Whole-school Food Policy.

School meals include foods that are naturally rich in vitamins and minerals to support pupils' health and physical development.

The school provides pupils with drinking water, semi-skimmed milk, or sugar-free fruit juice with their meal. Additional water is available from jugs on dining hall tables.

Dining staff monitor pupils' food intake during lunchtime by allowing them only to leave their table once they are finished eating. If a pupil is not eating well, the school will notify their parents via phone call.

Themed meals and meals served to celebrate festivals, holidays, or religious observances follow the same standards applied to regular school meals.

Pupils are not permitted to bring chocolate, sweets, and other confectionary as part of a packed lunch. Food items that are not in line with our Healthy Eating and Drinking Policy will be confiscated by dining staff and returned to the pupil at the end of the school day.

The school does not permit fizzy drinks in bottles or cans as part of a packed lunch. These items will be confiscated by dining staff and returned to the pupil at the end of the school day.

The school allows still drinks in cartons, plastic bottles and flasks as part of a pupil's packed lunch.

Pupils bringing in a packed lunch have access to additional water. This can be found in water jugs on dining hall tables.

To allow parents and catering staff to monitor what has been eaten, pupils will put their litter in their lunchboxes and return them to the lunch trolley. If staff feel that a pupil is not eating well, we will notify their parents via phone call.

Pupils are not permitted to share or swap any food, including that provided from home in a packed lunch or snacks.

7. Packed lunches

The school will apply its healthy eating principles to packed lunches and is committed to improving the quality of packed lunches that pupils consume. The standards of packed lunches will comply with the nutrition standards of school lunches.

Parents will be provided with clear guidance on providing a healthy packed lunch, and will be expected to provide their child with healthy packed lunches containing recommended food groups.

In line with the School Food Standards, packed lunches will contain the following:

- One portion of fruit, vegetable or salad
- Meat, fish or another source of non-dairy protein
- Carbohydrates, such as bread, pasta, rice or potatoes
- Dairy, such as cheese, yoghurt or custard
- Oily fish, e.g. smoked salmon, at least once every three weeks
- Only water, fruit juice, semi-skimmed or skimmed milk, yoghurt drinks or smoothies

Snacks in packed lunches will comply with this policy. The following food and drink are not permitted:

- Confectionary items such as sweets
- Carbonated drinks or those containing high levels of caffeine

Staff will monitor regularly the contents of pupils' packed lunches to ensure they are healthy and balanced and comply with this policy. Food that is not compliant will be confiscated and returned to the pupil at the end of the day. Alternative food items will be provided. If a pupil brings a lunch that is completely inappropriate, the school will provide a replacement meal for which parents will be charged. Concerns about the contents of a pupil's packed lunch will be dealt with appropriately and proportionately. The pupil's parent will be contacted via a letter or phone call to remind them of the need to follow the school's policy. If a pupil's packed lunch continues not to be appropriate, the school will contact the parents to arrange a meeting to discuss the matter further.

8. Treats and prizes

Chocolate, sweets, and other confectionary may be used as rewards. The school encourages staff to award pupils with alternative treats such as extra break time, stickers, or stationary.

Pupils are permitted to bring in confectionary items as treats for their classmates – these include birthdays and gifts brought back off holiday.

9. Exemptions

The school recognises the following exemptions to the Healthy Eating and Drinking Policy:

- Food, drink and treats at parties or celebrations to mark religious or cultural occasions
- Provisions at fund-raising events
- Treats as rewards for achievement, good behaviour or effort

- Provisions used when teaching food preparation and cookery skills, including where the food is served to pupils as part of a school lunch
- Food and drinks provided on an occasional basis by parents or pupils

10. Curriculum

The school's Healthy Eating and Drinking Policy is integrated into our curriculum. This will be achieved through the following teaching areas:

- PSHE
- PE
- Science
- D&T

The school communicates how to lead a healthy lifestyle and make good food choices via the following:

- School assembly
- Sending school menus home
- Parents can view menu from up to 8 weeks in advance on the Plus Pay System
- Staff as role models

11. Allergies and dietary requirements

The school ensures the correct food safety measures are in place, in line with the Allergen and Anaphylaxis Policy and the Health and Safety Policy, to protect pupils with known allergies, intolerances, anaphylaxis, diabetes and other medical conditions associated with diet.

Foods that are pre-packed for direct sale (PPDS) will be labelled in line with the requirements of The Food Information (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2019, known as Natasha's Law, as outlined in the Whole-school Food Policy.

Parents provide the school with a written list of any foods their child may have an adverse reaction to, as well as the necessary actions to be taken in the event of an allergic reaction, such as any medication required.

The school's chosen catering service is responsible for ensuring that the school's policies are adhered to at all times, including those in relation to the preparation of food, taking into account any allergens.

Learning activities which involve the use of food, such as food technology lessons, are planned in accordance with pupils' IHP's, accounting for any known allergies of the pupils involved.

Treats for effort or good behaviour are awarded in accordance with pupils' IHP's, including known allergies.

12. Communication with parents

The school will communicate any changes and updates to this policy via letter.

The school will update the website with healthy eating recommendations to parents every.

The school will inform parents via letter or phone call if concerns are raised about their child not eating well.

The school will inform parents via letter or text message which foods are not permitted as part of packed lunches, and how they will be returned once confiscated.

The school will involve parents in the healthy eating ethos, enabling them to provide consistent messaging about healthy choices at home.

Parents will keep the school updated with any changes to their child's dietary requirements, including allergies, and any cultural, religious, or ethical food requirements.

Parents will inform the headteacher via phone call if they are concerned their child is not eating well during the school day.

13. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher and governing board, or in light of any changes to relevant legislation.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is June 2027.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to catering providers, kitchen staff, parents and other stakeholders, where necessary.