

WALFORD NURSERY & PRIMARY SCHOOL



Policy for Food and Healthy Eating in EYFS

Reviewed and Updated: June 2025

Date for Review: June 2026

*Learning and Enjoyment...
Every Child, Every Opportunity, Every Day!*

'Children's early years provide an important foundation for their future health and strongly influence many aspects of well-being. The food children eat in their earliest years shapes their future health - their tastes and eating habits formed early in life can have consequences for growth, development, health and academic achievement in later life.'

Children's Food Trust Survey (Dec 2015)

Context

Following the Government's policy on nutritional standards for lunches in schools, the Children's Food Trust was set up in 2005 to make recommendations for all food available during the school day.

They support schools in developing a whole school approach to food and health. The school environment, behaviour of staff and the messages that children receive through the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum), all play a vital role in influencing children's knowledge and understanding of health and nutrition.

'Every child has a right to nutritious food. When children eat better, they do better: they're in better shape to reach their potential. By getting them eating well today, we're creating the healthier adults of tomorrow: adults who are less likely to suffer health conditions linked to poor diet.'

Children's Food Trust (2016)

At Walford Nursery & Primary School, we believe the principles of healthy eating is eating a wider range of healthy food to provide a balance of nutrients. Our children have opportunities to find out about the origins of foods, to explore sensorial, to prepare healthy snacks for their peers and share together as an EYFS community.

Aim

At Walford, we recognise that snack times are an important part of a child's day. It is a social time for children to enjoy food. We aim to provide healthy, balanced, varied and nutritious food and drinks which meet the children's needs, encouraging them to develop healthy lifestyles and promote wellbeing throughout their life. We meet the welfare requirements outlined in the EYFS on food and drink.

Objectives

- For children to be offered the opportunity to try a wide variety of healthy snacks.
- For children to have the opportunity to experience foods which raise their awareness of other cultures.
- For fresh drinking water to be available, at all times.
- Where possible, for staff to sit with children while they eat and provide a good role model for healthy eating and good table manners.

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- For staff to engage children, parents and carers in open discussion about the importance of healthy eating habits.
- For children to be encouraged to develop good eating habits and be given plenty of time to eat.
- For children to be taught about the importance of washing their hands prior to eating and how to use good manners.
- For children to be given the opportunity to prepare healthy snacks and serve their peers.
- For parents / carers of children who are on special diets or have allergies, to be asked to provide as much information as possible about suitable foods, and in some circumstances to provide the food themselves.
- For healthy food options to be used in all activities whenever possible: in play, language, cooking and other events.
- For staff handling food to have appropriate food hygiene training and certification.
- For snack areas to be kept in a hygienic condition, at all times.
- For children to prepare snacks independently, using appropriate tools.
- For snack preparation and communal meal time to be an opportunity to develop social skills and for speaking and listening to be developed.

Snacks

A selection of snacks are offered in order to encourage children to be independent in making choices about their diet. A drink of milk or water is available which children are encouraged to pour for themselves. Cups and feeding resources are developmentally appropriate and children are supported in Physical Development milestones. Cups, plates, bowls and metal cutlery are encouraged from the age of 3, to ensure children have a 'home from home' meal time experience. Children are encouraged to develop their responsibility by taking ownership of their meal / snack time resources.

Dietary Requirements

Key Workers and parents / carers discuss children's individual dietary requirements on a child's admission to nursery. We aim to cater for any other special dietary requirements. Parents / carers, who wish to bring in food from home, due to dietary requirements, may do so in consultation with the child's Key Worker, in order to ensure food is nutritious and well-balanced. This food will then be stored safely, according to food hygiene regulations.

Packed Lunch Boxes

If children bring a packed lunch, we will store them safely, according to food hygiene regulations.

Water

Fresh drinking water is freely available throughout the day. We encourage and support children to drink throughout sessions, particularly during hot weather.

Environment for Eating

Hygiene

At Walford, food hygiene is considered of upmost importance. Staff who handle or serve food hold a food hygiene certification which is renewed every three years. All food is stored safely, in accordance with environmental regulations. Fridge temperatures are monitored on a daily basis. Preparation areas are kept free of other clutter and are cleaned with environmental regulation cleaner.

Safety

All sharp knives and kitchen appliances are stored safely in the kitchen, out of reach of our children. The door to the kitchen can only be accessed by staff using a key code. Knives used by children in the preparation of snack are designed for use by children. We also use peelers in the preparation of vegetables. Children are taught to use these tools appropriately and are always supervised when involved in the preparation of fruit and vegetables.

Children are never left unsupervised whilst eating or drinking. Staff refreshments / foods are kept in the staff room and staff eat and drink in that location only.

Fussy Eating

Fussy eating is part of children's development and affects 10 - 20% of all children under five years of age. We recognise this and encourage children to try foods in a variety of ways by:

- involving the children in the preparation of healthy food;
- seating children around a table, so that fussy eaters have good eating habits modelled by their friends;
- giving children a smaller portion of a new food to try;
- regularly serving a new food for children to try;
- praising children who try something new;
- never forcing children to eat;
- never asking a child to eat 'quickly;'
- providing reward stickers for children who have eaten all of their food. We want children to learn to eat to feel full and satisfied and develop their autonomy.
- staff eating snack with the children; we give feedback to parents / carers about how well their child has eaten at snack time.

Where families report concerns regarding eating at home, the school may seek advice from the School Nurse, Health Visiting team or Paediatric Osteopath.

Learning Through Food

At Walford, we integrate learning about food through the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum in the following ways:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Snack times offer children experiences to taste different foods, overcome dislikes and learn how to share. Cooking activities offer opportunities for learning through working with others and increasing self-esteem.

Communication and Language

Through sitting children around a table to eat, we can teach conversation and social skills. Many stories involve food. We use these to teach children about ingredients, where food comes from and about food from different cultures. Language is developed and senses explored through discussing and describing the taste, texture, size, look and smell of food.

Mathematics

We use opportunities such as counting out cups or pieces of fruit at snack time to support numeracy skills. Weighing and measuring quantities of food when following recipes. Through sorting and matching foods into different types, we encourage organisational skills and reasoning.

Understanding the World

Through exploring the seasons, we explore where food comes from, life cycles, gardening and how to care for plants. In learning about the world, we also explore which food comes from other countries and food from different cultures. We use ICT to support children's knowledge and understanding of where food comes from and about the importance of eating healthily. We also focus on what happens with our leftover food.

Physical Development

Fine and gross motor movements are developed through activities such as pouring drinks, gardening, using knives, forks and spoons, as well as preparing food and washing up. Snack times are used as an opportunity to help children make healthy food choices.

Expressive Arts and Design

Through creative activities, we can engage children with food to explore colour, shape, form and texture.

Useful websites

www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk

This is an organisation which provides guidance on food in schools. We use their ideas and portion sizes for snacks.

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www.healthystart.nhs.uk/

This is an NHS website. It provides information on healthy choices, gives tips, recipes, vouchers and information on vitamins.

www.nhs.uk/Planners/birthtofive/Pages/Vitamins.aspx

This is an NHS article on vitamins for children under five. It gives guidance and links to other information about health for young children.

www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/food-labelling.aspx

Again, this is an NHS article which explains food nutrition labels. There are links to other food related topics.

www.rhs.org.uk/Children

This is the website for the Royal Horticultural Society (gardening). It has activities for families, fun children's activities, ideas for what to grow and resources you can buy online.

Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved every year.

This policy was adopted by the Standards, Teaching & Learning Committee of the Governing Body of Walford Nursery & Primary School in June 2025.

Signed:

Chair of Standards, Teaching and Learning Committee