



## **St Gabriel's Catholic Primary School**

### **Pre-School Food and Nutrition Policy**

## Mission Statement

### *'Nurturing Hearts and Minds'*

God's love is at the heart of all that we do at St Gabriel's Catholic Primary School.

Hearts and Minds are nurtured in a stimulating and safe environment. We believe that every child is unique and we nurture each child through a creative and rounded curriculum to reach their full potential. Talents are celebrated and differences are respected within a strong, supportive Catholic community.

At St Gabriel's, children learn to love, respect and care for each other and God's entire world. Our school is a place where children are filled with a love of life and learning.

# Food and Nutrition Policy

## Introduction

At St Gabriel's Catholic Primary School and Pre-School, we are committed to supporting children's health, development, and well-being through the provision of nutritious, balanced, and age-appropriate food. We follow the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the updated 2025 Nutrition Guidance for Early Years Providers to ensure the food and drink we provide meets the highest standards.

Providing healthy, balanced and nutritious food ensures that all children:

- Get the right amount of nutrients and energy they need while they are growing rapidly, which is especially important for children who might not have access to healthy food at home. This can help prevent children from becoming overweight or obese.
- Develop positive eating habits early on. Children's early experiences with food can shape future eating habits. This can impact children's long-term health including maintaining a healthy weight, and good oral health.

The early years are a crucial time to reduce health inequalities and set the foundations for a lifetime of good health.

## Our Values

*St Gabriel's Catholic Primary School and Pre-School*

### Aims:

- Promote lifelong healthy eating habits from an early age.
- Provide meals and snacks that meet children's nutritional, cultural, and dietary needs.
- Comply with statutory guidance on food and drink for children under five.
- Partner with families to support and respect children's individual food requirements.
- Encourage a positive, inclusive, and sociable dining experience.

We provide:

- Healthy, balanced meals and snacks based on the four food groups: fruit and vegetables, starchy foods, proteins, and dairy.
- Age-appropriate portion sizes.

- Water freely available throughout the day, and milk at designated snack times.
- Hot dinners are provided by our kitchen staff who work for Chartwells, their menus rotate every 3 weeks and are reviewed termly.
- At breakfast club we serve cereals that are green labelled 'salt' and 'sugar' items only. Breakfast offered consists of white or brown toast, Weetabix or Shreaded Wheat and fruit. At Afterschool club children are offered a light snack of fruit, cracker, rice cake or breadstick.
- At snack time in Reception and Pre-School children are offered morning fruit. Pre-School have an afternoon snack consisting of a cracker, breadstick or rice cake.

We avoid:

- Foods high in sugar, salt, or saturated fats.
- Artificial sweeteners and sugary drinks.

### **Choking hazards**

The choking hazards sheet is put up in our kitchen and is shared with Parents who prepare a packed lunches for their children.

### **Paediatric first aid**

A qualified paediatric first aider will be present at all times in the room during all snack and meal times.

### **Supervision when eating**

An adult will always supervise children closely when they are eating. Staff will face children while they eat to monitor for choking hazards, prevent food sharing and quickly identify any allergic reactions.

### **Special Dietary Needs and Allergies**

- We maintain a current list of children's allergies, intolerances, and cultural dietary needs.
- Allergen information is displayed and followed in food preparation areas.
- All staff receive training in allergy management and emergency response.
- We work closely with parents and healthcare professionals to develop individual care plans as needed.

## **Learning and Mealtime Environment**

- Mealtimes are a key learning opportunity and are used to teach children about healthy food, hygiene, and manners.
- Children are encouraged to try new foods and take part in preparing simple snacks or meals.
- We support children to serve themselves where appropriate, promoting independence.
- Positive role modelling and discussions about food and health are encouraged.
- Mealtimes are social, inclusive, and calm.
- Independence is promoted by encouraging children to serve themselves where age-appropriate.

## **Guidance for children aged 1 to 5 years**

### A healthy plate

We encourage children to eat a balanced diet containing a wide variety of foods. We plan meals and snacks that include a variety of food and drinks from the 4 main food groups every day. The more children try new foods, the wider the range of nutrients they will get from their meals. We will have children eat together in our school dinner hall. This encourages them to try foods that they might not try at home. For example, children who won't touch broccoli at home might happily try some if they see their peers eating it.

## **Partnership with Parents and Carers**

- Menus are shared regularly with families.
- We provide information on healthy lunchbox choices (for children bringing food from home).
- Families are consulted about dietary needs, food preferences, and cultural or religious requirements.
- We signpost parents to external guidance and support where appropriate.

## **Sustainability**

- We aim to reduce food waste and promote recycling in food-related activities.
- Our menus favour seasonal, locally sourced, and sustainably produced ingredients where possible.

## **Cooking with Children**

- Cooking and food preparation activities are part of our curriculum.
- These activities promote fine motor skills, maths, science, and cultural learning.
- Health and safety guidelines are followed at all times.

### **Celebrations and Special Occasions**

- We celebrate in healthy and inclusive ways.
- Families are encouraged to share culturally significant foods that meet our nutrition and allergy guidelines.

### **Cultural and Dietary Preferences**

- We respect and accommodate dietary needs related to religion, culture, and ethical beliefs.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

- This policy is reviewed annually or in response to updated statutory guidance.
- Menus and food practices are reviewed regularly and adapted based on feedback and nutritional standards.
- Compliance is monitored by the leadership team through regular audits.
- All staff are kept informed of any updates to guidance or training requirements.

### **Key References**

- Statutory Framework for the EYFS (2024, effective September 2024)
- Nutrition Guidance for Early Years Providers (DfE, 2025)
- Example Menus for Early Years Settings (Public Health England, 2025)
- Food Standards Agency: Safer Food Better Business
- Eat Better, Start Better (Public Health England / Action for Children)
- Start for Life - NHS

Date of Review \_\_\_\_\_