



EYFS FOOD AND NUTRITION POLICY

*Supporting healthy
growth from the
start*

September 2026

Policy review date: September 2027

Signed by the Chair of Governors _____

Signed by the Headteacher _____

Introduction

At St Anne's 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

Through our daily provision and learning opportunities St Anne's recognise the need for clear aims and provision.

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 (for pupils in Reception in receipt of Universal School Meals)
- Age-appropriate portion sizes.
- Water freely available throughout the day, and milk at designated snack times.

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- Menus that rotate every 3-4 weeks and are reviewed termly.
- Guidance on providing a healthy, balanced packed lunch for Nursery parents and the parents of children in Reception who opt out of Universal School Meals.

We avoid:

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

Our food provision reflects the guidance in 'Example Menus for Early Years Settings' and supports healthy growth and development.

Cutting food safely when introducing solid foods

When appropriate, we will make sure to cut food into small, bite sized pieces. When preparing food, we note that it is important to avoid round shapes as these are a choking hazard.

We will cut small fruits lengthways and then halve again (quarters).

These fruits include:

- grapes
- raspberries
- strawberries
- cherry tomatoes.

Paediatric first aid

A qualified paediatric first aider will be present at all times in the room during all snack and mealtimes and be in a position to oversee and observe all children.

Supervision when eating

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

Special Dietary Needs and Allergies

- Parents must inform school of all allergies and food allergens/intolerances that affect or may affect their child. If there are any changes to this information at any time, parents must inform school immediately. This includes if there is a required change to a child's medicine or plan in response to a known food allergy/intolerance.
- We maintain a current list of children's allergies, intolerances, and cultural

dietary needs.

- Allergen information is displayed and followed in food preparation areas and is made known to all staff.
- 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.
- Children sit together with staff who model positive eating behaviours.
- Independence is promoted by encouraging children to serve themselves where age-appropriate.

Guidance for children aged 3 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 setting. 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 and feedback is welcomed.
- 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.

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Sustainability

- We aim to reduce food waste and promote recycling in food-related activities.

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 always followed .

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.
- Parents are consulted to ensure inclusive meal planning.

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 (2026, effective September 2026)
- 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