Barkisland CE VA Primary School

Food and Healthy Eating Policy

1. Our vision and purpose

At Barkisland CE VA Primary School, our vision is *"we nurture and we believe."* We believe that providing children with healthy, balanced food and developing positive attitudes towards eating are important parts of nurturing their physical health, emotional wellbeing and readiness to learn.

This policy sets out our expectations and arrangements for food and drink across all school provisions. We aim to ensure that every child has access to appropriate, nutritious food and drinking water in a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment.

The policy aims to:

- Promote healthy, balanced eating and positive lifelong attitudes towards food.
- Support children's physical growth, development, concentration and learning.
- Ensure that food provision is appropriate for children's ages and developmental needs.
- Maintain high standards of food hygiene, food safety and allergy management.
- Respect cultural, religious, medical and individual dietary requirements.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers to support children's health and wellbeing.
- Ensure consistent expectations across the school day and all extended provision.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all pupils, nursery children, staff, volunteers, parents, carers and other adults involved in the preparation, provision, supervision or consumption of food and drink at Barkisland CE VA Primary School.

It covers:

- Barkisland CE VA Primary School.
- Little Lambs Nursery.
- School-provided meals and packed lunches.
- Breakfast Club.
- After-school Kids Club.
- Holiday Club.
- Food and drink provided during school trips, educational visits and residential visits.
- Food brought into school for celebrations, fundraising or special events.
- Food preparation and cooking activities undertaken as part of the curriculum or childcare provision.

The policy applies throughout the school day and during all school-run childcare provision, including holiday periods.

This policy must be read alongside the school's **Allergy Safety Policy** and **Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy**. Where food provision or food-related activities involve a child with a known or suspected allergy, the relevant requirements of the Allergy Safety Policy, individual healthcare plan (IHP), Allergy Action Plan and associated risk assessments must be followed.

The Allergy Safety Policy is the principal reference for allergy identification, allergen risk reduction, medication, individual arrangements and emergency responses.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Governing Body

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to support children's health, wellbeing and safety.
- Provide oversight of the implementation of this policy.
- Review the policy in accordance with the school's policy review cycle.

Headteacher and School Leadership Team

The Headteacher and School Leadership Team will:

- Ensure that food provision and associated practices comply with relevant requirements and guidance.
- Ensure that staff understand and follow this policy.
- Oversee arrangements for food hygiene, allergies and special diets.
- Ensure that appropriate risk assessments and individual healthcare arrangements are in place where required.
- Work with catering providers, parents and relevant professionals to address concerns.
- Monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the policy.

Allergy Lead

The school's Allergy Lead is **Mrs Jessica Stott**.

The Allergy Lead coordinates allergy safety arrangements in accordance with the separate Allergy Safety Policy, including the allergy register, relevant healthcare plans, staff awareness, allergen risk reduction and emergency medication arrangements.

Staff must refer to the Allergy Safety Policy and seek guidance from the Allergy Lead where they have questions or concerns about allergy management.

Catering and childcare staff

All staff involved in food preparation, serving or supervision will:

- Follow relevant food hygiene, food safety and allergen procedures.
- Promote positive, age-appropriate healthy eating messages.
- Ensure children have access to drinking water.

- Respect children's dietary requirements and individual needs.
- Supervise eating and drinking appropriately, taking account of children's ages and developmental stages.
- Report concerns about allergies, food safety, inadequate food provision or a child's wellbeing to the appropriate member of staff.
- Never use food as a punishment or means of coercion.

Parents and carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Inform the school of allergies, intolerances, medical conditions and dietary requirements.
- Provide suitable packed lunches where this is the chosen meal arrangement.
- Give the school 2 weeks' notice if changing the school meal choice (School meals or packed lunches)
- Follow the school's guidance regarding prohibited foods and allergens.
- Ensure that any food brought into school is appropriate for the child's age and needs.
- Work with school staff to support safe and healthy eating.
- Keep the school informed of any changes to their child's medical or dietary needs.

Children

Children will be encouraged, in ways appropriate to their age and development, to:

- Make healthy food and drink choices.
- Develop independence and positive eating habits.
- Respect the different dietary needs of others.
- Follow food safety and hygiene routines.
- Avoid sharing or swapping food and drinks.

4. Promoting healthy eating

The school encourages a balanced diet based on a variety of foods, appropriate portion sizes and regular opportunities to eat and drink.

Healthy eating messages will be promoted through everyday routines, conversations, curriculum learning and relevant activities.

Children will be encouraged to understand the importance of:

- Eating a variety of fruit and vegetables.
- Including sources of protein, such as meat, fish, eggs, beans and pulses.
- Choosing suitable starchy foods, including wholegrain options where appropriate.
- Eating dairy products or suitable alternatives.
- Drinking water regularly.

- Enjoying a balanced diet that includes a variety of foods.
- Understanding that food provides energy and nutrients needed for growth, development and learning.

Staff will use positive, age-appropriate language about food. They will not shame children about their food choices, body size, appetite, eating habits or family circumstances.

Children will not be forced to eat, finish meals or try particular foods. Staff will encourage children to explore new foods sensitively, respecting individual needs, sensory differences, medical advice and developmental stages.

The school recognises that food poverty, family circumstances, cultural practices, neurodiversity and medical needs can affect children's eating habits. Concerns will be approached sensitively and supportively.

5. School Meals and Catering Provision

Barkisland CE VA Primary School is fortunate to have its own in-house catering team, who prepare and cook school meals freshly on site each day. Wherever possible, locally sourced produce and fresh seasonal ingredients are used to provide nutritious, balanced and appealing meals for our children.

Our menus operate on a two-week cycle and are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect the seasons, the availability of fresh produce and suggestions from the children. We value pupil voice and aim to provide meals that children enjoy, whilst promoting healthy eating and introducing them to a variety of foods.

Each day, children can choose from **two hot meal options and five vegetable choices**. A jacket potato option is also available daily, alongside a grab-bag style lunch, which may include a sandwich, wrap or baguette, yoghurt and fruit. Two dessert choices are offered each day. Children having school meals also have access to bread, fruit and vegetables to supplement their meal, as appropriate.

Our menus are published on the school website so that parents and carers can view the choices available.

4.1 School meal charges and entitlement

School meals are chargeable for children attending Little Lambs Nursery and pupils in Years 3 to 6, unless they are eligible for means-tested Free School Meals.

Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to Universal Infant Free School Meals, funded by the government, regardless of their family's income.

In addition, children whose parents or carers receive certain qualifying benefits may be eligible for means-tested Free School Meals. Qualifying benefits include:

- Income Support.
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance.
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance.
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit.
- Child Tax Credit, provided the parent is not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and has an annual gross income of no more than £16,190.
- Working Tax Credit run-on, paid for four weeks after a person stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit.
- Universal Credit, subject to the applicable income threshold and transitional protection arrangements.

Eligibility rules can change, so parents and carers are encouraged to contact the school office for advice about checking entitlement and applying.

Information relating to Free School Meal eligibility is treated confidentially. The school handles applications sensitively and ensures that a child's entitlement is not unnecessarily disclosed to other pupils or families. Eligible families are encouraged to apply, as entitlement may also provide access to additional school funding and support for the child.

4.2 Choosing school meals

The school uses an electronic meal selection form, completed every fortnight, to record children's choices in advance. This enables the catering team to plan ingredients, manage food waste, prepare appropriate quantities and ensure that children receive a meal they have selected, regardless of their allocated lunchtime sitting.

Parents and carers select meals electronically for children attending Little Lambs Nursery through to Year 2. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make their own selections in school, with appropriate support where needed.

Advance meal selection also supports the safe management of allergies and dietary requirements by helping staff and the catering team plan meals in accordance with the information available to them. Individual healthcare plans, the school's Allergy Safety Policy and any relevant dietary arrangements must always be followed. Meal selection alone does not replace the necessary allergen checks before food is prepared or served.

We encourage parents and carers to support the meal selection process by submitting choices within the requested timeframe and informing the school of any changes to their child's dietary needs.

Through our in-house catering provision, we aim to offer children nutritious, freshly prepared meals, meaningful choices and a positive dining experience that supports their health, wellbeing and readiness to learn.

Parents wishing to change their child's meal arrangement from a packed lunch to a school meal should provide at least two weeks' notice, in line with the school's menu cycle and administrative arrangements.

6. Packed Lunch Policy

This section forms the school's Packed Lunch Policy and applies to all packed lunches eaten on school premises, during the school day, on school trips and residential visits, and during Holiday Club.

6.1 Nutritional expectations

Parents and carers are encouraged to provide a balanced packed lunch containing a variety of food groups.

Where appropriate for the child, a packed lunch should include:

Fruit and vegetables: At least one portion of fruit or vegetables.

Protein: For example, lean meat, fish, eggs, beans, pulses or other suitable alternatives.

Carbohydrates: For example, bread, pasta, rice or other starchy foods, with wholegrain options encouraged.

Dairy or suitable alternatives: For example, cheese, yoghurt or an appropriate fortified alternative.

Drinks: Water is encouraged. Other suitable drinks may include milk or an appropriate unsweetened drink, subject to the child's dietary requirements.

Desserts and treats: Desserts should generally be fruit-based or include fruit, such as fruit salad, fruit with yoghurt, or fruit-based puddings. A small treat, such as a biscuit or a small piece of cake, may occasionally be included as part of an otherwise balanced lunch.

The school recognises that some children require different foods or textures because of medical conditions, allergies, sensory needs or other individual circumstances. Reasonable adjustments will be considered where appropriate.

6.2 Foods and drinks that must not be included

Packed lunches must not contain:

- Nuts or products containing nuts, including peanuts, peanut butter and chocolate-hazelnut spreads such as Nutella.
- Sweets.
- Fizzy drinks.
- Energy drinks or other drinks containing high levels of caffeine.
- Sugary drinks, including diet or artificially sweetened fizzy drinks.
- Glass bottles or containers.
- Hot food in flasks or containers, as the school cannot reliably monitor the temperature and safe storage of such food.

Water is the preferred drink. Other suitable drinks may be included where they meet the school's dietary and allergy requirements.

Barkisland CE VA Primary School operates an allergy awareness approach particularly around nuts and nut products and asks parents, carers, staff and visitors not to bring nuts or nut-containing products onto the school premises. However, the school recognises that it cannot guarantee a completely nut-free environment.

The school's Allergy Safety Policy sets out the arrangements for managing known allergens, reducing the risk of exposure and cross-contact, and supporting children with allergies.

Parents and carers must inform the school of any diagnosed or suspected allergy and ensure that the school has up-to-date information. Children must not share or swap food or drinks.

6.3 Food storage and containers

Parents and carers should:

- Provide a suitable, clearly identifiable lunch container.
- Use an insulated lunch bag and an ice pack where necessary to keep food at a safe temperature.
- Avoid including food that requires reheating or temperature-controlled preparation by school staff.
- Ensure containers can be opened by the child, where developmentally appropriate.

The school will provide suitable arrangements for storing packed lunches during the day where facilities allow.

6.4 Eating packed lunches

Children eating packed lunches will have access to appropriate dining arrangements and fresh drinking water. Children having school meals and packed lunches will be able to eat together wherever practicable.

Children must not share or swap food or drinks because of allergy risks and individual dietary requirements.

If a packed lunch contains an item prohibited by this policy, staff will address this sensitively. Where necessary, the item will be removed from the child's access and retained safely until it can be returned to the parent or carer.

Staff will ensure that the child has sufficient suitable food and drink, offering an appropriate alternative where necessary. Parents will be informed of repeated concerns and asked to work with the school to ensure future lunches comply with the policy.

All items provided in children's packed lunches will be sent home at the end of the day, including uneaten food, wrappers and packaging. This enables parents and carers to see what their child has eaten, what they have left and whether they are regularly eating the food provided. This can help families to monitor their child's appetite and ensure that an appropriate amount and variety of food is being offered.

Parents and carers are encouraged to discuss any ongoing concerns about their child's eating habits with the school. Staff will monitor children's lunchtime wellbeing and raise any concerns about consistently uneaten food or insufficient food being provided with parents, where appropriate.

7. Little Lambs Nursery

Food provision in Little Lambs Nursery will take account of children's ages, stages of development, nutritional needs and emerging independence.

Staff will:

- Provide or supervise food and drink in accordance with the nursery's agreed arrangements.
- Encourage regular drinking of water.
- Support children to develop positive eating habits and appropriate independence.
- Ensure food is suitable for each child's developmental stage and ability to chew and swallow safely.
- Follow individual dietary plans and allergy procedures.
- Supervise children closely during meals and snacks.
- Follow safe food preparation, storage and cleaning procedures, with support from the Kitchen team where necessary.

Food offered to younger children must be appropriate to their developmental stage, with choking risks considered when planning menus and preparing food. Foods presenting a choking risk must be prepared appropriately or avoided in line with current early years guidance and individual risk assessments.

All food and drink arrangements within Little Lambs Nursery must comply with the school's Allergy Safety Policy. Staff must be aware of the allergies and dietary requirements of the children in their care and must follow relevant individual healthcare plans, Allergy Action Plans and risk assessments.

Parents and carers must provide up-to-date information about allergies, intolerances and dietary needs. Any changes must be communicated to the nursery promptly.

Staff will work with parents and carers to understand children's eating patterns, dietary requirements and any feeding difficulties. Food will never be used to pressure a child to eat.

8. Kids Club - Breakfast Club, After-School Club and Holiday Club

Healthy eating and safe food practices will apply consistently across Breakfast Club, After School Club and Holiday Club as does the school's Allergy Safety Policy.

Breakfast Club

Breakfast provision will offer suitable choices that support children's energy and concentration at the start of the day. Options will include cereal, toast, bagels, crumpets, fruit and other appropriate foods.

After-School Club

Snacks provided will be appropriate for children's ages and dietary needs. The school's in-house catering team prepares and provides the snacks served at After-School Club. Where possible, staff will offer fruit or other nutritious options alongside water.

Holiday Club

Food and drink arrangements will reflect the length of the session and the activities being undertaken. Parents will be informed whether children need to bring a packed lunch, snacks or other food.

The packed lunch requirements in Section 6 apply to children bringing packed lunches to Holiday Club.

Staff must have access to relevant allergy information for children attending their provision, understand the precautions required and know how to respond to an allergic reaction, especially for children who attend from other schools.

This includes checking food and ingredient information, following appropriate food handling and cleaning procedures, preventing food sharing, and ensuring prescribed emergency medication is accessible in accordance with the child's individual arrangements.

Where children attend a club or holiday provision outside their usual school routine, relevant allergy information and emergency arrangements must be communicated to the staff responsible for their care.

9. Allergies, intolerances and special diets

The school is committed to providing safe, inclusive food provision for children with allergies, intolerances and other dietary requirements.

All arrangements for identifying and managing allergies must comply with the school's **Allergy Safety Policy** and, where applicable, the **Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy**.

10. Food hygiene and safety

All staff involved in preparing, handling or serving food will have the necessary training and qualifications and must follow appropriate food hygiene and safety procedures and the allergen-management arrangements set out in the school's Allergy Safety Policy.

These include:

- Washing hands thoroughly before handling food and supporting children to do the same.
- Cleaning and disinfecting food preparation and eating surfaces as appropriate.
- Using clean equipment and utensils.
- Preventing cross-contamination between raw and ready-to-eat foods and preventing allergen cross-contact.
- Checking ingredients and relevant allergen information before preparing or serving food.
- Storing food at safe temperatures and following relevant use-by dates and storage instructions.

- Ensuring food is cooked, cooled and served safely where applicable.
- Following appropriate procedures for waste disposal and cleaning.
- Supervising children appropriately while eating.
- Following choking prevention and emergency response procedures appropriate to the age of the children.

Staff must report suspected food contamination, an allergic reaction or a significant food safety concern promptly through the school's established procedures.

Where food preparation or cooking forms part of a curriculum activity or club session, the same principles of hygiene, allergy awareness and safe supervision apply.

11. Food sharing, celebrations and rewards

Children must not share or swap food. This expectation applies across the school, nursery, clubs, trips and holiday provision.

Food brought into school for birthdays, celebrations, fundraising or special events must be agreed with the school in advance.

Any food provided must comply with the school's allergy arrangements and food safety procedures. Staff must check relevant dietary requirements and allergen information before serving food.

The school will seek inclusive alternatives where a child cannot safely eat the food provided with support from parents and carers.

Food will not be used as a punishment. Non-food rewards and recognition will be used wherever possible for any rewards.

12. Drinks and access to water

Water Bottles and Access to Drinking Water

Children are expected to bring a water bottle to school each day, filled with fresh water. Bottles must have a sports cap or non-spill lid to minimise the risk of spills in classrooms and other areas of the school. Children have access to their water bottles throughout the school day and can refill them as needed. We hold a small supply of spare bottles for children to use if they have forgotten to bring theirs into school available from the office and washed in the schools dishwasher at the end of each day.

When children join the school, they are provided with a school water bottle. Replacement bottles can be purchased through School Spider at a reasonable cost.

The school discourages the use of fashionable or novelty-style water bottles, as these can be distracting and may not be practical for use in the classroom. Air Up bottles are not permitted in school. If a child's water bottle becomes a distraction to their learning or the learning of others, parents and carers will be asked to provide a more suitable alternative.

All bottles should be clearly labelled with the child's name and used for water only. Children must not share water bottles.

Children will be encouraged to drink regularly, particularly during warm weather and physical activity.

Children may access their water bottles in accordance with classroom and activity routines. Staff will ensure that restrictions on access to water do not compromise children's health or wellbeing.

Water bottles should be clearly labelled and kept clean. Children must not share bottles.

Other drinks provided occasionally by the school will be appropriate to children's ages and dietary needs.

13. Food education and positive relationships with food

The school will promote healthy eating through relevant curriculum opportunities and everyday experiences.

This may include learning about nutrition, food origins, cooking, hygiene, sustainability, food waste and the importance of a balanced diet.

Where appropriate, children may participate in food preparation, gardening and growing activities. These activities will be supervised and risk-assessed, taking account of allergies, hygiene and the suitability of ingredients.

Staff will encourage curiosity about food while respecting children's individual preferences, sensory needs and developmental stages.

Allergy risks associated with cooking, food technology, science, art, craft and other practical activities must be considered in accordance with the Allergy Safety Policy. Pupils with allergies should be included wherever reasonably possible through appropriate risk assessments and reasonable adjustments.

14. Concerns about eating or food provision

If staff are concerned that a child is regularly not eating, appears hungry, has difficulty accessing suitable food or may have an unmet dietary need, they should report this to a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and record their concerns onto the school's CPOMS system.

Concerns will be handled sensitively, with the child's welfare as the priority. Where appropriate, the school will work with parents and carers and signpost or refer to relevant support services.

Any concern suggesting neglect, a safeguarding risk or an immediate threat to a child's health must be managed in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

15. Monitoring and compliance

The Headteacher and relevant staff will monitor implementation of this policy across the school, nursery, Breakfast Club, Kids Club and Holiday Club.

Monitoring may include:

- Reviewing menus and food provision.
- Checking allergy and dietary arrangements.
- Reviewing food hygiene practices.
- Considering incidents, concerns and feedback.
- Reviewing the suitability of packed lunches where concerns arise.
- Consulting staff, parents and children where appropriate.

Where the policy is not followed, the school will initially seek to work constructively with parents and staff to resolve the issue. Where necessary, further action will be taken to protect children's health and safety.

The Allergy Lead will oversee allergy-related arrangements in accordance with the separate Allergy Safety Policy, including the review of significant allergic reactions and near misses.

16. Related policies and guidance

This policy should be read alongside the following school policies and procedures:

- **Allergy Safety Policy** – including the allergy register, Individual Healthcare Plans, Allergy Action Plans, allergen risk reduction, medication and emergency procedures.
- Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy.
- First Aid Policy.
- Health and Safety Policy.
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Educational Visits Policy.
- Behaviour Policy.
- Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Data Protection Policy.

17. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and School Leadership Team, or sooner if there are changes to legislation, guidance, food provision or the needs of children attending the school.

Feedback from staff, parents, carers and, where appropriate, children will be considered as part of the review.

Our shared commitment: At Barkisland CE VA Primary School, we will work together to ensure that food is provided and enjoyed in ways that nurture children's health, dignity, safety and wellbeing.

Approved by the Governing Body: October 2026

Reviewed: