



**STOUR VALE
ACADEMY
TRUST**

SCHOOL FOOD POLICY

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1.0 Aim

This policy has been written to give clear guidance to staff, visitors, parents and carers, and pupils about the provision of food during the school day and our approach to the positive promotion of healthy eating. It recognises the importance of nutrition in supporting the health and wellbeing of children and young people in our school and our role in helping to ensure they develop good, healthy eating habits for life.

The policy adheres to the principles under data protection law. For further information please review the Stour Vale Data Protection Policy published on the Trust's website.

The 4 food groups

Children aged 1 to 5 years have different nutritional requirements to adults. They need to be fed a healthy balanced diet with a range of foods even as they are introduced to solid foods.

The Eatwell Guide uses government advice to show what a healthy and balanced diet looks like. It shows what a balance of foods should look like in one day or over a whole week. The advice in the Eatwell Guide applies to children from the age of 2 years

2.0 Food and drink provision throughout the day

2.1 Food Standards for Schools

As part of the School Food Plan, a new set of standards for all food served in schools was launched by the Department for Education. These standards are mandatory for all schools, including academies.

They are intended to help children develop healthy eating habits and ensure they obtain the energy and nutrition they need across the whole school day.

The standards do not apply to food provided:

- At parties or celebrations to mark religious or cultural occasions
- At fund-raising events
- As rewards for achievement, good behaviour or effort
- For use in teaching food preparation and cookery skills, including where the food prepared is served to pupils as part of a school lunch
- On an occasional basis by parents or pupils
- After 6pm, or during weekends or school holidays

For more information please refer to:

- The [Requirements for School Food Regulations 2014](#)
- The [DFE Standards for School Food in England](#) (updated 2023)
- The [DFE School Food Standards – Resources for schools](#) including a practical guide, checklists, portion sizes and allergy information (updated 2025)

- The School Food Plan – provides a range of resources, including recipe ideas, portion sizes and learning from others

2.2 School lunches

Our school lunches meet the statutory school food standards. Our menus include a range of healthy, quality ingredients with the choice of meals designed to appeal to all pupils. We aim for them to be offered a tasty, balanced and affordable lunch every day. We make provision for cultural, religious and special dietary needs, including food allergies and medical conditions.

All children from Reception to Year 2 are eligible to receive universal free school meals.

Schools cannot provide the following foods for lunch:

- Starchy food cooked in fat or oil on more than two days each week (applies to food served across the whole school day)
- A meat or poultry product more than once each week (applies across the whole school day)
- More than two portions of food that has been deep-fried, batter-coated or breadcrumb-coated each week (applies across the whole school day)
- More than two portions of food that include pastry each week (applies across the whole school day)
- Snacks, except vegetables and fruit with no added salt, sugar or fat (applies across the whole school day)
- Confectionery, chocolate or chocolate-coated products

Although schools are permitted under the school food standards to provide snacks containing nuts at lunch and at other times during the day (see section 2.3 below), **we are a NUT FREE school.** Please do not send your child in with anything in their lunch bags that may contain nuts, e.g. peanut butter sandwiches, Snickers chocolate bars. Some of our children have severe nut allergies and we thank you in helping to keep them safe and healthy.

2.3 School food other than lunch

The School Food Regulations 2014 also set out the requirements for food and drink other than lunch, provided to pupils on school premises up to 6pm, including breakfast clubs, tuck shops, mid-morning break, vending and after-school clubs. They also apply to other food provided before 6pm on school trips where the trip is for at least seven days.

Schools cannot provide the following foods outside of lunch:

- Starchy food cooked in fat or oil on more than two days each week (applies across the whole school day)
- A meat or poultry product more than once each week (applies across the whole school day)

- More than two portions of food that has been deep-fried, batter-coated or breadcrumb-coated each week (applies across the whole school day)
- More than two portions of food that include pastry each week (applies across the whole school day)
- Savoury crackers or breadsticks
- Snacks, other than vegetables and fruit, with added salt, sugar or fat (applies across the whole school day)
- Confectionery, chocolate, chocolate-coated products, cakes, biscuits, pastries or desserts (except yoghurt or fruit-based desserts containing at least 50% fruit)

Food is provided in school at the following times outside of lunch.

Break Time Snacks (mid-morning break and afternoon snack)

Healthy snacks can contribute positively towards a balanced diet. They provide an opportunity for children to have one of their five-a-day, as well as include other important nutrients in the diet.

Pupils are able to bring a snack for morning break to eat in school. **Any snacks that are brought from home will be restricted to fruit or vegetables** unless recommended by a doctor on medical grounds (e.g. dietary need, diabetes etc.)

The Government's School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme entitles all children in Key Stage 1 to receive one piece of fruit and/or vegetable every school day, free of charge, for afternoon break.

As part of the Government School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme examples of the type of snacks that may be on offer in school are:

- apples
- carrots
- raisins
- oranges

This list is not exhaustive

2.4 Drinks

Clean filtered drinking water is available to all pupils throughout the day, free of charge. They can refill water bottles easily and are encouraged to stay hydrated throughout the day.

The Food Standards state that 'Water should be the default drink for every child. The more it is offered, the more readily they will accept it. Sugary or sweetened drinks often have no nutritional value, contribute to weight gain, and can cause tooth decay'.

All pupils have access to water at lunch time meaning there is no need for an additional drink to be brought as part of a packed lunch. Pupils are encouraged to bring a water bottle every day that they can refill as necessary. Bottles go home at the end of every day to be washed and returned.

Water bottles should only be filled with water, exceptions to this will only be made if recommended by a doctor for medical needs.

Our school provides a mandatory milk scheme for all pupils, in accordance with Government guidelines. Parents are invited to register and pay for their child to participate in this scheme, which provides a carton (189ml or 1/3 of a pint) of semi skimmed milk every day for Reception and Key Stage 1 children and a carton of full fat milk for Nursery children. Parents can specify if an alternative type of milk is required e.g. soya. Children in Nursery are eligible for free milk. Children who are eligible for the Pupil Premium Grant are also eligible for free Milk (please speak to the office staff should you wish your child to receive milk and you are eligible).

3.0 Menu development and consultation

Before implementing any menu changes, we consult:

- Our pupils
- Parents/carers
- Catering company/provider
- Catering staff at school, including cooks and lunchtime supervisors
- Local governors

4.0 Food and drink brought into school and parent engagement

4.1 Packed lunches

We encourage parents and carers to provide healthy, well-balanced packed lunches.

For children aged five years and above, a healthy, well-balanced lunchbox includes:

- Starchy foods – bread, rice, potatoes, pasta, etc.
- Protein foods – including beans, pulses, eggs, fish, poultry and meat
- A dairy item – this could be cheese or a yoghurt
- Vegetables or salad
- A portion of fruit
- A healthy drink such as water or semi-skimmed milk

Please see the recommendations below:

INCLUDE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimum of 1 portion of fruit and 1 portion of vegetables everyday• Include a portion of non-dairy protein such as beans/pulses, fish, poultry or meat• Oily fish at least once every few weeks (e.g. sardines, salmon)• Starchy food such as bread, pasta, rice, potatoes including whole grain varieties• A dairy product - milk, cheese and yoghurt (unsweetened, low/medium sugar and low/medium fat), any dairy alternatives should be unsweetened and fortified• Water or milk (semi-skimmed or skimmed) as a drink

LIMIT
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Processed meat products such as sausage rolls, pies, sausages etc• Cakes and biscuits to be enjoyed as part of a meal occasionally not as a snack• Fruit juice: no more than 150mls per day

Exclude
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Salty snacks such as crisps• Sweets and chocolate• Sugary soft drinks

For more information and practical tips for children aged five years and above:
<https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes/>

5.0 School events, trips, birthdays and special occasions

Children across the UK eat significantly more sugar than the maximum daily limit recommended by health professionals. This has led to an increase in tooth decay and a range of health problems. The biggest source of sugar in children's diets is sugary drinks, followed by sugary snacks.

The NHS' Change4Life programme has developed a range of useful resources to help children and families cut down on sugar and become 'Sugar Smart'.

Due to our commitment to be a 'Sugar Smart' school we limit cakes, biscuits, chocolate and sweets and would only provide these as part of a 'special' event and will be done so as part of a balanced approach to eating. As such, we encourage the following:

For children's birthdays they are encouraged to bring in a story book to present to their class.

In line with EYFS nutritional guidance, we do not accept cakes, biscuits, chocolate and sweets for sharing for children's birthdays, as in doing so it may mean that some children are eating these unhealthy foods several times a week.

6.0 Special dietary requirements

We are aware of food allergies, intolerances and other dietary requirements of our pupils and have procedures in place to identify and manage these. They cover:

- Religious and ethnic groups
- Vegetarians and vegans
- Pupils with food allergies and intolerances
- Pupils with medical conditions where dietary needs are impacted

Nominated staff in school have completed training in first aid. All staff have completed training in understanding anaphylaxis, to enable them to respond to emergencies caused by food allergies.

7.0 The dining experience

Our dining hall is an integral part of our school and a place where our pupils can enjoy sitting down to eat and socialise with their friends. We have done the following to ensure that we have a pleasant eating environment for pupils:

- Parents access the Relish website to view menus and to order meals with their children
- Children line up quietly and enter the hall in small groups
- Children who bring packed lunches from home, eat together with their friends in the school hall, ensuring quieter environments to eat lunch
- Lunchtimes are staggered to keep queuing times short
- Children sit with their friends to eat their lunch
- Children take part in OPAL play during lunchtime.

Children are encouraged to be independent during the meal and clearing up after themselves at the end by tidying their plates and cutlery away.

8.0 School Lunches

Our food is provided by our own catering team.

All our school meals are provided in house, with our own catering team and served between 11:20 and 1:30. Parents can order meals for their children using Relish (please look on our website for further details). Meals include the use of fresh fruit and vegetables each day as a choice for the children. They provide a hot and cold options, both of which pay regard to nutritional balance and healthy options. A salad bar is also provided and children are encouraged to serve themselves and make healthy options. Staff ensure all children have a meal, using the Relish platform each morning, and discuss with children what is on the menu. Samples of our lunch menu are on offer at school events for parents to taste.

9.0 Food safety

We ensure food safety at all stages of food preparation and storage. This is demonstrated in the following ways:

- We provide safe and hygienic facilities to prepare and store all our food.
- We complete regular staff training and ensure that hazards are identified and risk assessments completed.
- Catering staff/staff with food handling responsibilities have completed
 - Food Standards: food allergy and intolerance online training.
 - Basic Food Hygiene Level 2

Under Natasha's Law, as a school any food that is repackaged for direct sale on your premises a list of the ingredients will be provided.

At school, we love seeing children enjoy healthy snacks like fresh fruit. Because children are still learning to chew and swallow safely, some foods—like grapes, cherry tomatoes, apples, and strawberries—can be a choking risk if served whole. To make them safer and easier to enjoy:

-  **Grapes and cherry tomatoes should be cut lengthwise into quarters.**
-  **Apples, pears, and similar fruits should be sliced into thin wedges.**
-  **Large berries can be halved or quartered.**

These small steps make a big difference in helping children eat safely and confidently.

10.0 Cooking and Food Education in the curriculum

Teaching pupils how to cook is an important part of our whole-school approach to health and wellbeing. It captures and stimulates pupils' interest and enjoyment of food as well as building self-confidence.

The school follows the National Curriculum, which states that healthy eating, nutrition and cooking must be taught in Science and Design and Technology (D&T). Food, its production and preparation is an important part of the curriculum for all pupils and is taught across the curriculum through Science, PHSE, PE and Design and Technology. We re-enforce our delivery of the national curriculum by holding healthy weeks/sessions which enables us to focus on all aspects of well-being including healthy eating.

For more information please refer to:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum>

12.0 Monitoring and evaluation

Trustees, headteachers and local governors monitor and review this policy, including all menu provision, annually.

13.0 Policy review

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Effectiveness of the policy will be assessed through:

- Feedback from staff, pupils, and parents and carers
- Review of the policy by trustees, headteachers and governors to determine if objectives have been met and ensure ongoing policy development

14.0 Linked policies

- Health and Safety Policy
- First Aid in Schools Policy
- Pupil Allergy Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Data Protection Policy