

# Temple Meadow Primary School



# Healthy Eating and Drinking Policy

**Policy Ownership: (Headteacher)**

<b>To SLT:</b>	July 2025
<b>To Staff:</b>	July 2025
<b>To Governors:</b>	July 2025
<b>Live Date:</b>	Sept 2025
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	Sept 2028

## **Statement of Intent**

At Temple Meadow, we are committed to promoting healthy eating and drinking habits throughout the school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). We recognise the vital link between a nutritious diet, children’s health, and their ability to learn, concentrate and grow. We aim to foster a school culture that supports and promotes healthy lifestyle choices, both at school and at home.

In line with national guidance and statutory requirements, we ensure food provided in school is safe, healthy, varied, and inclusive of dietary and cultural needs. We work collaboratively with families to educate children on healthy eating and instil positive habits early in life.

## **Legal Framework**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance, including but not limited to:

- The Requirements for School Food Regulations 2014
- The Food Information (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2019 (Natasha’s Law)
- Food Safety Act 1990
- School Standards and Framework Act 1998
- Public Health England (2024) ‘Example menus for early years settings in England’
- DfE (2025) ‘Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance’
- DfE (2023) ‘School Food in England’
- DfE (2024) ‘Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage’

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Disability and Equity policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy
- Early Years Policy

## **Our Aim**

Our aim is to support all children in being well-nourished and hydrated throughout the school day, ensuring they have access to nutritious food and plenty of fluids. We use the curriculum to educate children on the benefits of healthy eating and food safety, helping them make informed choices that support their well-being. Consistent messages about food and health are reinforced across all aspects of school life, and we ensure that our food provision caters for the diverse religious, cultural, and medical dietary needs of our children. We also actively involve both children and their families in promoting and upholding our healthy eating ethos.

## **Food and Drink Provision**

### ***Drinks***

We always encourage children to bring plain water to school in their reuseable bottles. All children have access to chilled, filtered water throughout the school day.

### ***Break times and snack time***

Temple Meadow participates in the **School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme**, providing free fresh fruit or vegetables each school day to all children in Early Years and Key Stage 1. This helps to encourage healthy snacking habits and ensures all children receive at least one portion of fruit or vegetables during the school day.

We also participate in the **Cool Milk scheme**, offering children the opportunity to receive a daily portion of chilled milk. Children under five are entitled to this milk free of charge, while older pupils may continue to access the scheme through parent payment or if they are eligible for Pupil Premium and Free School Meals.

### **School meals**

Lunch time meals provided by the school's catering service (SIPs) are balanced, nutritious, and varied, incorporating a selection from the four key food groups: fruit and vegetables, starchy carbohydrates, dairy or dairy alternatives, and proteins. Foods that are high in fat, sugar, and salt are limited in both portion size and frequency. Menus are designed to reflect cultural diversity and provide children with opportunities to explore a variety of flavours and textures. SIPs have their own comprehensive food policies in place.

All children in Early Years and Key Stage 1 are entitled to a free school meal each day. In Key Stage 2, school meals are accessible to those who are entitled to free school meals or those who choose to purchase a meal.

### **Packed Lunches and Food Brought from Home**

Families are encouraged to send healthy, balanced packed lunches which comply with the school's healthy eating guidance. These should include items from the major food groups and avoid high-sugar or high-fat foods. Items not permitted include fizzy drinks and products containing nuts. Any food not in line with this policy will be confiscated and returned to the child's adult at the end of the day. In some cases, if the packed lunch is entirely unsuitable, a school meal may be provided and charged to parents if applicable.

### **Celebrations**

To support our commitment to healthy eating and ensure compliance with **Natasha's Law**, **children are not permitted to bring any food items to share for birthdays or other celebrations**. This is to protect children with allergies and to ensure consistent food safety practices. Instead, we invite children to wear their own clothes to school on their birthday (or the closest school day if it falls during a weekend or holiday) as a fun and inclusive way to celebrate.

### **Treats and Special Events**

While we place a strong emphasis on healthy eating, we also recognise the importance of balance and celebration. On **special occasions**, children may be offered treat items as part of a reward or school tradition. Examples include:

- Tip tops or fruit ice lollies on Sports Day
- Year 2 end-of-year tea party with cakes and biscuits
- Ice cream or sweet treats during fundraising sales or charity days
- Hot chocolate and cookies during a school movie night
- Festive snacks or themed treats during religious and cultural celebrations

All treats offered by the school are carefully considered and provided in a safe, controlled manner that adheres to allergy guidance and supervision.

These occasional treats are seen as an opportunity to celebrate, socialise and reward effort and community participation in moderation, reinforcing a positive relationship with food.

### **Allergens and dietary requirements**

At Temple Meadow, we strive to be a **nut-free school** due to the life-threatening risk nut allergies pose to some children. We take this policy extremely seriously. If a child brings in any food items, including snacks or packed lunch items, that explicitly contain nuts, staff will confiscate the item, provide an appropriate alternative, and return the original item to the family member at the end of the day.

The health and safety of children with allergies and special dietary needs is of paramount importance. All known allergies, intolerances, and dietary requirements are recorded and communicated to relevant staff. Individual Healthcare Plans (IHPs) are created where needed, and appropriate risk assessments are carried out. Staff receive regular training on allergy awareness, including how to recognise symptoms of allergic reactions and respond appropriately, including in the event of anaphylaxis.

Where staff are in doubt whether a food item is suitable for a child with known allergies and intolerances, they will seek input from the parents and carers in order to ensure these are appropriately catered for.

We liaise closely with our catering providers to ensure that the allergy and dietary requirements of our children are met safely and effectively. Our caterers (SIPs) follow their own robust food safety policies and adhere to strict guidelines that prevent cross-contamination of allergens during food preparation. For children with coeliac disease or gluten intolerance, our catering team provides a dedicated coeliac-friendly menu. All meals for children with special dietary needs are prepared in line with agreed protocols and best practices to ensure their safety and inclusion.

Children are not permitted to share or swap food at any time, whether it is provided by school or brought from home. Separate utensils, preparation areas, and labelled storage are used where necessary to avoid cross-contact with allergens. Our school lunch menu ensures that there is at least one vegetarian option available each day to accommodate religious, cultural, or ethical preferences.

### **Early Years Nutrition Guidance (Nursery and Reception)**

In line with the **DfE's 2025 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Nutrition Guidance**, Temple Meadow recognises that the early years are a critical period for establishing healthy eating habits, addressing health inequalities, and laying the foundations for lifelong well-being. Children in our Nursery and Reception classes are supported to eat well through a structured approach to food provision that meets both their developmental and nutritional needs.

When preparing food for food tasting as part of a curriculum activity, staff will always strive to avoid round shapes as these are a choking hazard. All of our staff involved with food preparation have appropriate food hygiene training.

Children are **supervised at all times during meals and snack times** by trained Early Years staff. Staff sit with children, model appropriate behaviour, encourage positive eating habits, and respond promptly to signs of difficulty, discomfort, or distress. At least one member of staff present during eating times is trained in **paediatric first aid**, and all staff are aware of how to respond to choking incidents.

We also provide:

- **Only milk or water** as drink options for EYFS children, in support of hydration and dental health.
- **Cool Milk scheme** access, with free milk provided to under-fives and subsidised milk for those over five.
- **Daily fruit or vegetable snacks**, provided through the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme for our Nursery and Reception children.

Children are encouraged to develop independence at mealtimes and try a wide variety of healthy foods. Our school catering service (SIPs) avoid processed and packaged foods in favour of freshly prepared meals that expose children to a range of textures and flavours. Our menus rotate on a three-week cycle and are adapted to reflect seasonal produce, dietary requirements, and cultural diversity.

Our EYFS staff are trained to observe signs of hunger or fullness and respond to children's cues during meals. Children are never forced to finish their food; instead, we promote positive, pressure-free eating environments. Fussy eating is managed with patience and consistency, using strategies that align with home practices and encourage the gradual acceptance of new foods.

### **Curriculum Integration and Food Education**

Healthy eating is embedded across the curriculum and school life. Through Learning for Life, Science, P.E., design and technology, and whole-school initiatives, children are taught about nutrition, hygiene, cooking skills, and the importance of balanced diets and hydration. Practical cooking and tasting opportunities are offered to engage children and help them develop confidence with food choices. All allergies and dietary requirements are considered and catered for when planning food based curriculum activities.

Assemblies and themed events are used to further reinforce healthy messages and involve the whole school community in the ethos of wellbeing.

### **Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing**

We understand that food can be connected to emotional wellbeing, and staff are trained to recognise early signs of disordered eating or food-related anxiety. This includes patterns such as skipping meals, eating in isolation, or showing signs of physical distress related to food. Any concerns are raised with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Senior Mental Health Lead, and support is provided in line with safeguarding and mental health policies. We strive to promote positive body image, emotional resilience, and healthy attitudes toward food and physical health.

### **Communication with Families**

Families are vital partners in promoting a healthy eating culture. The school regularly communicates menus, healthy eating tips, and updates to this policy via letters, newsletters, and the school website. In the EYFS, staff will provide feedback on children's food intake and engage parents in menu planning and routine where necessary. Where concerns arise regarding a child's eating habits, staff will contact parents to work together on a suitable approach.

Feedback from families is welcomed and used to improve the quality and relevance of our food provision.

### **Monitoring and Review**

This policy is reviewed annually by the Headteacher, EYFS lead, and governing board. It is updated in response to changes in statutory guidance, school priorities, or feedback from stakeholders. All updates are communicated clearly to the relevant parties.