



# Whole School Food Policy

**March 2016**

**Date of review: May 2020**

## MERSEA ISLAND SCHOOL

Barfield Road, West Mersea, Colchester, Essex. C05 8QX

Tel: 01206 382736  
Fax: 01206 384362

Email: [office@merseaschool.org](mailto:office@merseaschool.org)



Healthy School



Mersea Island School  
SAILING CLUB





The policy has been formulated following consultation with pupils and staff to develop healthy eating and drinking activities that benefit pupils, staff, parents and others associated with the school. The policy and future amendments to the policy will be communicated clearly and consistently to pupils, staff and parents. It will continue to be developed in consultation with pupils and parents as the school works towards its aim of maintaining Healthy School Status.

## Rationale

Mersea Island School recognises the importance of a healthy diet and the significance connection between a healthy diet and a pupils ability to learn effectively and achieve high standards at school. It is important that Mersea Island School considers all elements of work to ensure that awareness of healthy eating is promoted to all members of the school community and also the role the school can play to promote family health. Through effective leadership, the school ethos and curriculum, all school staff can bring together elements of the school day to create an environment which supports sustainable healthy eating habits as part of a healthy lifestyle.

The policy was formulated through consultation between members of staff, governors, parents and pupils.

The principles of this policy incorporate those outlined in the School Food Plan <http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/>

The nutritional principles of this policy are based on the 'eatwell plate' <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/eatwell-plate.aspx> and the School Food Standards <http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/standards/>

## Aims

The main aims of our school food policy are:

- To ensure that all aspects of food and nutrition in school promote the health and wellbeing of the whole school community
- To ensure that all members of the school community are able to make informed choices and are aware of the importance of healthy food, where food comes from and the need to support sustainable food and farming practices
- To enable pupils to make healthy food choices through the provision of information and development of appropriate skills including food preparation.
- To implement the School Food Standards
- To ensure that the school follows the principles laid out in the School Food Plan, encouraging the take up of school meals
- To take a whole school approach to healthy eating to ensure that messages taught in the curriculum are echoed and reinforced by the type of food and drink provided in school

These aims will be addressed through the following areas:

### 1. School Food Plan

The School Food Plan <http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/> is an agreed plan published in July 2013 with the support of the Secretary of State for Education and of the diverse organisations who can support head teachers to improve the quality and take-up of school





food and put the kitchen at the heart of school life. The plan outlines how schools should improve their attitude to school food by :-

- Adopting a 'whole-school approach': integrating food into the life of the school: treating the dining hall as the hub of the school, where children and teachers eat together; lunch as part of the school day; the cooks as important staff members; and food as part of a rounded education
- The head teacher leading the change
- Concentrating on the things children care about: good food, attractive environment, social life
- Encourage take up of school meals to improve school food economics and in particular encourage take up of the Universal Free School Meals for all KS1

## 2. Equal Opportunities

In healthy eating, as in all other areas of the curriculum we recognise the value of the individual and strive to provide equal access of opportunity for all.

## 3. Curriculum

Food and nutrition is taught at an appropriate level throughout each key stage. Cooking and nutrition was brought in as a compulsory part of the national curriculum from September 2014. Schemes of work at all key stages reflect the whole school approach to healthy eating and incorporate the DFE statutory guidelines :-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-design-and-technology-programmes-of-study/national-curriculum-in-england-design-and-technology-programmes-of-study>

This is addressed through:

- **Teaching methods**

Effective teaching requires pupils to develop their understanding of healthy eating issues and appropriate skills and attitudes to assist them in making informed decisions. Schemes of work at all key stages reflect the whole school approach to healthy eating.

- **Cooking and nutrition**

As part of their work with food, pupils are taught how to cook and apply the principles of nutrition and healthy eating. Learning how to cook is a crucial life skill that enables pupils to feed themselves and others affordably and well, now and in later life. All pupils are taught the basic principles of a healthy and varied diet, to prepare simple dishes and understand where food comes from. Older pupils are taught about seasonality and a range of cooking techniques.

- **Cross Curricular**

The school recognises that food has a great potential for cross curricular work and is incorporated in teaching of a variety of subjects in addition to science and PHSE.

- **Staff training**

School staff including teachers, TA's and lunch time supervisors have a key role in influencing pupils' knowledge, skills and attitudes about food and healthy eating, so it is important that they are familiar with healthy eating guidelines. To facilitate this information is





shared at staff meetings, midday assistant team meetings and through the weekly staff bulletin

- **Visitors in the classroom**

This school values the contribution made by outside agencies in supporting class teachers. It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that the contributions made by visitors to the classroom reflect our own philosophy and approach to the subject. The status of visitors to

the school is always checked ensuring that the content of the visitor's talk is suitable for the ages of the pupils.

- **Resources**

Resources used to deliver healthy eating are current and up to date and all staff are consistent in the resources used throughout the curriculum. These reflect the 'eatwell plate' where appropriate.

#### **4. Food and Drink Throughout the School Day**

- **Food Standards**

National Nutritional Standards for school Lunches became compulsory in 2009. As a result of the School Food Plan, the standards have been reviewed and new Food Standards for school lunches came in to force in January 2015. Together with the existing standards they cover all food sold or served in schools: breakfast, snacks, lunch and after-school meals.

- **Wraparound Care**

Breakfast is an important meal that should provide 25% of a child's energy requirement and contribute significantly to their vitamin and mineral requirements.

The school operates a before and after school club that provides meals, including breakfast and tea – see Appendix 3

- **Lunch**

Food prepared by the school catering team meets the National Nutritional Standards for School Lunches.

- **Universal Free School Meals**

From September 2014, all children in reception, year 1 and year 2 in state-funded schools in England have been eligible for free school lunches. The school fully supports this initiative, encouraging children to have their free school meal. Research shows that a school lunch is nutritionally superior to most packed lunches and can lead to improved behaviour attainment.

- **Fruit Scheme (KS1 only)**

The School is part of the National Fruit and Vegetable Scheme. Children eat their fruit as part of snack time.

- **Milk**

The new Food Standards require that milk must be available for drinking at least once per day during school hours. It is available from the tuck shop and with school meals.





- **Snacks**

The school understands that snacks can be an important part of the diet of young people and can contribute positively towards a balanced diet.

The school only permits fruit, vegetables, seeds and cereal bars.

The school discourages the consumption of snacks high in fat and sugar at break-time.

**(Insert tuck shop menu here)**

- **Use of Food as a Reward or Treat**

The school does not encourage the regular eating of sweets or other foods high in sugar or fat, especially as a reward for good behaviour or academic or other achievements. Other methods of positive reinforcement are used in school.

- **Drinking Water**

Drinking water is available to all pupils from the drinking fountains and there are 2 water coolers in the main foyer, from which children can refill their water bottles. Every child is expected to have a water bottle in school at all times. These are available in the classrooms.

## **5. Food and Drink Brought into School**

- **Packed lunches**

Packed lunches prepared by the school caterers adhere to the Government Food Lunch Standards.

The school encourages parents and carers to provide children with packed lunches that complement these standards. This is achieved by promoting healthy packed lunch options using the principles of the 'eat well plate'.

## **6. Special Dietary Requirements**

- **Cultural and religious diets**

Many people follow diets related to their culture or religious beliefs and the school will make every effort to provide meals for all children.

- **Medical Diets**

Individual care plans are created for pupils with medical dietary needs/requirements. These document symptoms and adverse reactions and actions to be taken in an emergency. Pupils with specific needs are flagged on the school's 'medical conditions' poster which is updated regularly and displayed in the school office and the kitchens. A copy is also included in the class medical boxes for staff reference.

## **7. Food Safety**

Appropriate food safety precautions are taken when food is prepared or stored. These vary depending on the food on offer and include: ensuring that adequate storage and washing



facilities are available; that food handlers undergo appropriate hygiene training; and that suitable equipment and protective clothing are available. Any food safety hazards are identified and controlled. We consult our local Environmental Health Department about legal requirements.

## 8. The Food and Eating Environment

Behaviour and discipline is important in maintaining a pleasant environment for eating. Pupils are reminded about good table manners, managing noise levels and encouraged to sit with friends.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Parents are reminded about the healthy eating policy and consulted through the parents' forum and the weekly update

## REVIEW

Date policy implemented: March 2016

Review Date: May 2020



## Appendix 1

# The Food Plan Summary – July 2013

This plan is about good food and happiness. It is about the pleasures of growing, cooking and eating proper food. It is also about improving the academic performance of our children and the health of our nation.

### *What we found*

The quality of food in England's schools has improved enormously since 2005, when Jamie Oliver alerted the nation to the horrors of the Turkey Twizzler. There has been a clear, measurable improvement in the nutritional quality of most school food, and a reduction in junk foods.

The best schools do a brilliant job of weaving food education – cooking, growing vegetables, even modest efforts at animal husbandry – into school life and the curriculum. We have been hugely impressed by the energy and enthusiasm we have witnessed among school cooks, caterers, teachers, nutritionists, parents, volunteers, charity workers and many others working to make school food great.

But there is still work to be done. Some schools are lagging behind, serving food that is much too bland, boring and beige. Across the country, take-up of school food remains stubbornly low, at 43%. That means that 57% of children are not eating school lunches at all. Some graze instead on snack foods served at mid-morning break (when the standard offerings in our experience are panini, pizza and cake). Others go off-site to buy their lunch – usually junk food – or bring in a packed lunch.

Many parents mistakenly imagine that a packed lunch is the healthiest option. In fact, it is far easier to get the necessary nutrients into a cooked meal – even one of mediocre quality. Only 1% of packed lunches meet the nutritional standards that currently apply to school food.

This country faces a serious health crisis caused by bad diet. Almost 20% of children are already obese by the time they leave primary school at eleven. Diet-related illnesses are putting a huge strain on the nation's coffers – costing the NHS £10 billion every year. We need to tackle the problem now, before the costs (both personal and financial) become too heavy to bear.

Eating school dinners is better for children. It is also better for the school's finances. A half-empty dining hall – like a half-empty restaurant – is certain to lose money. In order for the school food service to break even, average take-up needs to get above 50%. In other words, the system is currently bust. It has to be subsidised with money from school budgets and local councils, to the tune of £140 million a year.

This state of affairs is neither desirable nor necessary. Parents currently spend almost £1 billion a year on packed lunches; persuading just a fraction of them to switch to school food would make the system solvent again (and their children healthier).

### *What needs to be done*

What you have in your hands (or on your screen) is not a traditional 'report', or a set of recommendations to the government. It is a plan. It contains a series of actions, each of which is the responsibility of a named person or organisation. These are the things that need to happen to transform what children eat at school, and how they learn about food.

Below, we have given a very condensed list of these actions. We heartily recommend that you read the whole plan to get a better sense of the purpose behind them. In the meantime, there are a few essential points that need making.

Increasing take-up is not something that can be done from the top-down. It requires a cultural change within each school. It means cooking food that is both appetising and nutritious; making the dining hall a welcoming place; keeping queues down; getting the price right; allowing children to eat with their friends; getting them interested in cooking and growing.





The only person with the power to orchestrate all this is the head teacher. They need support from their governors and leadership team, but if the head isn't behind changing the food culture in a school, it won't happen.

The vast majority of head teachers already believe that good food is vital to children's health and academic achievement, and to the broader life of the school. But many feel they lack the knowledge and experience to improve their food culture. So this plan is aimed primarily at giving head teachers the practical support, advice and information they need.

We have put together a 'checklist for head teachers': a brief guide to the practical steps every school can take to improve the quality and take-up of its food. This includes everything from chucking out prisonstyle trays and getting teachers to eat in the dining hall, to banning packed lunches (it can be done!). The checklist can be found at the end of the plan.

The government has agreed to provide funding for specialist organisations to go into 5,000 schools that are struggling with their lunch service, to help them turn things around. Boris Johnson has also agreed to create flagship 'food boroughs' in London, with more areas to follow if these are successful.

Separately, we have set up a taskforce to help small schools overcome their particular logistical difficulties, and drawn up a strategy to improve the skills and morale of school caterers.

Many studies have shown that hunger affects concentration, and that well-nourished children fare better at school. The government has agreed to allocate money to help schools in the poorest areas establish breakfast clubs. And it has promised to look at extending free school meal entitlement, to ensure that the children of the so-called 'working poor' do not go hungry at lunch.

We have also recommended that free school meals should be extended to all primary school children, starting with the most deprived areas. This is the only one of our recommendations that the government has not agreed to yet. We understand that the considerable cost and the need to involve other departments make it a big ask. But we are pleased that the Secretary of State agrees with us in principle and we would urge schools and councils to consider funding universal free school meals themselves.

Providing a wholesome lunch for children is only half the battle. We also need to equip today's children with the skills they need to feed themselves – and, in time, their own children. We are delighted that the government has accepted our recommendation that cooking lessons should be made a part of the national curriculum for all children up to the age of 14. The new curriculum will emphasise the importance of cooking nutritious, savoury dishes, understanding where food comes from, and taking pleasure in the creative arts of the kitchen.

Finally, many people have been concerned by the government's decision to exempt most academies and free schools from the existing school food standards. The fear is that, without legal constraints on what they serve, these schools will be tempted to slide into bad habits. We have not found any evidence of widespread slippage – indeed, some of the best food we have eaten has been in academies.

However, we do believe it is wise to have some sort of safety net in place. To that end we have worked with the Medical Research Council and our own expert panel to develop a set of simpler food standards, which we believe will be easier to implement and enforce. If the new standards are agreed to be effective from a practical and nutritional standpoint, the Secretary of State has agreed to make them mandatory across all types of school.

In the past year, we have seen many different people from across the school food sector – and beyond – coming together to help build on the good work that has been done already. Michael Gove, Sir Michael Wilshaw (head of Ofsted), the Department of Health, Public Health England, Jamie Oliver, charitable organisations and representatives from all the major school food providers – from private industry to local





authority caterers – have agreed to do their bit to increase take-up and create a truly first class school food service.

Good food provision in schools has been shown to lead not only to healthier children, but to improved attainment. We hope this plan will help to create a generation of children who enjoy food that makes them healthier, more successful and, most importantly, happier.

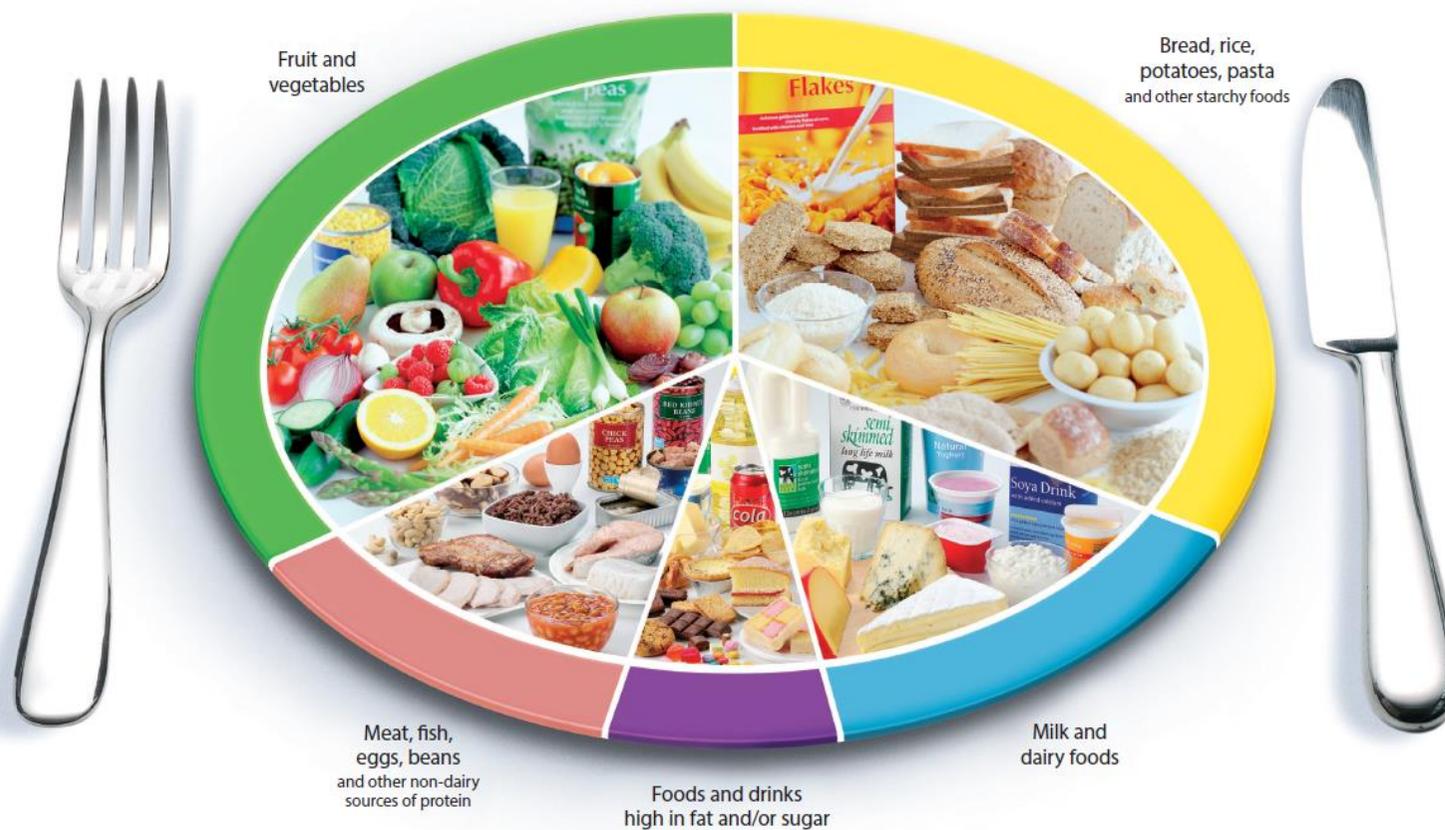
*Henry Dimpleby and John Vincent*



## Appendix 2

# The eatwell plate

Use the eatwell plate to help you get the balance right. It shows how much of what you eat should come from each food group.



### Appendix 3 – Wraparound Care Menu

Week 1	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
<b>Breakfast</b>	Cereal Toast Milk/Squash/ Water	Cereal Toast Milk/Squash/ Water	Cereal Toast/crumpets Milk/Squash/ Water	Cereal Toast Milk/Squash/ Water	Cereal Toast Milk/Squash/ Water
<b>Snack</b>	Veg sticks Milk/Squash/ Water	Veg sticks Milk/Squash/ Water	Veg sticks Milk/Squash/ Water	Veg sticks Milk/Squash/ Water	Veg sticks Milk/Squash/ Water
<b>Tea</b>	Toast with topping ie jam/marmite/ cheese	Crumpets or toast butter	Beans on toast	Toast with topping ie jam/marmite/ cheese	Filled pitta bread fruit

Week 2	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
<b>Breakfast</b>	Cereal Toast Milk/Squash/ Water	Cereal Toast Milk/Squash/ Water	Cereal Toast Milk/Squash/ Water	Cereal Toast Milk/Squash/ Water	Cereal Toast Milk/Squash/ Water
<b>Snack</b>	Veg sticks Milk/Squash/ Water	Veg sticks Milk/Squash/ Water	Veg sticks Milk/Squash/ Water	Veg sticks Milk/Squash/ Water	Veg sticks Milk/Squash/ Water
<b>Tea</b>	Toast with topping ie Jam/marmite/ cheese	Hot dogs	Toast with topping ie Jam/marmite/ cheese	Spaghetti on toast	Waffles

Week 3	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
<b>Breakfast</b>	Cereal Toast Milk/Squash/ Water	Cereal Scotch pancakes Toast Milk/Squash/ Water	Cereal Toast Milk/Squash/ Water	Cereal Toast Milk/Squash/ Water	Cereal Toast Milk/Squash/ Water
<b>Snack</b>	Veg sticks Milk/Squash/ Water	Veg sticks Milk/Squash/ Water	Veg sticks Milk/Squash/ Water	Veg sticks Milk/Squash/ Water	Veg sticks Milk/Squash/ Water
<b>Tea</b>	Scotch pancakes	Toast with toppings ie Jam/marmite/ cheese	Pizza	Toast with topping	Filled pitta bread, fruit

Drinks to be available at all times

Fruit and yoghurts when available to be offered at tea also