

# Fiveways School

*A Specialist School for Communication & Interaction*

May 2024



***“What does a good life look like for me now and in the future?”***

## Food Policy



This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Curriculum Policy
- Early Years Policy

## **INTRODUCTION**

At Fiveways School we understand the importance of healthy eating and education about food and mealtimes. We believe eating is more than just 'refuelling'. It provides opportunities to develop communication and social interaction, learning for life and physical skills and prepare for adulthood.

As a school for pupils with severe, profound and multiple learning disabilities (SPMLD) some pupils have complex or specific medical needs, allergies or intolerances. We work closely with parent, carers and professionals to support children with these needs. It is parent carers responsibility to inform and update the school regarding any of these.

## **AIMS**

- Promote healthy food and eating habits.
- Enable pupils to make informed choices about the food they eat.
- Encourage pupils to experience, taste and eat a range of foods.
- Develop eating and drinking skills, use of utensils and table manners.
- Learn to serve food and clear up after a meal.
- Provide for pupils with medical needs, allergies or intolerances.
- Cater for dietary requirements and preferences as far as is reasonably practical.
- Develop preparation for adulthood skills in cooking and food preparation.

## **SNACKS**

Snacks can play an important part in contributing positively towards a balanced diet. To support this the Governments school fruit and vegetable scheme entitles all children in KS1 to one piece of fruit and/ or vegetable per day.

Some pupils bring their own snack from home. We work with families to encourage a healthy diet and to plan for and meet dietary requirements.

Mid-morning snack time is used as a planned teaching opportunity for pupils to experience, explore and taste food, develop eating, drinking skills, engage in social communication and use communication systems and learning for life skills.

Snacks provided for pupils are predominantly healthy fruit or vegetable options and food containing refined sugar is provided on a limited basis. This may not apply at celebrations e.g., birthdays, religious or cultural occasions or at fund-raising events.

## **DRINKS**

Water is freely available for pupils throughout the day. In partnership with parents and carers we may provide other drinks for pupils e.g. squash. Reduced sugar squash is encouraged, and squash is not freely available to pupils to limit sugary intake. For some pupils with sensory processing difficulties the decision may be taken that any drink is better than none to ensure they have sufficient fluid intake.

Due to medical needs, some pupils have specific requirements around amount of fluid intake or require fluids to be thickened and some have fluids through gastrostomy.

## **SCHOOL LUNCHES**

Food prepared by the school catering department meets the national school food-based standards. We ensure that the quality of ingredients and choice of meals are appealing by regular checks and asking pupils, families and staff for feedback. The school council make suggestions to ensure that the meals reflect the preferences of pupils and pupils are supported by their families to choose from 2 options for hot food. Pupils who have school meals are provided with a packed lunch if not on school site for lunch.

The Government offers universal free school meals for children from reception to year 2. We encourage parents and carers to opt for school lunches for their children as it can be an easier way of ensuring they get a nutritionally balanced meal. Some pupils bring in a packed lunch from home and we work with families to provide healthy well-balanced packed lunch where the need is identified. We cater for a range of dietary requirements, food allergies / intolerances and medical needs e.g., some pupils require food to be pureed or are fed by gastrostomy.

Lunch time is used as a planned teaching opportunity for pupils to experience, explore and taste food, develop eating, drinking skills, engage in social communication and use communication systems and learning for life skills. At lunchtime, depending on their developing abilities and learning goals pupils may be served at the tables or encouraged to be involved to develop mealtime skills e.g. pouring drinks, serving, wiping & cleaning up, helping others. In our 6th Form learners plan, prepare and cook their lunches as part of preparation for adulthood curriculum.

## **COOKING AND FOOD EDUCATION**

This is an important part of our preparation for adulthood curriculum for all pupils including e.g., Learning for Life, PSED (EYFS) and Health (6<sup>th</sup> Form) and aims to develop preparation for adulthood skills in cooking, food preparation, food hygiene and healthy food. Teaching methods and learning contexts are adapted to age, to meet the learning needs of pupils and consider food allergies/intolerances and other dietary requirements. Cooking and food education also has other curriculum and learning benefits including:

- Aiding communication and language development.
- Enriching vocabulary.
- Promoting a greater understanding of the world.
- Understanding their own likes and dislikes and respecting those of others.
- Increasing self-confidence.

### **Sensory food education**

We provide opportunities to engage in sensory food exploration / sensory cooking to capture pupils' curiosity and teach them to use their senses to explore food. This can build familiarity, lead to an increased acceptance of new foods, and develop personal food preferences. Sensory food education takes place away from mealtimes to enable pupils to feel free to explore foods. To remove pressure to eat the foods, meaning children are more likely to try and potentially enjoy what's on offer there are some "golden rules":

- Activities are fun.
- No one has to try.
- No one has to like.

**Food safety training**

Every class has at least one member of staff with a Food Hygiene Level 2 Certification and most classes have more than one. This training forms part of our rolling CPD programme to maintain effective food hygiene and safety practices.