

Food Policy

2026/29



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1. Aim of the Policy

- To provide an environment that promotes healthy eating and provides tasty, nutritious food and drink, enabling pupils to make informed choices.
- This policy supports the Polaris Multi Academy Trust Vision and Values.
- Nutritional principles are based on the **Government's Dietary Reference Values**, the **School Food Standards (2014)**, and the **Public Health England Eatwell Guide**.

2. Linked Policies

- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Allergens and Anaphylaxis Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- PSHCE & RSE Policy

3. Food Policy Co-Ordinator

This Trust food policy and healthy eating strategy is co-ordinated by **Damien O'Brien (Polaris Multi Academy Trust Catering Manager)**.

4. Purpose of the Policy

- To enable pupils to make healthy choices through information, skills, and positive attitudes.
- To provide healthy food choices throughout the school day.
- To ensure the formal curriculum regarding food and nutrition is consistent and reflects current British Nutrition Foundation guidelines.

To ensure all drinks provided meet the requirements for Academy Food Regulations.

- To encourage the consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables by maintaining high-quality provision through our catering partners.
- To ensure all staff responsible for the food curriculum and catering delivery hold valid Level 2 Food Hygiene certification as a minimum.

5. Whole Academy Policy Guidelines

- **Compliance:** The Trust is committed to ensuring all food and drink meets the mandatory **School Food Standards in England**.
- **Hot Meals:** While not a statutory requirement, hot lunches are provided wherever possible to ensure pupils have access to at least one hot, balanced meal daily.
- **Hydration:** Fresh, chilled water is available, freely accessible, and free of charge at all times.
- **Quality Assurance:** The Trust Catering Manager and catering providers hold regular performance
- **Special Dietary Requirements**

The Trust accommodates specialist diets including allergies, medical requirements, and religious practices. To support the needs of our diverse community, halal meat served across Trust Academies is farm-assured and certified halal (pre-stunned), in line with animal welfare standards. Non-halal meat options are also available across the Trust. All meat is sourced from Farm Assured providers.

- **Staff Modelling:** Staff are encouraged to eat with pupils and model healthy eating habits and positive table etiquette.

6. Exemptions to the School Food Regulations

The School Food Regulations do not apply to food provided:

1. At occasional parties or celebrations to mark religious or cultural occasions.
2. At fundraising events.
3. For use in teaching food preparation (unless the food prepared is served as the actual school lunch).
4. On an occasional basis by parents or pupils for snacks.

7. National Guidance & Compliance

The Trust ensures each location remains compliant by:

- Ensuring each Academy maintains **Healthy School** status (or equivalent local authority certification).



- Identifying a member of the **Senior Leadership Team (SLT)** at each Academy to oversee food standards.
- Involving a selection from each **Academy Pupil Body** in menu cycles and food policy feedback.
- Maintaining a welcoming dining environment that encourages social interaction.
- Providing pupils with the skills to budget, plan, and cook meals while understanding the importance of reducing salt, sugar, and saturated fat intake.

8. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years and/or when new legislation of best practice is published by regulators. This Policy review is delegated by the Trust Board to the CEO.

Appendix: EYFS Food Standards and Nutritional Guidance (0-5 Years)

This appendix demonstrates how the setting meets the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework in relation to food, drink and nutrition. The provision ensures that all meals, snacks and drinks are healthy, balanced and nutritious, and that the Department for Education's EYFS nutrition guidance (2025) is taken fully into account in menu planning and practice.

Food provision is designed to support children's health, wellbeing and development, including their physical growth, cognitive function, and social and emotional development. The setting implements robust systems to ensure food safety, allergy management and appropriate supervision, in line with safeguarding and welfare requirements.

Through this approach, the setting is able to demonstrate to Ofsted that nutrition is embedded as a key part of high-quality early years provision, contributing positively to children's outcomes, healthy lifestyles, and readiness to learn.

1. Statutory Requirements

- All meals, snacks and drinks must be healthy, balanced and nutritious.
- Settings must take account of EYFS nutrition guidance (from September 2025) and follow it unless there is a clear reason not to. [Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/early-years-foundation-stage-nutrition)
- Fresh drinking water must be available at all times

2. Balanced Diet Expectations

Provision should include a balance of key food groups:

- Starchy carbohydrates (e.g. bread, rice, pasta, potatoes)
- Protein sources (e.g. meat, fish, eggs, pulses)
- Fruit and vegetables provided daily with variety
- Dairy foods or suitable alternatives for calcium

3. Healthy Eating Framework

- Provide: fruit, vegetables, and nutrient-rich, minimally processed foods
- Limit: foods high in fat, salt and sugar
- Avoid: sugary drinks, confectionery, and heavily processed snacks
- Only water and plain milk should be offered as drinks

4. Age and Developmental Appropriateness

- Food portion sizes, consistency and texture must be appropriate for 9–12-month-old babies
- Food portion sizes must be appropriate for children aged 1–5 years
- Food textures must be suitable for children's developmental stage
- Weaning should follow a child-led approach in partnership with parents

5. Safety and Safeguarding

- Allergy and dietary needs must be identified and carefully managed
- Food must be prepared safely to reduce choking risks
- Children must be supervised at all times while eating



- Staff must be trained to respond to allergic reactions
- Staff must be trained to deliver food to 9 month-12-month-old babies in line with the advice in the NHS Start for Life guidance [Preparing food safely for babies - Best Start in Life - NHS](#)

6. Supporting Children's Development

- Physical: supports growth, brain development, and immune health
- Cognitive: supports concentration, learning readiness, and energy stability
- Social: promotes communication, sharing, and positive mealtime interactions
- Emotional: supports wellbeing and self-regulation through positive food experiences
- Behavioural: supports development of lifelong healthy eating habits

7. Inclusion and Equity

- Provision must meet cultural, religious, and dietary needs
- Children with SEND, allergies or additional needs must be supported
- Food provision should contribute to reducing health inequalities

8. Implementation Expectations

- Menus should demonstrate balance, variety and nutritional value
- Food should be used as part of wider learning and development
- Settings should maintain a clear food and nutrition policy
- Parents and carers should be engaged in food practices where appropriate