



THE ELMS
EST 1614

Early Years Food and Nutrition Policy	
Version	2025.01
Effective from	September 2025
Extent of Policy	Early Years
Policy Owner	Head of EYPP / Head Chef
Authorised by	EY governor
Review by	September 2026
Frequency of Audit	Annual
Circulation	All EY SLT Governors Parents
Publication	Website

Early Years Food and Nutrition Policy

Introduction

We recognise that all members of the school staff, including volunteers and peripatetic staff, share the duty of care for children at the school. We aim to ensure that the health, safety and welfare of all pupils is paramount. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Safeguarding policy which includes Child Protection procedures.

At The Elms School, we are committed to promoting the health and well-being of every child through the provision of nutritious, balanced food and positive mealtime experiences. We recognise the importance of establishing healthy eating habits in the early years and aim to work in partnership with families to support children's nutritional needs and development.

Aims and Objectives

- To provide children with healthy, balanced, and nutritious meals, snacks, and drinks, taking into account the Government's Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance.
- To ensure all food provided meets dietary requirements, religious and cultural preferences, and any allergy or medical needs.
- To encourage children to develop good eating habits and a positive attitude towards food.
- To involve children in food-related activities and learning to develop awareness of healthy choices.
- To support parents and carers with information and guidance on nutrition.
- To ensure that our food provision complies with Food Standards Agency guidelines and national and local food safety standards.
- To ensure any updates to legislation or guidance are promptly incorporated into our practices.

Meals and Snacks

- All meals and snacks will be freshly prepared where possible and made from wholesome ingredients.
- We will follow government guidance such as *Eat Better, Start Better* as well as the Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance to ensure appropriate portion sizes and nutritional content.

- Staff are trained to recognise signs of hunger and fullness and to support children in self-regulating their intake.
- Meals will include a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and protein sources.
- Water and milk will be the only drinks offered during the day (except in special circumstances).
- We avoid processed foods high in fat, salt, or sugar and do not serve fizzy drinks or sweets.
- All food is freshly prepared on-site (or sourced from approved providers), using ingredients low in salt, sugar, and saturated fat.
- Seconds may be offered where appropriate, but children are never pressured to eat more than they need.

Snack times and Mealtimes

- Mealtimes will be sociable, calm, and enjoyable experiences.
- Children will be encouraged to develop independence, such as serving themselves or pouring drinks (age appropriately).
- Staff will eat alongside children where possible, modelling positive attitudes and behaviours.
- Children will never be forced to eat or finish food; encouragement and positive reinforcement will be used.
- There will always be a member of staff with a Paediatric First Aid certificate supervising the children directly during snack and meal times.

Special Dietary Requirements

- We will obtain detailed information from parents about each child's dietary needs upon registration.
- A record of allergies, intolerances, cultural or religious preferences will be kept and regularly updated.
- Staff will be trained in allergen awareness and appropriate food handling procedures where appropriate.
- Meals prepared for children with allergies, dietary needs or requirements will be clearly labelled, where appropriate, and cross-contamination will be avoided.
- All children with allergies, dietary needs or exclusions will have a personalised photo label with their individual requirements, in order for staff to cross check their dietary needs with the food they are serving.

Food Safety and Hygiene

- All food preparation and storage follow current Food Standards Agency regulations.
- Staff involved in food handling and preparation are trained in Level 2 Food Hygiene and Safety.
- The catering team conduct regular checks of food temperatures, use-by dates, and cleaning routines.
- Children are taught basic food hygiene, such as handwashing before and after meals.

Promoting Healthy Eating

- Healthy eating will be embedded into our curriculum through cooking activities, growing fruit and vegetables, and food-themed play.
- Children will learn about different foods, where they come from, and their benefits.
- We will limit the use of sugary or processed foods and avoid using food as a reward.

Working with Parents and Carers

- We will provide parents with information on our menus and invite feedback.
- We recognise the importance of celebrating birthdays and special occasions in a way that supports our healthy eating ethos.
- Whilst we do allow Birthday cakes from home, we encourage healthy alternatives to ensure consistency with our nutrition policy and to safeguard children with allergies.
- Any food sent in from home must not contain nuts and should include a list of ingredients.
- Staff will work with families to ensure cultural and religious celebrations are acknowledged respectfully and healthily.

Nutrition Education and the Curriculum

- Food and nutrition are embedded within the EYFS framework, supporting Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) and Understanding the World areas of learning.
- Activities include cooking, growing food, food-tasting, and talking about healthy choices.
- Children are introduced to where food comes from, seasonal eating, and sustainability.
- We use food-based learning to build language skills, confidence, and cultural awareness.

- Food is a meaningful part of cultural and religious celebrations. We may celebrate festivals and special cultural events (e.g. Eid, Diwali, Christmas, Harvest) through themed meals, cooking activities, and food-tasting experiences that reflect diverse traditions.
- We welcome discussion with families to ensure cultural sensitivity and dietary inclusivity.
- Children will be encouraged to share their own experiences and traditions, fostering respect and curiosity.