

Healthy Eating and Nutrition Policy

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HEALTHY EATING AND NUTRITION POLICY

Introduction

At Annan all aspects of a child's wellbeing and holistic development are valued. We know that eating well is vital for good health and understand that there is a strong link between a healthy diet and physical, mental and social wellbeing. As a school we know that food is fundamental to the quality of a child's life; not just in providing essential nutrition but in communicating and sharing positive values, attitudes and experiences with each other and in celebrating, nurturing and increasing our appreciation of cultural diversity.

We are committed to giving children consistent messages to help them take responsibility for and understand the impact of choices they make. We believe that adults (staff, parents and carers) should be good role models and should support the children in understanding how balanced nutrition contributes to a person's health, happiness and overall wellbeing.

This policy has been formulated to enable the school to develop and maintain a clear, shared philosophy on all aspects of food and nutrition that benefits the whole school community.

Aims and objectives

- To encourage children to enjoy food and make informed choices
- To promote life-long learning about food and nutrition
- To understand that nutritious food is essential to their ability to learn
- To ensure that we are giving consistent and up to date messages about food and health
- To teach accurate information about food and nutrition as part of the curriculum
- To promote the importance of drinking water and encouraging children to drink water throughout the day
- To promote healthy balanced snack choices
- To ensure school cooked lunches are balanced and nutritious
- To promote healthy options for cookery in school
- To encourage packed lunches to be healthy and balanced
- To ensure that the food provision and cooking ingredients used in school reflect the needs of all children eg catering for specific food-related allergies

Allergy awareness and nut bans

We support the approach advocated by Anaphylaxis UK towards nut bans/nut free schools. This does not support a blanket ban on any particular allergen in any establishment, including in schools. This is because nuts are only one of many allergens that could affect pupils, and no school could guarantee a truly allergen free environment for a child living with food allergy. They advocate instead for schools to adopt a culture of allergy awareness and education.

Annan School has a 'whole school awareness of allergies' approach, to ensure teachers, pupils and all other staff are aware of what allergies are, the importance of avoiding the pupils' allergens, the signs & symptoms, how to deal with allergic reactions and to ensure policies and procedures are in place to minimise risk.

To minimise risk we have a Nut Aware approach and ask parents not to send in food containing nuts.

This includes all snacks, lunches (including packed lunch in kindergarten and on outing days in rest of school), cooking and all shared events.

Our Policy means that the following items should not be brought into school:

- Packs or pots of nuts
- Peanut butter sandwiches
- Fruit and cereal bars that contain nuts
- Cake containing nuts
- Muesli and granola
- Nutty bread

Daily snack time

Snacks should reflect this healthy eating policy so children are not permitted crisps, chocolate, sweets or sugary items such as sweet biscuits, cakes and doughnuts.

Suggested items include:

- A piece of fruit or vegetable*
- Oat cakes/Bread sticks/Rice cakes
- Small bread roll or sandwich with protein filling eg cheese
- Cereal/oat/fruit bar (please check they do not contain nuts)
- Innocent smoothie (or similar check ingredients)
- Plain Crackers
- Homemade flapjack or similar (low in sugar content and no nuts)

In Kindergarten, children are provided with a healthy snack and fruit (which is chargeable), however as an alternative, parents may provide snacks and fruit from home following the guidelines above.

*** For children under 5, food items which can represent a choking hazard such as grapes, mini tomatoes or olives should be cut in half lengthways.** This is a statutory requirement for children in EYFS).

Lunch time

Lunch time is a pleasurable, orderly, social occasion and children to sit together to enjoy their meal.

Lunch is served in the hall. There are two sittings each of 30 minutes, although this can vary according to children's needs. There is an early years (kindergarten/infant) sitting at 12pm and a junior sitting at 12.30pm. The hall is well staffed with teachers and support staff on a rotational basis. In the early years, staff sit with the children. Staff monitor the amount children eat and are support them to eat their lunch, to help maintain a clean and tidy environment and to encourage positive interactions over the meal. Staff will provide feedback to parents if children have not eaten as much as usual.

School Lunches

Our school meal providers prepare vegetarian meals off-site and bring them in ready to eat. They work closely with us to enable children to have input into the menu. The menu is sent home to parents a week in advance. Children are encouraged to try a wide range of foods and an alternative option is available to ensure children do not go hungry. Parent views are regularly sought and responded to regarding school lunch menus. Our caterers provide balanced and nourishing vegetarian meals that contain at least one item from each of the following food groups:

- Starchy foods such as potatoes, grains, rice and pasta
- Vegetables (raw or cooked)
- Protein rich foods such as beans or cheese
- Pieces of fruit such as orange, apple, melon, pineapple, grapes, pear

Packed Lunches

Children in receipt of Early Years Funding (EYFE) may opt to bring in their own packed lunch in place of school lunch.

All other children are provided with a school lunch. If there are particular circumstances that you would like your child to bring a packed lunch (i.e. severe food allergies) please talk to us.

When preparing packed lunches, ideally these should include unrefined carbohydrates such as bread, grains, fruits and vegetables, healthy fats such as avocados as well as a source of protein for example a hardboiled egg or cheese. They can also contain hot soup, pasta and dairy items such as yogurts. If you send in any meat or dairy products, please make sure these are in insulated lunchbox contains an ice pack as lunch boxes are not refrigerated.

Food items which can represent a choking hazard such as grapes, mini tomatoes or olives should be cut in half lengthways. This is a statutory requirement for children in EYFS.

The following are not allowed in lunchboxes at school:

Chocolate or snack bars containing chocolate
Sweets, crisps, and fizzy drinks
Items containing nuts.

Drinks

Children are expected to bring a named water bottle to school daily. Children are encouraged to drink whenever they feel thirsty. Water bottles should be filled at home each morning and can be refilled at school if needed. Milk and a dairy alternative (oat milk) is available in the morning snack time for kindergarten children. Older children are encouraged to drink water with their snack. Children have a glass of water along with their school lunch and all children are encouraged to drink.

Packed lunch for school trips (infants/juniors)

When preparing packed lunches for whole day school trips, we are more relaxed about what parents choose to pack but ask that these are easy to eat (avoiding things like soup/pasta) and in lightweight containers which are easy to transport. Some additional snacks are often asked for - it is fine to send snacks in packets for this so long as they are nut free and there is a balanced offering overall in the lunch provided.

Breakfast Club and After School Club

The children are offered toast, crumpets, fruit and water (and milk in the kindergarten) for Breakfast Club. If staying on for after school club, children are offered fresh fruit and a starchy snack, such as a rice cake or oat cake and a drink of water.

Special occasions and Community events

There are several special occasions and celebratory events over the Annan year, such as the Strawberry Tea and Winter Festival. During these events foods can contribute to a sense of celebration and sharing, therefore sweet foods such as cake may be available, in addition to more balanced 'free from' options such as sugar/dairy/wheat free options. We recognise that healthy eating does not mean elimination of certain food groups but can mean enjoying them at certain times in moderation. We educate children about the nutritional value of foods and encourage them to make informed choices.

We ask parents to bear our healthy eating and nut free policy in mind when making produce to donate.

Birthdays

We ask that children do not bring in cakes or refined foods/sweets for birthdays or special celebrations but do encourage children to bring in healthy alternatives like special fruit or fruit kebabs.

Cookery and Nutrition in the curriculum

We believe that cookery and nutritional education has great potential for cross-curricular work. There are many opportunities to promote healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle in most curriculum areas which are considered when planning topics.

Children receive multiple opportunities to learn about how to grow their own food and each class has access to outdoor growing beds. We maximise opportunities within the curriculum to discuss and work with food, such as preparing and cooking seasonal soup at Forest School. We aim to increase children's awareness of where their food comes from including elements of food production and manufacturing and how these can impact upon the environment. We aim to make ethical choices such as using free-range eggs and ingredients free from palm oil. Importance is placed on educating children about seasonal and sustainable produce. We avoid using refined sugar in cookery as far as possible and cooking ingredients are healthy and nutritious.

Cooking activities are used in a variety of ways to widen children's experiences by giving them the opportunity to touch, taste and smell a wide variety of foods from different cultures. Depending on the age of the children we also educate children about how their body uses the food they eat.

Opportunities to support and extend the curriculum will be made through:

- Cooking experiences in class
- Cooking offered as a Froebelian occupation
- Cookery Club offered as an after-school activity
- Parent workshops when appropriate

We do not use nuts or nut derivatives in school cooking sessions. Coconut, lentils and sesame are permitted. However, we cannot guarantee food is free from nut traces.

Food hygiene

Several staff members across the school hold a Food Hygiene Level 2 award. All staff contribute towards good practices in relation to food hygiene, as follows:

- Children are reminded to wash their hands after going to the toilet, before cooking and before eating.
- Water bottles and lunch boxes should be taken home everyday to be washed.
- Clean surfaces are used to prepare foods in cookery lesson and for snack.
- Food will be stored in appropriate places. Fridges are available to keep perishable cookery items at the correct temperature.
- Parents are informed that the packed lunches are stored at room temperature and are therefore encouraged to use insulated packed lunch boxes.

Health and safety

- All staff are aware of any current food allergies or intolerances affecting specific children. Staff know where to access epi pens or other medical equipment should the need arise.
- A number of identified staff throughout the school hold current Paediatric First Aid certificates and are trained in how to deal with choking incidents.
- Children are asked not to share packed lunches or snacks. Some children are allergic to nuts and a serious reaction, including breathing difficulties could occur if accidentally ingested.
- Staff will be aware of eating disorders that can occur for younger children and ensure that we know how to recognise and respond appropriately should the need arise.

Partnership with parents and carers

The partnership between home and school is important in shaping how children perceive healthy eating and nutrition. We aim to learn from each other, particularly regarding diversity. We welcome parents to send in recipes from home and foods related to family and cultural celebrations.

Parental views about school meals, packed lunches, nutrition and cookery are gathered through questionnaires. We respect the wide-ranging parental views on food and nutrition and aim to provide a balanced response.

We ask that parents support our aim to keep refined foods especially sugar to a minimum and to not use nuts when cooking for special events. Where food may include other allergens we ask that they are clearly labelled.

Packaging

Whilst not directly an issue in relation to healthy eating, we ask that parents avoid single use plastics, plastic bags and cling film in snack or lunch preparation where possible. Please try to decant things into smaller containers.

Monitoring and review

This policy is monitored by the Proprietors and staff of the school and will be reviewed for changes in procedures and statutory guidelines in accordance with the school's policy review guidelines.