



## QUEEN ELIZABETH HIGH SCHOOL AND HEXHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL

### SCHOOL FOOD POLICY

We value all members of the school community and seek to promote the health and well-being of all members as part of being an enjoyable place to work and learn. We recognise that food and nutrition form an important aspect of our health and well-being and thus contribute to all being able to learn effectively. We recognise that food and drink play an important role in our different cultures and for all of our emotional and social well-being and are committed to communicating consistent messages across the school.

As students' spend on average a quarter of their waking lives in school, one big step to improving the nutrition of children is to offer healthy food and drink choices throughout the school day. The schools environment, attitudes of staff and pupils, as well as, what children learn in the classroom, have a major influence on their knowledge and understanding of health. If encouraged to enjoy healthy food and drink early on, it is much more likely that these positive behaviours will remain with a child throughout life.

The purpose of this policy is to inform all members of the school community and implement systems and structures to be consistent about the food and drink provision at our school.

The food policy was initially formulated following consultation involving the school community, including students, school staff, governors, parents, community dietician and Healthy School Standards representative. The revised food policy is available to the entire school community via our website.

Everyone involved with the teaching/serving/cooking of food/drink in school during the day and our partners that share our school premises seek to adhere to this policy

#### **Rationale**

Our School Food policy will encourage, reflect and build upon the values outlined in the National Curriculum. It is based on the advice and guidance from the Food in Schools material and supported by the Northumberland Healthy School Programme.

At Hexham Middle School and Queen Elizabeth High school we recognise the important connection between a healthy diet and a pupil's ability to learn effectively and achieve high standards in school. It is widely known that a healthy balanced diet is vital for children's growth and development and for their long-term health and well-being. This is particularly important in teenage years therefore as a school community we have a responsibility to continually promote healthy eating.

Current research indicates that health issues related to diet are a major factor in ill health and mortality issues. Deprivation indices show that obesity is linked to a high index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). Schools share the responsibility with parents and the wider community including health professionals e.g. nurses, GPs, dentists, to educate students in all aspects of food and nutrition so enabling them to make healthy, informed choices through increasing knowledge, challenging attitudes and practising skills.

## Aims and Objectives

We aim to:

- Improve the health of pupils, staff and their families by helping to influence their eating habits through increasing their knowledge and awareness of food issues; including what constitutes a healthy diet, hygienic food preparation and storage methods.
- Help our pupils acquire the skills and knowledge to make healthy choices and set a good example by offering healthy food and drink, across the whole school day, as outlined in the National Healthy School Programme.
- Ensure that food provision throughout the day is in line with current guidelines from the School Food Trust and covers all aspects of provision including the nutritional school food standards.
- Integrate our aims into all aspects of school life, including food provision within the school, the curriculum and pastoral and social activities.
- Ensure that all aspects of food and nutrition in school promote the health and wellbeing of pupils, staff and visitors to the school.
- Provide age appropriate knowledge and skills in order to make healthy choices.
- Tackle childhood obesity by educating our pupils about the importance of a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle.
- Encourage a healthy lifestyle outside school.
- Increase pupils' knowledge of food production, manufacturing, distribution and marketing. As well as informing them of the impact on both their health and the environment.
- Work with the Catering Manager to encourage students to make healthier choices.
- Work with the catering manager, students and parents to develop a healthy focus to mealtimes including lunch, break and breakfast times.
- Reduce the intake of salty, fatty and sugary foods.
- Encourage experimentation with unfamiliar foods e.g. by having days focussing on foods from around the world/other cultures.
- Encourage the uptake of free school meals for those who are entitled.
- Ensure pupils are well nourished at school, and that every pupil has access to safe, tasty and nutritious food.
- Ensure that food provision in the school reflects the ethical and medical requirements of staff and pupils, e.g. religious, ethnic, vegetarian, medical and allergenic needs.
- School meals should provide an opportunity for the development of social skills through the dining experience and encourage more young people to take a school lunch.
- Ensure that the teachers with responsibility for food/catering have basic food hygiene training.

## **These Aims and Objectives will be addressed through the following curriculum areas:**

- **Art** - observational drawing of food, healthy eating poster/lunchbox design.
- **PSHE** - cultural diversity, menu planning, nutrition.
- **Design & Technology** - healthy eating cookery workshops, designing tools, Food Technology and hygiene.
- **Literacy** - food diaries, writing instructions.
- **Geography** - what food grows where, transporting food, waste/recycling, sustainability
- **History** - past diets, discoveries.
- **ICT** - recording results of food / diet surveys.
- **Maths** - weights and measures, graphs.
- **P.E.** - links between healthy eating and exercise.
- **Science** - effects of heat on food, plant growth, nutrition.

## **Food served in School**

### **Breakfast**

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. It is needed to kick-start the body after a long night's rest. Eating a breakfast high in fibre can help prevent hunger pangs mid-morning, which means there is less likelihood of pupils snacking on foods containing fat and sugar. By skipping breakfast, pupils may be missing out on essential vitamins and minerals. Research conducted by the Health Promotion Agency shows that almost one third of 12–17 year old girls do not eat breakfast on school days. The High School operates a breakfast service that provides nutritious food for pupils before the school day.

### **Morning Break**

Morning break plays an important role in school. It contributes to short-term health benefits by providing access to healthy food at break times and should primarily reinforce the key whole school food message to ensuring that the morning break offers a range of healthy choices including sandwiches, freshly prepared bread products, fruit, yoghurt and healthy drinks

### **School Lunches**

School meals should be nutritious, varied and appeal to students. For a significant proportion of students, school lunch may be the only freshly cooked meal of the day. School meals should help create an interest in food by offering pupils a range of new food experiences. A variety of healthy, tasty and nutritious food is freshly prepared on a daily basis by the school catering team and meets the National school food Standards. As a school we encourage students to have a school lunch and encourage free school meals students to use their daily entitlement to purchase a nutritious lunch. Healthy options are promoted at lunchtime and we encourage the consumption of fruit and vegetables as part of the 5 a day initiative as much as is possible e.g. through the provision of a salads and fruit deserts

## **Snacks**

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

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

The school recommends the consumption of the following foods and drinks at morning break and lunch time:

- Water
- Milk
- Fruit and Vegetables
- Bread based snacks- wholemeal breads spread thinly with low fat spread, bread sticks or toast

## **Vending Machines**

Vending machines will provide a range of healthy snack foods that contribute positively to the pupils' health.

## **Use of Food as a Reward**

We do 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 should be used in school.

## **Drinking Water**

The National School Food Standards recommend that drinking water should be available to all students, every day, and free of charge. Water Research has shown the value to pupils of gaining regular access to fresh, chilled drinking water throughout the school day. Intake of water is linked to good health, better concentration and increased attainment. The school has a number of chilled water units available and Pupils are expected to fill water bottles during break and lunchtimes.

## **FOOD AND DRINK BROUGHT INTO SCHOOL**

### **Packed Lunches**

The school recognise that choice is a key element of healthy eating and the school's role is in educating students to make informed choices about healthy eating. Some students may choose to bring a packed lunch to school. Parents are responsible for the provision of packed lunches for their children.

However, the school recommends that packed lunches should follow guidelines issued by the Children's Food Trust and refrain from including confectionery, crisps or fizzy drinks. Information is also available at parent evenings or on request from the School Catering Manager.

Packed lunches prepared by the school caterers will adhere to the National school food Standards

## **SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENTS**

### **Food Allergy and Intolerance**

Parents are expected to inform school about any food allergies or special dietary requirements that their child may have. Information relating to individual needs should be discussed with the parents prior to the child starting school. Individual care plans will be organised by Pastoral Leaders with support from pastoral admin and will be overseen by a member of the SLT. These plans will document symptoms and medical/ allergic reactions and actions to be taken in an emergency, including emergency contact details. School caterers will be made aware of any students with food allergies/food intolerance and requests for special diets will be submitted according to an agreed process.

**Vegetarians and Vegans** School caterers offer a vegetarian option at lunch every day. When necessary the school will also provide a vegan option.

### **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 food safety and hygiene training; and that suitable equipment and protective clothing are available. Any food safety hazards are identified and controlled.

Information is cascaded to everyone who is involved with food related activities in school. We have food safety information displayed in the appropriate areas. All staff involved in the preparation or handling of food are expected to complete their Food Hygiene Certificates. There is regular monitoring of the food facilities by the Environmental Health Officer.

### **Food Hygiene**

Pupils are reminded about the importance of food hygiene and hand washing before eating or handling food. Whenever pupils' work with food in the classroom they are reminded to follow basic hygiene routines including; wearing a food preparation apron, using clean equipment, always washing hands before and after working with the food.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation:**

The Catering Manager will seek and use feedback from students, parents and staff. For example, the Catering Manager will seek student/pupil views from the respective schools councils.

This policy will be kept up-to-date in relation to the current National School Food Standards.

### **Useful links**

The school food plan: <http://www.schoolfoodplan.com>

The Children's Food Trust: [www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk](http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk)

Child obesity and socioeconomic status: [http://www.noo.org.uk/noo\\_about\\_obesity/child\\_obesity](http://www.noo.org.uk/noo_about_obesity/child_obesity)

NHS – Eat Well guide website: <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/the-eatwell-guide.aspx>

5 a day: <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/5ADAY/Pages/Tips.aspx>

Change for life: <https://www.nhs.uk/change4life-beta/be-food-smart>

Food Safety: <http://www.nhs.uk/LiveWell/Homehygiene/Pages/Homehygienehub.aspx>

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