



Food and Drink Policy

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Governor Approval:	Suzie Longstaff	September 2025
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Policy statement

Eaton Square School regards snack and mealtimes as an important part of the school day. Mealtimes are a social time for children and adults, and they also help children to learn about healthy eating. This is an opportunity for adults to role model healthy eating and appropriate behaviours.

Aim

At snack and mealtimes, we aim to provide nutritious food which meets the children's individual dietary needs. We also promote the health and well-being of the whole community through all aspects of food and nutrition, teaching the children how to keep healthy as part of our curriculum, and we provide consistent messages to children, parents and staff.

Dietary requirements and allergies

The school is made aware of any of the children's dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies, at the point of entry to the school via the application process. Parents are required to consult with staff to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs, including any allergies, are kept up to date. We display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all staff and volunteers are aware of them.

Procedures are in place to support and manage children's dietary requirements. A food/drink substitution, made in the case of allergies or other dietary requirements, will be similar in nutrient content to the food/drink it replaces. Food allergen information is on display. Foods served reflect the ethnicity and cultures of all children using the provision. Parents and/or carers are asked for advice to ensure the needs of all children are met and we learn from carers and parents' experiences and suggestions. Children with complex needs have their nutritional needs taken into account.

We require staff to show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. Staff do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child or make a child feel singled out because of his/her diet or allergy.



Menu

We plan menus in advance and review them with parents. Our menus are sent to all parents in advance and we display the menus on the website. We provide nutritious food that includes a variety of foods from the five main food groups. We also include foods from the diet of each of the children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new foods. We do not provide food that contains nuts or nut products. We do provide a vegetarian alternative on days when meat or fish are offered.

Our meals, snacks and drinks are scheduled at regular times

A healthy, balanced and nutritious meal or a snack is offered to children at least every 1½ – 3 hours. This is because children in the Early Years have small stomachs and high nutrient needs as they grow and develop, to play and learn. Only drinking water and milk is provided. Fresh drinking water is always available, and staff encourage children to drink water regularly throughout the day. Meal and snack times are included in each class's timetable.

In accordance with parents' wishes, we offer children arriving early before 8.30am, and/or staying late, an appropriate meal or snack.

We serve age-appropriate portion sizes

We serve age-appropriate portion sizes. Appetites in young children vary. We encourage them to eat healthy foods according to their appetites. It is better for children to ask for seconds than to serve them too much. Children are required to wash their hands before each snack or meal. We also provide children with utensils that are appropriate for their ages and stage of development and that take account of the eating practices in their cultures.

Meal and snack times are an opportunity to share conversation

Meal and snack times are recognised as an important time to develop verbal and social skills, good eating habits and to learn about healthy eating. Children always sit at tables in groups for meals and snacks. Teachers can easily offer help, role model good manners and eating behaviour, direct conversation, and create a calm and relaxed eating environment. At the same time, we can supervise the children's eating. Class teachers eat with the Nursery children at mealtimes and eat the same food, to role-model good manners and healthy eating.

Children are encouraged to try healthy foods

Children are encouraged to have a little of the different dishes on their plate and have a balanced diet. Children are allowed to say 'no' to foods and all food served is healthy. Food is not used as a reward or punishment. We praise children for trying different foods and demonstrating good manners and eating behaviour.

Birthday Policy

We have a Birthday Policy (see separate policy). Special occasions and birthdays are celebrated with



mostly healthy foods or with non-food treats. We promote non-food celebrations and treats, such as craft projects or stickers, which are pleasant alternatives to birthday sweets. If food is used for celebrations, it forms part of a balanced meal provision and doesn't replace healthy foods.

Only healthy drinks are provided

Water and milk are the best drinks for children's teeth, growth and development. We provide full fat milk and/or semi-skimmed milk for those children who chose to drink milk; we do not use skimmed milk for children under five. Drinking water is available at all times. Juice (even diluted juice) or other sugary drinks are not provided.

During the summer, drinks are taken outside throughout the day and children are encouraged to drink. In the EYFS, staff take water to the park every day during park times.

In our Early Years classrooms, the children are encouraged to bring their favourite open cup from home. The staff provide water regularly as needed.

Breastfeeding

At Eaton Square School, we have a supportive breastfeeding environment. Breast milk is the ideal source of nutrition for infants for at least the first year of life. We have refrigerated storage space for staff's expressed breast milk which is clearly labelled with name and date at the staff room. Milk will be stored at staff's own risk. Mothers (parents and visitors) are welcome to breastfeed, and a secluded space will be provided, if required. Our designated area for breastfeeding is the First Aid Room.