



Food Policy

Policy agreed by:	LMT
Date of policy:	December 2022
Review frequency:	2 years
Date of next review:	December 2024

Food Policy

Introduction

Red Gates School is committed to improving and promoting the health and well being of all pupils, staff and visitors. This can only be achieved through a whole school approach to promoting healthy eating and drinking. This policy has been written alongside the government documents 'The food standards practical guide' 2022 and 'The Eatwell guide' 2018. It will promote the importance of physical activity, directly linked to healthy eating and drinking. This policy will be accessible for staff and parents on the school website.

Definition of a Healthy Diet

With reference to Schools Food Trust Guidance 2022;

“Children need a healthy, balanced diet, which is rich in fruit, vegetables and bread/other cereals/potatoes, contains moderate amounts of meat (or alternatives) and dairy products, and contains much less fat, sugar, and salt than many children currently eat.”

Description of school and dining facilities

Red Gates is a primary school for children who have severe learning difficulties (SLD) and autism (ASD), and has classes for children of Nursery class age through to Year 6. Approximately 165 children attend the school that live in Croydon or neighbouring boroughs. The wide catchment area means that parental involvement is more difficult than in a mainstream school but we work hard to ensure that parents are as involved as possible through staging school activities at convenient times, hosting parents' support groups and ensuring that parents are represented as Governors.

Red Gates is co-located with The Quest Primary School. The two schools share the same dining hall and kitchen facilities. Lunch time is regarded as an excellent inclusion opportunity where pupils from both schools see each other daily. Where required, the Speech and Language Therapy Team (SaLT) and Occupational Therapy Team (OT) will assess eating and drinking skills, provide equipment and devise eating and drinking profiles. We seek to ensure the setting and atmosphere in which pupils dine is relaxed and comfortable so that pupils can enjoy their meals in a pleasant, sociable environment.

A variety of table and chair heights are available to the pupils. Special utensils, mats and equipment are provided dependent on need and assessment by the SaLT and OTs. Every class requires the support of lunchtime support assistants (LTSA) to provide the support required to improve eating, drinking and social skills in line with eating and drinking profiles, Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and Personalised Plans.

Vending Machines

There are no vending machines at the school.

Name of member of LMT responsible for school food

Melissa Hendry – Acting Head Teacher

Key responsibilities and a multi-disciplinary approach

The Head has the key responsibility for monitoring that pupils are provided with healthy nutritional choices of food at snack and lunch times.

For many pupils at Red Gates, eating can be a challenge which often results in very limited diets. Staff support pupils to continuously explore a wider variety of foods through sensory activities, cookery sessions, snack and lunchtimes.

Harrisons provide catering for Red Gates, our menu has been designed to ensure that it is made up of foods that we know our population eats. Our daily menu includes a meat and vegetarian option. Halal options are also available daily. The company provides basic utensils but the school provides specialist equipment such as Doidy cups, Manoy plates, plate rings, ergonomically designed utensils.

The school considers lunchtime to be an important learning opportunity and it is treated as part of the pupils' education. Pupils eat with their class groups and the class team supervise the pupils at lunchtime to assist them to make choices and eat as independently as possible.

The School Business Manager (SBM) meets regularly with the area manager from the catering provider to discuss menus and review pupils' preferences and dislikes, taking into consideration the complex needs of Red Gates pupils. School meals to celebrate special events are also organised e.g. Chinese New Year.

A "Healthy Schools" governor representative liaises with the Head to monitor school food, healthy eating and well-being in school.

All teachers have responsibility for the snacks (prepared or brought in) provided to the class. A balanced range of healthy snacks are offered to pupils daily.

The Head monitors school meals and consults with the School Nurse and Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT) to look at pupil's preferred foods, range of foods being eaten and special diets required in line with eating and drinking programmes. The School Nurse liaises with the Dietician as required. Packed lunches are also monitored and parents contacted to discuss healthier options where necessary. Parents are encouraged to choose school lunches for their children rather than provide a packed lunch, but this is not always possible due to the special needs and unique dietary requirements of the pupils. If pupils' diets are very restricted and therefore parents send in a packed lunch, staff support pupils to explore a wider variety of food during sensory sessions and cooking sessions.

The school works with parents to promote healthy lifestyles through correspondence, family learning sessions and parent workshops. As part of the "Starter Programme" for parents of new pupils, healthy eating will be discussed by a representative from the school's catering company. School menus and special diets will be discussed. Parents will also meet with the School Nurse, dietician (if required), SaLT and Occupational therapist, regarding special diets and eating and drinking programmes.

Eating and Drinking, special diets and monitoring of the height and weight of individual pupils are discussed with parents as part of the annual review of pupils' EHCPs. Where appropriate, pupils' independent eating and drinking skills, and their progress towards choosing, preparing and tasting a range of foods is assessed on SOLAR, the online assessment tool used across the school.

Parental and pupil involvement in monitoring food provision

Wherever possible, pupils are consulted regarding the quality of food provision at the school. Due to the learning difficulties of the pupils, their responses are given in a variety of forms. Whilst a few are able to discuss their preferences, for the majority a judgement will need to be made based on how they have responded when an option was offered. The responses of the pupils are regularly fed back to the cook and SBM. Where appropriate, the school council represent the pupils' view with regards to food provision at the school.

During snack times, great emphasis is placed on the pupils' ability to make choices and they are supported in this by the use of symbols and photographs, as well as speech, signing and gestures.

Menus are sent home to parents and they are invited to comment on the provision. A governor with special responsibility for food represents the views of parents, pupils and staff on the Board of Governors.

Meeting the needs of pupils with special dietary needs

All parents are asked if their children have any special dietary needs when they begin at Red Gates School. Special dietary needs, whether for medical, religious or cultural/moral reasons will always be respected. The school will seek to ensure that all school staff and catering staff are given this information in written form.

It is recognised as a medical need that some pupils need a particular texture of food, e.g. through difficulty chewing/swallowing or because of another condition e.g. autism.

Reward systems within Red Gates School

Food (whether unhealthy or healthy) is not used as a reward to recognise the positive behaviour and achievements of pupils at Red Gates School.

Red Gates School recognises achievement through a range of appropriate motivators, e.g. verbal praise, stickers, certificates, wows and as part of the "Celebration of Achievement" ceremony held at the end of each academic year, which directly involves each child in the school.

Celebrations

Red Gates promotes good relationships and understanding among pupils, and celebrates the large number of different cultures within the school (refer to SMSC Policy). For this reason, food from a range of cultures is often shared as part of religious and cultural festivals. On some occasions people will be invited in to cook foods for the pupils and parents or friends may send in food to be shared at school.

Due to their disabilities and the wide catchment area of the school, Red Gates pupils do not have the opportunity to have the same peer links outside of school as many young people. The sharing of important occasions such as birthdays with their peers and friends are celebrated at school. Parents are welcome to send in healthy food for these celebrations and a birthday cake if they wish to.

Aims

The school will promote the health and wellbeing of pupils, staff and visitors to Red Gates by:

- Providing access to and promoting healthy nutritious food and drink;
- Delivering clear and consistent messages about food, nutrition and healthy eating;
- Providing opportunities to learn about diet, nutrition, food safety and hygiene, food preparation, as well as where food comes from as part of the curriculum;
- Actively promoting healthy food and drink as part of an enjoyable and balanced diet and restricting the availability and promotion of unhealthy options;
- Providing the appropriate dining furniture and eating utensils to meet the very specific needs of Red Gates pupils, some of whom will also require additional support from the Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist and Speech and Language Therapist.

The school will promote the importance of physical activity as part of a healthy life style by:

- Ensuring all pupils have regular physical exercise as part of the school curriculum;
- Ensuring all pupils will have access to specialised clubs (e.g. lunch time clubs, Golden Time) and be encouraged to participate in physical activities during play times;
- Provide training for staff so they are skilled in maximizing opportunities for pupils to increase and enjoy physical activity.

Review and development

Whole school Healthy Eating will be reviewed by LMT, with individual pupils healthy eating reviewed by class teams. Maintaining healthy options at snack times and continuing to promote the Red Gates Healthy Eating and Well-Being Policy to all stake holders is monitored by LMT.

The quality of school meals will be reviewed at half-termly meetings to monitor the catering contract.

This policy will be monitored and reviewed by staff and the Governors Premises and Health and Safety Committee.

Policy reviewed and updated December 2022

Headteacher

Chair of Governors

Date

Date