Old Palace & Children's House Federation

HEALTHY EATING POLICY

ADOPTED AUTUMN 2025

Healthy Eating Policy

1. Introduction

As a Health Schools London Gold Award winner, the federation is committed to giving our pupils consistent messages about all aspects of health and to encourage them to take **responsibility for the choices** they make. The federation recognises the important connection between healthy eating and a pupil's ability to learn effectively, as well as it impact on their physical development and mental health.

"Tackling obesity is one of the greatest long-term health challenges this country faces. Today, around two-thirds (63% of adults are above a healthy weight, and of these half are living with obesity. We have 1 in 3 children leaving primary school who are already overweight or living with obesity, with 1 in 5 living with obesity."

Obesity prevalence is highest amongst the most deprived groups in society. Children in the most deprived parts of the country are more than twice as likely to be obese as their peers living in the richest areas. This is sowing the seeds of adult diseases and health inequalities in early childhood.

Obesity is associated with reduced life expectancy. It is a risk factor for a range of chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, at least 12 kinds of cancer, liver and respiratory disease, and obesity can impact on mental health."

Locally, children in Tower Hamlets have high levels of excess weight (overweight or obesity). Among 4-5 year olds, 21.8% have excess weight (of whom 11.7% are obese) and among 10-11 year olds, 41.4% have excess weight (of whom 25.3% are obese) (NCMP data 2018/19 academic year). Both of these are above the average for London and England.

In addition, the number of children aged 5 years old who have one or more decayed, missing or filled teeth is higher than the London average.

2. Aims and Objectives

1. To provide a range of healthy food choices throughout the school day and in line with the mandatory School Food Standards
2. To support pupils to make healthy food choices and be better prepared to learn and achieve
3. To give our pupils the information they need to make healthy choices and to support them in developing a healthy attitude towards food
4. To ensure a consistent approach to healthy eating across the school community including pupils, staff and parents/carers

3. Curriculum Provision and Content

By the end of primary school pupils should know:

Healthy eating

- what constitutes a **healthy diet** (including understanding calories and other nutritional content).
- the principles of **planning and preparing a range of healthy meals.**
- the characteristics of a **poor diet** and **risks** associated with unhealthy eating (including, for example, obesity and tooth decay) and other behaviours (e.g. impact of alcohol on diet or health).

Within each year group, there are opportunities for the children to learn about food and the importance of healthy eating.

Through the **Early Years Curriculum**, delivered at Children's House and in Reception at Old Palace, pupils begin to learn the importance of a healthy diet. They have opportunities to handle and taste different fruits and vegetables, and grow their own salad produce, which they then use to prepare healthy snacks. They learn about the role food plays in special occasions and that some foods should be eaten less often than others.

Science in KS1 introduces children to where their food comes from and allows the children to explore a wide range of fruit of vegetable. The children learn that a healthy diet is needed for growth and are introduced to the main food groups. They have opportunities to plan a health plate and to consider the effect of food allergies. They learn about the importance of sleep, good oral hygiene and how to handle food safely. The children also have an opportunity to grow, harvest and eat their own fruit and vegetables, and learn about composting.

In KS2, they continue to develop their understanding of where food comes from, including processed foods. The children learn about the digestive system, illnesses such as diabetes and how to care for their teeth and gums. They consolidate their knowledge of food groups and which foods are rich in these, and investigate the role some common vitamins and minerals have in supporting health. They learn about the need for a balance diet and how eating different coloured fruit/vegetables can support this. They are introduced to calories and factors which impact how many calories are needed. They also investigate how some common foods may contain 'hidden' sugar' and use the Food Scanner app to monitor their own sugar consumption. The children, also learn how to store food safely and look at ways in which seasonal food can be preserved.

Humanities provides an opportunity to look at where our food comes from and the significance of different foods to specific countries and cultures. Children explore food production and the negative impact this may have, such as the use of non-sustainable farming and the impact of food miles. They also explore Fair Trade.

Food Technology (part of DT), allows each year group to prepare food and build upon their basic cooking skills. It also provides a practical opportunity to apply their knowledge of food safety. The school has a purpose build Food Lab where cookery can be taught. In Year 2, the children have the opportunity to work with a professional chef.

RE provides an opportunity to discuss the role of certain foods in the major religions of the world. Children learn about the symbolism attached to some foods and the association of food with certain religious festivals.

PSHCE encourages young people to take responsibility for their own health and well-being, teaches them how to develop a healthy lifestyle and addresses issues such as body image. It also allows children to explore how other behaviours may effect diet

Physical Education allows pupils to explore how a healthy diet supports physical development and performance. It also teaches the importance of regular exercise for good physical and mental health.

All food provision within the curriculum will be healthy at all times.

4. Food provision across the Federation

Breakfast Club

Breakfast is an important meal that should provide 25% of a child's energy requirement and supports pupils to be ready to learn at the start of each day. Old Palace runs a daily Breakfast Club from 8am.

The food offered is healthy and is consistent with a healthy diet. We provide wholegrain toast, low-fat margarine, low sugar jam, low fat cheese spread, low-salt/low-sugar fortified cereals (occasionally including Rice Krispies as a choice), semi-skimmed milk and slices of fresh fruit. A small class of 100% fruit juice can be taken, in addition to water.

Drinks
All pupils have access to drinking water throughout the day.
The children are asked to bring in a clear reusable water bottle for use in the classroom. Water is provided on the lunch tables and there are water stations in the playground where bottles can be re-filled.
Packed lunches, provided for trips, also include a bottle of water.
Other than water, the children should not bring any drinks into school

It is recommended that pupils have the following intake of water each day:

- **2- 4 year olds:** 1 to 1.2 litres perday
- **Reception to Year 3:** around 1.2 litres per day
- **Year 4-6** around 1.5 litres per day.

Snacks
The federation understands that healthy snacks can be an important part of the diet of young people.

At Children's House, Snack Time is an important social time where children have access to a range of healthy snacks prepared and served by the school staff

At Old Palace, Reception & KS1 classes participate in the government fruit and vegetable initiative that provides all infants with free fruit/ vegetables each day.
KS2 pupils are allowed to bring fruit or a healthy cereal bar into school to eat at break-times or before after school clubs.

We do not allow crisps, sweets, chocolates or fizzy drinks.

Lunchtime

Children's House

At Children's House, full time pupils must be provided with a healthy packed lunch.

At lunchtime, the children are seated in small 'family style' groups to support the development of social skills. Their growing independence, for example in the use of utensils and when clearing away, is facilitated, and table manners are taught.

Fresh drinking water and cold milk are available
Children must only eat their own packed lunch and not share items.

Packed lunches should include each day:

- at least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables or salad;
  For Nursery & Reception children, grapes and cherry tomatoes should be cut in half to prevent them being a choking hazard
- meat, fish or another source of protein (e.g. eggs, lentils, beans, hummus or falafel)
  It is recommended that oily fish (sardines, salmon, mackerel) are eaten at least every 3 weeks
- a starchy food, such as whole grain bread, pasta, rice, couscous, noodles or potatoes;
- a dairy food, such as hard cheese (not dunkables or cheese strings) or unsweetened yoghurt

Packed lunches should not include:

- Cold fast food, such as burgers, pizza or fried chicken
- Crisps or crisp like snacks.
  instead, include vegetables, fresh or dried fruit or seeds (with no added salt, sugar or fat). Savoury crackers or breadsticks served with fruit, vegetables or dairy food are also a good choice.
- Nuts – as these may cause a severe allergic reaction, we request that nuts and nut products are not sent into school – see above for alternatives
- Sweets & items containing or coated in chocolate
  instead a cereal bar could be provided, but these can be high in hidden sugar content
- Sugary drinks, such as fruit juices, milk shakes or fizzy drinks
  drinking water is available.

Meat products such as sausage rolls, individual pies, corned meat and sausages / chipolatas should be included only occasionally
A portion of cake or a biscuit is allowed on a Friday, to be eaten as part of a balanced diet.

As fridge space is not available, children are advised to bring packed lunches in insulated bags with freezer blocks where possible. T
The heating-up of food is not permitted, as incorrect heating can lead to food poisoning. Parents may wish to use Insulated container.

Packed lunches are regularly reviewed by teaching staff and midday meal supervisors
Where they do not comply with the Packed Lunch guidance a leaflet will be placed in the in the packed lunch container informing them of the recommended content. If a child regularly brings a packed lunch that does not conform to the federation's Healthy Eating policy, parents will be contacted to discuss this. Due consideration will be given to cases where pupils have verified special dietary requirements.

Staff will endeavour to return home any uneaten food, so parents can monitor what their child has consumed during the day and then raise any concerns over their child's food intake with the school

Old Palace

At Old Palace lunches are provided by Nourish. The company provides a Silver standard Food for Life accredited menu, which means that they ensure the food is healthy, ethical, and uses local ingredients. The pupils are provided with three choices each day. The menu changes twice a year and works on a four week cycle. Copies of the menu are displayed at https://oldpalaceprimary.co.uk/parents/school-dinners/

- 90% of the menu is freshly cooked on site; sausages and fish fingers are the only pre-prepared foods that are purchased. A minimum of 5% organic ingredients are used in the menu;
- The menu is meat free on a Monday and a vegetarian main meal option, in addition to the choice of a baked potato, is available daily;
- Fish is available once a week and children are encouraged to take up this option;
- Hot meals are accompanied with two portions of hot vegetables and one portion from the salad bar;
- Bread is baked daily and is freely available;
- Fresh fruit, yoghurt or cheese and crackers are available daily;
- A dessert/ pudding is only available on a Friday to support the children in developing a health relationship with foods that should be eaten less often and only as part of a balanced diet;
- Salt and condiments restricted;
- Fresh drinking water is available at all times;
- Taster sessions and a theme day held each half term encourage the children to try new foods.

Old Palace encourages parents to take up the option of a school dinner
Where families prefer to provide a packed lunch from home, this needs to comply with the same healthy eating guidance set out above.

After School Care
Pupils attending after school care will be provided with a healthy snack and will have access to drinking water.

5. School Trips

At **Old Palace** a healthy packed lunch will be provided by the school. This will include: a sandwich (made using 50% whole grain bread), a piece of fruit, a low sugar Nourish biscuit and a bottle of water.

Parents are welcome to provide their child with a packed lunch on trips, however these lunches must adhere to the same food and drink guidance described for packed lunches above.

At **Children's House**, parents will be required to provide a packed lunch. The usual Packed Lunch guidance will apply.

6. Specialist Dietary Requirements

The federation does everything possible to accommodate pupils' specialist dietary requirements, including allergies, intolerances, religious or cultural practices.

Upon admission the school obtains information about any special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and intolerances that the child has, and any special health requirements. This information, including individual care plans, is stored securely on the school network, where it can be accessed by members of staff. Staff are expected to access this before preparing and handling of food for pupils to ensure the children's requirements are met.

At Old Palace, the lunch menu indicates the allergens contained in each meal; alternative options are available. Children in Reception, KS1 and Year 3, wear a badge and a lanyard at lunchtime, which contains details of their requirements

Staff receive training to ensure that they are aware of the symptoms and treatments for common allergies and anaphylaxis and understand the differences between allergies and intolerances.

7. Initiatives

Our federation has signed the Sugar Smart Pledge, a national campaign backed by the Mayor of Tower Hamlets, The Healthy Lives Team and the Public Health Team, with the aim of reducing sugar consumption, tackling obesity and improving oral health across the Borough.

At Old Palace we also have Meat Free Mondays, to encourage pupils to consider the impact that meat production has on the environment.

8. Rewards and Special Occasions

The federation does not allow food to be used as a reward for good behaviour, attendance or achievement

The federation recognises that food plays an important role in celebrations of cultural, personal or community milestones, such as religious festivals, birthdays and fund raising events.

Birthdays: Every effort will be made to celebrate in a healthy way, for example by singing happy birthday or wearing a birthday badge. Families may wish to send in fresh or dried fruits, which can be shared with their child's class. Sweets, chocolates, biscuits and cakes are not permitted

Christmas & Eid parties: Families may wish to donate food for their child's class party. Please ensure that all home cooked foods are labelled with a full list of the ingredients. We encourage the use of low sugar/ low fat recipes. Sweets, chocolates, biscuits and fizzy drinks are not permitted.

Fundraising: Occasionally the federation may hold cake stalls and bake sales as part of wider fundraising activities. It is intended that such treats are consumed as part of a balanced diet. Please ensure that all home cooked foods are labelled with a full list of the ingredients. We encourage the use of low sugar/ low fat recipes.

Staff Meetings & Celebrations: Occasionally food is provided at these events. The choice of food should reflect the requirements of a healthy diet. Where unhealthy foods are included, these should be provided in moderation, alongside healthy alternatives.

Fasting: During Ramadan, we recognise that some pupils in years 5 & 6 may wish to fast. We request that pupils do not fast on days when they have PE or trips and encourage parents to consider restricting their child's fasting to the weekend or up to 2 days in the school week

9. Health and Safety

Risk assessment are in place to support the safe storage, handling and preparation of food. These include, but are not limited to the following:

- Ensure long hair is tied back
- Cover open cuts or abrasions using blue plasters
- Wipe table-tops and aprons with an antibacterial spray before cooking sessions
- Children wash their hands with antibacterial soap before and after cooking sessions
- Children are taught the importance of checking with adults before touching unknown foods or substances e.g. berries in the garden
- Children are carefully supervised during cooking sessions with appliances involving the use of electricity and are made aware of the potential dangers of burns and scalds from heat or steam

10. Additional guidance for Early Years

At Children's House and in Reception at Old Palace, the following safety measures will be applied:

- Children must always be within sight and hearing of a member of staff whilst eating. Choking can be completely silent therefore it is important for staff to be alert to when a child may be starting to choke.
- Where possible, staff should sit facing children whilst they eat so they can make sure children are eating in a way to prevent choking and so they can prevent food sharing which could result in allergic reactions.
- Whilst children are eating a member of staff with a valid paediatric first aid certificate will be present.
- Children will be seated appropriately while eating
- Staff will be mindful of the need to prepare food in a way to prevent choking. The following site provides additional guidance: Help for early years providers : Food safety
- When appropriate discussions are held with parents in regard to introducing solid foods,including to understand the textures the child is familiar with. Pupils will be supported to move on to the next stage at a pace right for the child. The NHS provides the following advice: Weaning and feeding - NHS

11. Partnerships

Parents

The partnership of home and school is critical in shaping how children and young people behave, particularly where health is concerned. We aim to support parents with information and advice around healthy eating, so they are best placed to make healthy choices for their families.

Coffee mornings, events and food related workshops are delivered throughout the year. In addition, the school websites and newsletters are used to provide reminders and to promote a healthy lifestyle.

Parents are encouraged to share any worries about their child's eating at home or in school

Staff

The school encourages staff to contribute to and support this food policy across the school day. Staff and visitors will be encouraged to model good practice behaviour around food and drink and in line with the policy, whenever possible and certainly when in the company of pupils.

12. Monitoring and Review

The Executive Headteacher and Head of School are responsible for curriculum development of the healthy eating policy

The Head of School, Deputy and Assistant Headteachers will overseeing the day to day implementation of the policy within their phase and at Old Palace will liaise with the Well Being Team when support or training is required to support implementation.

At Old Palace, the School Business Manager will liaise with Nourish to ensure that the school meals and packed lunches they provide adhere to the policy. As part of her leadership of Health & Safety she will also oversee the safe storage and handling of food. At Children's House, this will be overseen by the Head of School.

The Breakfast-Club and After School Care club supervisors are responsible for ensuring that the food served at these clubs is in accordance with this policy.

The Senior Deputy Headteacher will work with the school's Parent Support Workers to ensure that parents are provided with the information and support they need to adhere to the policy

At Old Palace, the Deputy Headteacher with responsibility for SEND & Medication will be responsible for safeguarding pupils with special dietary needs. At Children's House, this will be overseen by the Head of School.

This policy will be reviewed and updated as necessary, and at least every three years