OUR LADY & ST. PHILOMENA'S
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Love of Christ Shines Here

Food in School Policy

2026 – 2027

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'The Love of Christ Shines Here'

Our School is Christ-centred where Gospel values permeate our daily lives.

We extend our hand of friendship to the wider community in the spirit of love, peace and justice.

We create opportunities to celebrate the uniqueness of every child and nurture them through a stimulating and enriching curriculum.

Food in School Policy - Snacks, Packed Lunches and Nut-Free Provision

Introduction

Our Lady and St. Philomena's Catholic Primary School is committed to promoting the health, wellbeing and safety of all pupils. We recognise that healthy eating plays a vital role in supporting children's physical development, emotional wellbeing, behaviour, concentration and learning, and that schools have an important responsibility in shaping positive lifelong habits.

This policy sets out the school's expectations and procedures relating to food brought into school, including snacks and packed lunches, and confirms the school's position as a nut-free setting. It also outlines how food safety, allergy management and choking prevention are addressed, ensuring a consistent, inclusive and safe approach for all members of the school community.

- **Aims**

The aims of this policy are to:

- promote healthy eating habits across the school day
- protect pupils and staff with food allergies, particularly those at risk of anaphylaxis
- reduce the risk of choking and food-related illness
- ensure clarity and consistency for parents, pupils and staff
- support safeguarding and medical needs in line with statutory guidance
- encourage partnership between home and school in supporting children's safety, health and wellbeing
- promote equality, inclusion and equitable access to healthy food for all pupils

Statutory Responsibilities and Key Guidance

This policy supports the school's statutory duties relating to **safeguarding, health, wellbeing and medical needs**, and reflects current national guidance and best practice.

In particular, this policy aligns with and is informed by:

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE) -** ensuring pupils' health and safety, including those with medical needs and allergies
- **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework -** including requirements relating to food safety, supervision, choking prevention and children's wellbeing
- **DfE Help for Early Years Providers: Food Safety (Updated September 2025)** - including requirements relating to food hygiene, allergy management, choking prevention, supervision during meals and snacks, dietary requirements, and safe food preparation for children under five.
- **School Food Standards (DfE) -** promoting healthy eating and balanced nutrition across the school day
- **Children and Families Act 2014 -** supporting pupils with medical conditions in school
- **NHS and UK Health Security Agency guidance -** promoting healthy eating, dental health and allergy awareness
- **Allergy UK and Anaphylaxis Campaign guidance -** supporting best practice in allergy risk management

While this policy is **non-statutory**, it plays an important role in helping the school meet its statutory responsibilities and in providing a clear, consistent and safe approach to food provision for all pupils.

Packed Lunches

This section sets out clear expectations for packed lunches to ensure they are balanced, nutritious and safe, while also supporting the school's nut-free requirement.

Packed lunches should provide a balanced meal and include:



- a main item such as a sandwich, wrap, roll, pasta or rice-based dish
- at least one portion of fruit or vegetables
- a dairy item or suitable dairy alternative (e.g. yoghurt, cheese)
- water as the preferred drink (but cordial is also acceptable)
- a healthy treat/dessert

Packed Lunches Must Not Include

- any nuts or nut-containing products (including spreads, snacks and cereal bars)
- chocolate bars or sweets
- fizzy drinks or energy drinks
- large cakes, pastries or sugary desserts

Where prohibited items are brought into school, staff will use professional judgement to manage the situation appropriately, taking account of the age of the child, any allergy risks and the nature of the item. Parents may be contacted where necessary.

Packed lunches are eaten under staff supervision. Where packed lunches regularly do not meet expectations, or where there are concerns linked to allergies or safeguarding, the school may contact parents to discuss the appropriate next steps.

Please see Appendix A - What Does a Healthy Packed Lunch Look Like? - for guidance, ideas, tips and hints.

Healthy Snacks in School

The purpose of this section is to ensure that snacks consumed during the school day are nutritious, safe and appropriate, supporting children's energy levels and ability to learn.

Children may bring one healthy snack to school for morning break (and afternoon break where applicable). Acceptable snacks include:

- fresh fruit (whole or appropriately prepared)
- vegetables (e.g. carrot sticks, cucumber, peppers)
- plain breadsticks or rice cakes
- healthy cereal bars

The following snacks are **not allowed** in school:

- chocolate, sweets or confectionery
- crisps
- cakes, biscuits or pastries
- sugary cereal bars or desserts
- fizzy drinks or energy drinks

These items do not support healthy eating, can negatively impact concentration and behaviour, and increase the risk of dental decay.

Please see Appendix B - Healthy Snack Choices - for guidance, ideas, tips and hints.

Nut-Free Provision

This section exists to protect pupils and staff with severe nut allergies, where exposure can result in life-threatening reactions.

Our Lady and St. Philomena's Catholic Primary School is a nut-free school. This means:

- no nuts or nut-containing products are permitted on site
- this applies to snacks, packed lunches, food brought in for events and celebrations
- parents and carers must check ingredient labels carefully

This approach significantly reduces risk and supports a safe environment for all.

Whilst the school takes all reasonable precautions to reduce the risk of exposure to nuts, it cannot guarantee that the school site is completely nut-free. The cooperation of all members of the school community is therefore essential in reducing risk.

Food Safety and Choking Prevention

At Our Lady and St. Philomena's Catholic Primary School, we are committed to ensuring that food consumed in school is safe and age-appropriate, and that risks are minimised. Following this approach significantly reduces risk and supports a safe environment for all.

We ask that:

- Grapes, olives and other higher-risk foods must only be brought into school if they are appropriately prepared to reduce choking risk. This includes cutting grapes and olives lengthways and into smaller pieces, and preparing hard foods so they are soft, grated or cut into thin strips appropriate to the child's age.
- Parents prepare food before it comes into school, rather than relying on children to manage this themselves
- Stones and pips are removed from fruit before being brought into school.
- Cherry tomatoes, strawberries and other small round foods are cut lengthways and into quarters where appropriate for younger children.
- Raw apple, carrot and similar hard foods are cut into thin slices or strips rather than chunks.
- Cheese is cut into strips rather than cubes for younger children where appropriate.
- Popcorn, marshmallows, jelly cubes, hard sweets and other known choking hazards must not be brought into school.

We ensure that:

- Children are supervised while eating and staff support children to eat safely and calmly.
- Staff are encouraged, wherever practicable, to sit facing children while they eat so that they can monitor safe eating, reduce food sharing, and identify any allergic reactions promptly.
- EYFS children are never left unattended whilst eating and remain within sight and hearing of a member of staff at all times.
- Any choking incident requiring staff intervention (for example, back blows or first aid treatment) will be recorded and parents/carers informed. The school will review incidents to identify patterns and reduce future risk.
- Food is stored and handled safely
- EYFS provision follows enhanced guidance on food preparation and supervision
- Staff hold paediatric first aid training
- Staff receive guidance regarding choking prevention and age-appropriate food preparation.

Allergies and Medical Needs

To ensure pupils with medical conditions and allergies are identified, supported and kept safe, we ensure that:

- Allergies and medical needs are recorded and shared appropriately
- Allergy and dietary requirement information is obtained before a pupil attends school and is reviewed regularly with parents and carers to ensure records remain accurate and up to date.
- Allergy information is accessible to all relevant staff who may supervise, prepare, serve or monitor food.
- At each meal and snack time, an identified member of staff is responsible for checking that food provided is suitable for pupils' dietary, allergy and medical requirements.
- Staff seek to prevent food sharing where this could place a child at risk of an allergic reaction.
- Individual Medical Care Plans are in place where required
- Staff are trained to recognise allergic reactions and administer medication (including EpiPens)
- Parents are encouraged to inform school immediately of any new or changed allergies
- All allergy-related incidents, reactions and medical interventions will be recorded in accordance with the school's medical recording procedures.

This section should be read alongside the school's:

- Allergy Safety Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Asthma Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Administration of Medicines Policy

Where a pupil has an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP), the procedures outlined within that plan must be followed at all times.

Food Allergen Management

Where food is prepared or provided by the school, staff will seek to ensure awareness of all allergens present within meals and snacks. Appropriate allergen information will be obtained, maintained and made available to staff responsible for serving food.

The school will work closely with parents, carers, catering providers and external organisations to ensure that food provided to pupils with allergies or intolerances is safe and appropriate.

Any food supplied for educational activities, celebrations, breakfast provision or wraparound care must be considered alongside pupils' allergy information before being offered.

Allergy Safeguards and Benedict's Law Compliance

In accordance with statutory duties under Benedict's Law and our school duty of care, the school enforces rigorous allergen controls to protect vulnerable pupils:

- Nut-Free Zone: Our school operates a strict nut-free policy. Packed lunches must not contain peanuts, tree nuts, peanut butter, Nutella/hazelnut spreads, or any products explicitly stating "contains nuts".
- No Food Sharing: Pupils are strictly instructed and supervised not to trade, share, or sample food items from other children's lunchboxes.
- Cross-Contamination Controls: Dining tables are cleaned and disinfected between lunch sittings. Staff monitoring the hall are trained to recognise severe allergic reactions and anaphylaxis symptoms.
- Alignment with Allergy Policy: This document operates in direct conjunction with the standalone Whole-School Allergy Safety Policy, which details individual healthcare plans (IHCPs) and emergency medication protocols.

Breakfast Club Provision

Our Lady and St. Philomena's Catholic Primary School recognises the importance of children starting the day nourished, settled and ready to learn. As part of our commitment to wellbeing and inclusion, the school provides toast and fruit to children attending Breakfast Club, supporting a healthy and positive start to the day.

Our Breakfast Club provision:

- includes toast and fresh fruit
- promotes calm routines and positive social interaction
- supports children who may not have had breakfast at home
- is managed in line with food safety, allergy and hygiene procedures

All food provided at Breakfast Club complies with the school's nut-free policy and allergy management arrangements. Staff supervising Breakfast Club are trained to support children appropriately and ensure food is eaten safely.

Free Breakfast for All

To promote consistency in healthy eating across all school provision, Our Lady and St. Philomena's Catholic Primary School provides a free breakfast to all pupils, in line with School Food Standards. Any changes to food provision are risk-assessed, communicated clearly and monitored for impact on pupils and staffing arrangements.

Staff involved in preparing, handling or serving food will receive appropriate food hygiene instruction, information and training commensurate with their role and responsibilities.

Free Breakfast Toast and Fruit Provision

Our school is committed to ensuring that all children have access to healthy food during the school day, regardless of circumstance, and recognises the important link between nutrition, wellbeing and readiness to learn.

Our Lady and St. Philomena's Catholic Primary School provides toast free of charge to every child each morning. This provision is available to support pupils who may not have had breakfast at home and to ensure that all children begin the school day settled, nourished and ready to learn.

Our toast provision is:

- inclusive and open to all pupils who need it
- offered without stigma
- managed in line with food safety, allergy and hygiene procedures

This approach reflects the school's commitment to equity, care and wellbeing.

Fruit at Breaktime

In addition to the free morning toast provision, our school provides fresh fruit for pupils to access at break time. This supports healthy snacking, promotes positive eating habits and ensures that children have access to nutritious food during the school day.

Our fruit provision:

- is available to all pupils
- complements, rather than replaces, expectations around healthy snacks from home

- supports the School Food Standards and NHS healthy eating guidance

Wraparound Club Provision

Our school's Wraparound Club provides healthy snacks and meals in line with the principles and expectations of this policy. Food offered through wraparound provision is designed to be nutritious, balanced and appropriate, supporting children's energy levels and wellbeing at the end of the school day.

Staff involved in preparing, handling or serving food will receive appropriate food hygiene instruction, information and training commensurate with their role and responsibilities.

Wraparound food provision:

- reflects this policy, healthy eating guidance and School Food Standards
- considers allergies, dietary needs and choking risks
- promotes positive food choices and good eating habits
- is supervised by trained staff who support safe eating

Our Curriculum - Supporting Healthy Food Choices

Our school's curriculum supports and reinforces the expectations set out in this policy, ensuring that pupils not only follow the guidance around food in school, but helps them understand why it matters.

Our Lady and St. Philomena's Catholic Primary School recognises that developing pupils' understanding of health, wellbeing and safety is a key part of preparing them for life beyond school. Through our PSHE and RSE/RSHE curriculum, pupils are explicitly taught the knowledge, skills and attitudes that underpin the expectations within this policy.

Teaching is age-appropriate and builds progressively, ensuring that pupils develop a secure understanding over time.

As part of Science, Design Technology, PSHE and RSE/RSHE lessons, pupils learn about:

- Healthy eating and nutrition, including the importance of balanced meals, healthy snacks and hydration
- Food choices and wellbeing, understanding how what we eat can affect our energy levels, mood, concentration and physical health
- Allergies and medical needs, learning why some foods are not allowed in school and how rules such as being a nut-free school help keep everyone safe
- Risk awareness and safety, including choking risks and why certain foods must be prepared in specific ways
- Responsibility and respect, understanding that individual choices can impact others within a shared community
- Equity and inclusion, recognising that schools provide food such as toast and fruit to ensure all children can access what they need to be ready to learn

Through these curriculum opportunities, pupils develop the knowledge, language and understanding needed to make informed choices about food and health, both in school and beyond. This contributes to pupils' cultural capital by equipping them with practical life skills, social awareness and an understanding of how to navigate shared environments responsibly.

Our curriculum reinforces consistent messages across school life, helping pupils to understand that expectations around food are not arbitrary rules, but part of a wider commitment to health, safety, kindness and community responsibility.

Celebrations and Special Events

In order to ensure food used for celebrations remains safe, inclusive and aligned with the school's healthy approach and policies, our school:

- ensures that allergies and dietary needs are considered
- non-food rewards are promoted, wherever possible
- parents/carers ensure that food provided, for event such as class parties, adhere to this policy and our 'nut-free school' stance
- external providers are aware of what is set out in this policy
- food provided during educational visits and off-site activities will be risk assessed and managed in accordance with pupils' dietary, allergy and medical requirements

Parents/carers should avoid supplying homemade food for wider distribution unless explicitly agreed by the school and accompanied by suitable allergen information.

Food provided at events must be traceable in terms of ingredients so that allergy risks can be appropriately assessed.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parents and Carers

- provide healthy, nut-free snacks and packed lunches
- inform school of allergies and medical needs
- support the school's healthy eating messages and this policy

Staff

- model positive attitudes to food and healthy eating
- supervise eating safely
- follow allergy, food hygiene, food safety and choking prevention procedures, including maintaining awareness of pupils' dietary requirements and ensuring safe supervision during meals and snack times.

School Leadership and Governors

- monitor the implementation of this policy
- ensure appropriate training is provided to empower staff
- review and update this policy

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be:

- monitored by senior leaders
- reviewed annually, or sooner where changes to legislation, guidance or school circumstances require
- updated in response to medical, safeguarding or operational needs

Any questions or concerns about this policy should be raised with the school office or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Appendix A

What Does a Healthy Packed Lunch Look Like?

This section is intended to support parents and carers in making positive, practical choices when preparing packed lunches for primary-aged children. A healthy packed lunch helps children to maintain energy levels, concentrate in lessons and develop lifelong healthy eating habits.

Good practice guidance recommends that packed lunches include a balance of starchy foods, fruit and vegetables, protein and dairy, while limiting foods high in sugar, salt and saturated fat.

The 'Perfect' Packed Lunch - A Balanced Approach

A healthy packed lunch should include the following components:

A Starchy Main Item (Energy for Learning)

Starchy foods provide children with the energy they need to get through the school day.

Examples include:

- wholemeal or brown bread sandwich or wrap
- pasta salad with vegetables
- rice or couscous dish
- bagel or roll (wholegrain encouraged)



Filling ideas (nut-free):

- cheese
- egg
- tuna
- chicken or turkey
- hummus (nut-free)

Fruit and/or Vegetables (Vitamins and Fibre)

At least one portion of fruit or vegetables should be included every day. Including both is encouraged where possible.

Examples include:

- apple slices, pear slices or orange segments
- berries or melon (appropriately prepared)
- carrot sticks, cucumber, peppers
- cherry tomatoes (cut appropriately)



These support digestion, immunity and overall health.

Protein-Rich Foods (Growth and Development)

Protein supports children's growth and helps them feel full for longer.

Examples include:

- lean meats (chicken, turkey, ham)

- eggs
- cheese or yoghurt
- pulses such as lentils or chickpeas

Dairy or Dairy Alternatives (Calcium for Strong Bones)

Calcium is important for bone and tooth development.

Examples include:

- yoghurt
- cheese portion
- fromage frais
- dairy-free alternatives (where appropriate)

A Healthy Drink

- Water is the recommended drink for school but we also allow cordial.
- Milk is also appropriate and can be provided, at a cost, by our school
- Fizzy drinks and energy drinks are not suitable for school.

Healthy Treats

Packed lunches do not need to be completely 'treat-free', but treats should be small.

Healthier alternatives include:

- plain flapjack
- malt loaf
- small homemade cake
- plain biscuit

Chocolate bars, sweets and high-sugar desserts are not allowed.

Important Safety Reminders

- Our school is a nut-free environment - nuts and nut products must not be included
- Grapes, olives and similar foods must be cut lengthways
- Food should be age-appropriate and safely prepared
- Popcorn, marshmallows, jelly cubes and hard sweets should not be included in packed lunches due to choking risks.
- Cherry tomatoes and strawberries should be prepared appropriately for younger children.
- Pips, stones and bones should be removed before food is brought into school.

Supporting our Families

At Our Lady and St. Philomena's Catholic Primary School, we recognise that families have different routines, preferences and circumstances. These examples are intended as guidance, not judgement, and we are always happy to support families with questions or concerns.

By working together, we can help children develop healthy habits, confidence around food and a positive relationship with eating.

Appendix B - Healthy Snack Choices

This appendix provides clear guidance for parents, carers and staff on appropriate healthy snack choices for school. Healthy snacks help maintain children's energy levels, support concentration and promote positive eating habits. This guidance reflects national good practice and supports the school's commitment to health, wellbeing and safety.

School-Provided Snacks

Our Lady and St. Philomena's Catholic Primary School provides **fresh fruit** for pupils to access at break time. This ensures that all children have access to a healthy snack during the school day and supports equity and inclusion. Parents may choose to provide an additional snack from home; however, this must align with the guidance below.

Permitted Healthy Snacks



The following snacks are appropriate for school:

- Fresh fruit (whole or appropriately prepared)
  e.g. apples, bananas, pears, oranges, berries
- Fresh vegetables
  e.g. carrot sticks, cucumber, peppers
- Plain breadsticks
- Plain rice cakes
- Healthy cereal bars

These snacks are:





- low in sugar and salt
- supportive of dental health
- recommended by NHS and School Food Standards guidance

Snacks That Are Not Permitted

The following snacks should not be brought into school:

- Chocolate bars
- Sweets
- Crisps
- Cakes, biscuits or pastries
- Sugary cereal bars
- Fizzy drinks or energy drinks

These items are high in sugar, salt or fat and do not support children's health, wellbeing or readiness to learn.

Nut-Free Requirement

Our Lady and St. Philomena's Catholic Primary School is a nut-free school.

- Nuts and nut-containing products must **not** be brought into school
- This includes peanuts, nut spreads and cereal bars containing nuts
- Parents and carers are asked to check ingredient labels carefully

This requirement is in place to protect pupils and staff with **severe allergies**.

Appendix C - Food Hygiene Standards

Food Hygiene Standards

- Children wash hands before eating and after using the toilet.
- Food preparation surfaces and equipment are cleaned appropriately.
- Food is stored safely and in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
- Food is cooked, served and cooled appropriately.
- Staff report any food safety concerns immediately.
- Food that has been dropped on the floor must not be eaten.
- Food hygiene arrangements within EYFS and Wraparound provision reflect current DfE and Food Standards Agency guidance.