



Food, Nutrition and Catering Policy

October 2026



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Food, Nutrition and Catering Policy

Aims

St John's College School ("the School") aims to::

- give healthy and delicious food and drink to all members of the school community.
- promote healthy eating and positive eating experiences, not only supporting children's physical development, but also promoting lifelong healthy eating habits through enjoyable, social dining experiences.

We do this by:

- Reviewing regularly the food provided at school and making changes where appropriate.
- Teaching about diet, nutrition, food safety and hygiene, food preparation and cooking, as well as where food comes from through the PSHEE and Science curriculums, and through the work of the Environmental Committee.
- Regularly surveying the children to get their views using online or written surveys and using this information to inform future menus.
- Following the recommendations of the Connect Catering Ltd ensuring all Company regulations are adhered to. For further information see <http://www.connectcatering.co.uk/>.
- Keeping within the guidelines of the Food Standards Agency.
- Having regular inspections by Environmental Health Officers, who offer feedback on the standards of hygiene and the quality of food.
- Gathering information about children's food preferences: before any child joins the school community, we obtain comprehensive information about their dietary requirements, which may stem from cultural, religious, or personal family preferences that are integral to their identity and wellbeing. We gather detailed information on food preferences and familiar foods that enable children to feel comfortable and secure in their new environment. Critical to child safety, we collect thorough documentation, details regarding any food allergies, including medical information and emergency procedures that must be followed in the event of an adverse reaction. Additionally, we record information about food intolerances, documenting associated symptoms and the specific management strategies that have proven effective for each individual child. We also gather information about any special health requirements that may impact nutrition or feeding practices, ensuring we can provide appropriate care that supports each child's individual needs.

Child Involvement and Independence

Children are actively involved in age-appropriate food preparation activities supporting their development while building positive relationships with food and cooking. These meaningful opportunities include clearing activities, helping children develop independence and understanding of mealtime routines. We encourage and support self-feeding and self-serving skills appropriate to each child's developmental stage, providing guidance and assistance as needed while fostering growing independence. Food exploration activities are thoughtfully incorporated into our broader learning programme, using cooking and food preparation as natural opportunities to develop fine motor skills, mathematical concepts, scientific understanding, and cultural awareness.

Children are empowered to decide which foods they will eat from the healthy options provided, supporting their developing autonomy while ensuring all available choices are nutritionally beneficial. We maintain a firm policy that food is never used as a reward or punishment, recognising that such practices can create unhealthy relationships with eating that may persist throughout life. Children's individual preferences are respected and

accommodated where possible, while gentle encouragement is provided to try new foods and expand dietary variety.

Health and Safety

All aspects of food preparation, storage, and serving are conducted in strict accordance with current food safety regulations, with regular monitoring and documentation to ensure consistent compliance. Temperature monitoring of refrigeration and cooking equipment is conducted regularly and systematically, with records maintained to demonstrate ongoing food safety management. All staff involved in food handling receive comprehensive training in food hygiene principles, with regular refresher training provided to ensure knowledge remains current with evolving best practices. Throughout all food-related activities, we maintain a clean and hygienic eating environment that supports both health and the enjoyment of mealtimes.

Choking Prevention

Age-appropriate food textures and sizes are carefully provided for each child, taking into account not only chronological age, but also individual developmental readiness and familiarity with different food types. When preparing food, small fruits including grapes, olives, raspberries, strawberries and cherry tomatoes are cut lengthways and then halved again (quarters).

Continuous, attentive supervision is maintained during all eating times, with staff positioned to observe all children clearly and respond immediately to any signs of difficulty. All staff receive thorough training in choking response procedures, including recognition of choking signs and appropriate emergency interventions, with regular practice sessions to maintain competency. Seating arrangements are deliberately planned to ensure clear visibility of all children and enabling rapid response to any emergency situation.

Meetings

- The following staff meeting as required: the Bursar, the Account Manager from the catering outsourcing partner, the Catering Manager, the Assistant Head (Pastoral) Senior House, the School Nurses, the Head of Junior Department/Senior Deputy Head and the Head of Boarding.

Responsibilities

The Catering Department is responsible for:

- Procurement of foodstuffs.
- Planning Menus
- Ensuring the menus are on the website for parents to view.
- Preparation and presentation of food.
- Providing food which meets the needs of the different sectors of the community bearing in mind issues such as gender, age, food likes and dislikes (information gained from the surveys and liaising with staff and pupils).
- Providing food for children with specific dietary requirements due to medical issues, religious beliefs and food choices such as vegetarianism as well as supporting children with particular food preferences where these are affecting eating.
- Ensuring that children with food allergies are catered for, in line with the School's allergy aware approach (see the Allergy and Anaphylaxis Policy).
- Providing food which demonstrates a balance between being tasty, healthy and nutritious and attractive to young children and pupils.
- Ensuring fresh drinking water is provided and always available for all children from either water machines, water fountains or placed directly in classrooms.
- Providing fresh drinking water in EYFS classrooms.
- Providing fresh drinking water at meal times in the dining rooms.
- Having regular meetings with the Boarding House, the Bursar, the Head of Junior Department and the Assistant Head (Pastoral) Senior House .
- Training EYFS staff in food hygiene and best practice in preparing and handling food
- Monitoring wastage.
- Attending and contributing to the agenda for meeting to review the catering provision.

EYFS:

The Head of Junior Department is responsible for:

- Ensuring that statutory supervision and first aid requirements are met, which must include at least one member of staff on duty that has a paediatric first aid certificate and correct EYFS qualifications for the ratios of staff to children
- Ensuring active observation is met, including staff sitting or standing facing children to spot signs of choking or allergic reactions immediately.
- Ensuring that seating requirements are met: children must be securely seated in an appropriately sized low chair in a low distraction eating space. In the pre-school children will eat in their classrooms at their tables.
- Ensuring all staff know of their responsibilities to wipe tables properly in the classrooms for snack (and lunch for pre-school) before eating
- Ensuring snack and meal times are scheduled regularly so that children's energy levels are sustained.
- Ensuring that our mealtimes are relaxed, calm occasions, encouraging shared conversation and social interaction, creating positive associations with food and eating that will benefit children throughout their lives.

The School Nurse is responsible for:

- Collecting and collating medical history to include allergies, food intolerances and special health needs.
- To add any information onto the School's 'Dietary Restriction' list and keep updated versions which are to be passed onto the Kitchens.
- Organise nurse, parent, catering manager meeting if required.
- Ensuring appropriate first aid training is delivered to staff and renewed every 3 years, with refresher updates in between. For EYFS this is always full paediatric first aid training.

The Catering Department are responsible for:

- Providing food for children with specific dietary requirements due to medical issues, religious beliefs and food choices such as vegetarianism.
- Ensuring that children with food allergies are catered for, in line with the School's allergy aware approach (see the Allergy and Anaphylaxis Policy).
- Providing food which demonstrates a balance between being tasty, healthy and nutritious and attractive to young children and pupils. Which must include foods from the main four food groups of (1) fruit and vegetables, (2) Starchy carbohydrate, (3) dairy or alternatives and (4) proteins such as meat, fish, beans or pulses.
- Giving age-appropriate portion sizes.
- **Fruit and Vegetables:** at least one portion provided with each main meal which must be varied. Tinned fruits and dried fruits will be avoided.
- **Starchy carbohydrates:** Provide at least one portion with every main meal which must be at least 3 different types of wholegrain or white across the school week. Fried starchy carbohydrates will be avoided such as chips.
- **Dairy or Alternatives:** Milk and unsweetened dairy foods to be provided daily, non-dairy alternatives such as oat/soy milk must also be available. Sweetened yoghurts will be avoided.
- **Proteins:** Provide at least one portion of protein as part of lunch or snack each day. Protein sources will be varied and will incorporate the use of beans, pulses, lentils and meat alternatives. To provide any child who is a vegetarian or vegan with a variety of protein sources.
- **To avoid** raw or runny eggs unless they carry the British Lion Stamp, Unpasteurised milk or cheeses, fresh pâté. Certain fish which are high in mercury.
- **To ensure** that choking prevention is maximised by selecting the correct cuts during preparation of foods. Small round foods must be cut lengthways and into quarters, hard fruits and vegetables will be cut into thin slices. Meat and fish dishes will be thoroughly checked for bones, and these will be removed if found. Cheese will be cut and served in ribbons.

- Ensuring fresh drinking water is provided at every mealtime and is always available for all children from either water machines, water fountains or placed directly in classrooms.

The Assistant Head (Pastoral) Senior House and the Head of Junior Department (including EYFS) are responsible for:

- Organisation of the dining rooms.
- Ensuring correct supervision of the children during lunch time and snack times
- Expectations of behaviour in the dining rooms.
- Meeting the needs of the different sectors of the community.
- Monitoring the children's eating, ensuring equal observation of both genders.
- Having regular meetings with the Catering Manager.
- Contributing to the agenda for regular meetings to review the catering provision.
- Administering surveys to the children to obtain information about food.
- Keeping parents informed about issues regarding the provision of food at school.
- Dealing with complaints about food from parents, staff or children.
- Ensuring that making healthy food choices is part of the taught curriculum

The Boarding House Staff are responsible for:

- Liaising weekly with the Catering Manager to plan the menus for the boarders and choristers.
- Contributing to the agenda for regular meetings to review the catering provision.
- Reviewing and monitoring the provision of food for the choristers.
- Administering regular surveys about food to the boarders.
- Dealing with complaints from boarders and their families.

Complaints Procedure

- All complaints need to be directed to the Assistant Head (Pastoral) Senior House or the Head of Junior Department, who will then take the appropriate action.
- All complaints should be recorded with the nature of the complaint, the action taken and a summary of the outcome. These should be stored centrally in a shared folder.
- Please see our Complaints Policy for further information.

Foods Brought from Home

Children bring in their own morning snacks from home. With regard to morning snack times:

- We encourage children to bring in healthy snacks from home (through information provided to parents in At Homes and through our taught curriculum for children)
- We ensure that parents understand that we are an allergy aware school and that no snacks should be brought in that contain nuts.
- We supervise children eating snacks. For Year 2 – 8 this is during playground supervision. For EYFS and Year 1 children eat snacks in the classroom under close supervision of teachers and TAs, at least one of whom is paediatric first aid trained.
- Children are not allowed to share snacks.

Communication with Parents

Before a child starts school, we gather information about a child's allergies. For EYFS children there is a meeting with the teacher and parents to discuss further the children's food preferences, needs, intolerances, special dietary requirements and any other special health requirements. It is the responsibility of the teacher and TA to check that food provided meets requirements.

Allergies

Please see the Allergy and Anaphylaxis Policy.

We Know It Works Because

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Applies to: All Staff including Early Years Foundation Stage and Boarding

- The meetings to review the catering provision occur regularly to ensure that all issues around food at school are being dealt with.
- The catering provision is a standard item on the agenda in Senior Management meetings and is therefore monitored on a regular basis.
- The surveys are used to obtain information from the children and to give them a say in the food they eat at school.
- The PSHEE curriculum is reviewed annually to ensure healthy eating is included in the curriculum.
- Menus are on the website for parents to view.
- Complaints are dealt with in a timely manner.

Links

This policy should be read in connection with the:

- Allergy and Anaphylaxis policy
- First Aid and Medical Welfare policy
- Safer eating risk assessment (held on iAmCompliant).

This policy has been developed in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements and with regard to the Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance, May 2025. It recognises that good nutrition is fundamental to children's health, development, and learning outcomes.

Appendix 1: Version Control Information

Food, Nutrition and Catering Policy

Amendment History

Document Name	Ver No.	Modified by	Regulation Date	Regulation Para. Ref.	Change required	Summary of change	Date Approved
Food and Catering Policy	3.0	FB				Baseline	10/2015
Food and Catering Policy	3.0	FB			Annual Review	Annual Review – No changes	03/2018
Food and Catering Policy	3.1	FB			Annual Review	Minor amendments, removal of reference to written minutes	03/2019
Food and Catering Policy	3.2	FB			Annual Review	Minor amendments, addition of Assistant Head instead of Deputy Head	02/2020
Food and Catering Policy	4.0	DoO			Annual Review	Remove reference to Bursar and Food Working Party	05/2025
Food, Nutrition and Catering Policy	5.0	Senior Deputy Head			Update for Pre-School	Retitled “Food, Nutrition and Catering Policy”. Added EYFS provision in line with the EYFS Nutrition Guidance (May 2025): child involvement and independence, health and safety, choking prevention, EYFS and School Nurse responsibilities, nutrition standards, foods brought from home, communication with parents, linked policies.	14/10/2026
Food, Nutrition and Catering Policy	5.1	Clerk			Formatting	Contents page added; “the School” defined and capitalised; nut free wording aligned with the Allergy and Anaphylaxis Policy; version control and document information updated; infant references removed; location of risk assessment added.	14/10/2026

(The above is to be copied to the Compliance Log for any compliance-related changes.)

Document Information

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