



Harbinger Primary School

Whole School Food Policy

Policy agreed: October 2025
To be reviewed: October 2026



Aim	<p>The main aims of our school food policy are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">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 ensure a consistent approach to healthy eating across the school community including pupils, staff and parents/carers.
Context	<p><i>“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 obesity¹. We have 1 in 3 children leaving primary school who are already overweight or living with obesity with 1 in 5 living with obesity².”</i></p> <p>Obesity prevalence is highest amongst the most deprived groups in society³. 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 areas⁴. This is sowing the seeds of adult diseases and health inequalities in early childhood.</p> <p>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 disease⁵, and obesity can impact on mental health⁶.“</p> <p>(Policy paper. Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives. Published 27 July 2020, Department of Health and Social Care https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-obesity-government-strategy/tackling-obesity-empowering-adults-and-children-to-live-healthier-lives)</p>

	<p>Locally, children in Tower Hamlets have high levels of excess weight (overweight or obesity). Among 4-5 year olds, 20.4% have excess weight (of whom 10.9% are obese) and among 10-11 year olds, 45.4% have excess weight (of whom 29.7% are obese) (NCMP data 2021/22 academic year). Both are above the average for London and England.</p> <p>The issue of oral health also continues in Tower Hamlets, with high levels of children aged 5 years old with experience of visually obvious dentinal decay (2021/22). Tower Hamlets has 29.6% compared to the national figure of 23.7% and 25.8% in London (Tower Hamlets Child Health Profile, Public Health England, https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/)</p>
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Curriculum Provision and Content

<p>Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing (Health Education) – Statutory</p>	<p>(Delete as appropriate)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Wellbeing • Internet Safety and Harms • Physical Health and Fitness • Healthy Eating • Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco • Health and Prevention • Basic First Aid • Changing Adolescent Body <p>By the end of primary school pupils should know:</p> <p>Healthy eating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what constitutes a healthy diet (including understanding calories and other nutritional content). • the principles of planning and preparing a range of healthy meals.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the characteristics of a poor diet and risks associated with unhealthy eating (including, for example, obesity and tooth decay) and other behaviours (e.g. the impact of alcohol on diet or health).
Curricular and Extra-Curricular	<p>Food and nutrition is taught at an appropriate level throughout each Key Stage in Science, PSHE and Design Technology (cooking and nutrition).</p> <p>The Eatwell Guide (Appendix 1) is used throughout the school as a model of understanding a balanced diet.</p> <p>All food provision within the curriculum or cookery clubs will be healthy at all times.</p>

Food Provision

Breakfast Club	<p>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.</p> <p>The breakfast menu includes: cereal, toast, bagels, milk and fresh fruit.</p>
Snacks	<p>The school understands that healthy snacks can be an important part of the diet of young people.</p> <p>Pupils are able to bring fruit snacks into school to eat at break-times.</p> <p>School makes fresh fruit available at breaktimes.</p> <p>Any after school snacks must be healthy and follow the principles of this policy, whether provided by the pupil or the school.</p> <p>As a Healthy School we do not allow crisps, sweets, chocolates, biscuits or sweet items that do or do not contain chocolate.</p> <p>We are also a nut-free school so do not allow nuts in school</p>
School Meals	School meals are provided by Tower Hamlets Catering Services.

	<p>School meals are planned on a 2 week cycle and as a Healthy School we have signed the Tower Hamlets Fantastic Food in Schools Charter (March 2024) (Appendix 2) which includes a commitment to the Tower Hamlets Dessert Policy (March 2024) (Appendix 3) with a focus on fresh fruit; low or no sugar yoghurt and cheese with unsweetened crackers as dessert options.</p> <p>We encourage and promote uptake of salad, fruit and vegetables at all times to all pupils.</p> <p>We consult termly with pupils, staff, governors and our catering provider around menu options, choices, portion sizes and quality control. We work with our school caterer to constantly review and improve school food.</p> <p>We have worked to improve the lunchtime experience for all pupils, making every effort to reduce queues and making lunchtimes a more enjoyable and stress-free experience for pupils.</p>
<p>Packed Lunches</p>	<p>Packed lunches should aim to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some starchy foods such as bread (sliced bread, pitta bread, wraps, bagels), pasta, potatoes, couscous; choose wholegrain where possible. • 1 portion of fruit and 1 portion of vegetables or salad. • Dairy food such as cheese or yoghurt • Meat, fish, or another source of protein such as eggs, beans and pulses, hummus, falafel • Oily fish once every 3 weeks e.g. sardines or salmon <p>Packed lunches should not include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nuts of any kind • Crisps or crisp type snacks • Sweets

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any confectionary items including bars, biscuits or cakes. • Anything containing chocolate. <p>The school provides water for all pupils at lunchtime.</p> <p>If a child brings in something that does not comply with the packed lunch guidelines, then a conversation will be carried out between the school and the parents and if necessary, the child will be compensated with food from the main school lunch.</p> <p>See Packed Lunch Guide for Parents (Appendix 4)</p>
School Trips	<p>A healthy packed lunch will be provided by the school, for all children who usually have a school meal.</p> <p>Children are welcome to bring their own packed lunches on trips, however, these lunches must adhere to the same food and drink guidance described above.</p>
Specialist dietary requirements	<p>The school does everything possible to accommodate pupils' specialist dietary requirements including allergies, intolerances, religious or cultural practices.</p> <p>Individual plans are created for pupils with food allergies and relevant staff are aware of these plans. Children with allergies/dietary requirements have lanyards and posters are provided to the kitchen staff and SLT.</p> <p>We are a nut free school.</p>

Initiatives

Fantastic Food in Schools	<p>Our school has committed to the Fantastic Food in Schools Charter to make our whole school food environment as healthy and enjoyable as possible. As part of this, we commit to healthy desserts with a focus on offering fresh fruit, low or no sugar yoghurt and cheese with unsweetened crackers.</p>
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Rewards and Special Occasions

Rewards	<p>The school does not allow food to be used as a reward for good behaviour or achievement.</p> <p>Other methods of positive reinforcement used in school include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Genuine praise that is specific to the behaviour/attitude demonstrated by the child• Being nominated to share examples of their best work/behaviour in sharing assemblies/newsletter/social media• Communication with parents• Dojo points
Special events, celebrations and Birthdays	<p>The school recognises the importance of celebrating birthdays and special occasions.</p> <p>For birthday celebrations, every effort will be made to celebrate birthdays in a healthy way, for example by celebrating with a song in class or in the lunch hall.</p> <p>For celebration events, we welcome a variety of foods, from different cultures, for children to try. Class teachers will provide parents/carers with suggestion lists of celebration food to ensure that we have a wide variety of food choices available.</p>

Consultation and Partnerships

Parents	<p>Our relationship with parents/carers is very important and we aim to support them with information and advice around food, so that they are best prepared to make healthy choices for their families.</p> <p>Coffee mornings, events and food related workshops are delivered throughout the year for family members to attend.</p>
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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, when in the company of pupils.
Resources	<p>The Healthy Lives Healthy Eating Toolkit with resources to support all this work can be found at the THEP website.</p> <p>Healthy Schools - Tower Hamlets Education Partnership (the-partnership.org.uk)</p>

Appendix 2 – Tower Hamlets Dessert Policy (March 2024)



Tower Hamlets Dessert Policy

As part of the Fantastic Food in Schools, Tower Hamlets will be supporting all primary schools in Tower Hamlets to implement a new policy regarding healthy school desserts. In the interest of promoting the health, well-being and educational outcomes of our students, the policy will focus on offering **fresh fruit; low or no sugar yoghurt; and cheese with unsweetened crackers** as dessert options.

Examples of desserts that conform with the new policy:

- Fruit salad
- Cut pieces of fruit
- Plain yogurt (with or without fruit puree, made from fruits, or unsweetened oats)
- Fruit yogurt with less than 5% sugar
- Cheese with unsweetened crackers/breadsticks

Examples of desserts that do not conform with the new policy:

- Cakes, biscuits, ice-cream
- Fruit smoothies or yoghurt-based drinks
- Baked fruit
- Fruit-based desserts (e.g. apple crumble, 50/50 cakes)
- Yogurt with over 5% sugar
- Cheese-based baked goods (e.g. cheese straws)

Theme days

We understand that food is part of celebrations for specific religious and cultural days. During celebrations, schools are encouraged to use decorations and the main (savoury) part of the school meal to make the day feel special. To ensure the school meal continues to maximise the nutritional intake of children, this policy allows no more than 2 non-compliant desserts per term, as part of theme days.

Rationale for new policy

This decision reflects our commitment to combat high levels of dental decay and excess weight in Tower Hamlets, and to support children to develop healthy eating habits from an early age. We believe that by encouraging nutritious choices, we can contribute to the long-term health and success of our children and improved behavioural and educational outcomes in the long term.

We are committed to working closely with schools and caterers to explore cost-effective options and ensure that the school meal in Tower Hamlets is appropriately funded with support to ensure high uptake. We have worked closely with our own contract caterer to develop menus that reflect this policy.

The Fantastic Food in Schools programme has resources and offers individual school support in implementing a whole school approach to improving the school food environment. It is important to engage the whole school community when making these changes and creating a healthier school food environment for Tower Hamlet's students.

Appendix 3 – Fantastic Food in Schools Charter (March 2024)



Fantastic FOOD IN SCHOOLS CHARTER

Food

Nutritious meals: We will prioritise nutritious and balanced meals that maximise a child's nutrition across the school day. This includes working to comply with the borough's Healthy Dessert Policy in order to encourage healthy habits for life and maximise nutritional intake.

Variety and choice: We will offer diverse menus that cater to different tastes, dietary needs, and cultural preferences.

Cooking from scratch: We will endeavour to prepare meals from scratch, minimizing processed foods and additives, and maximizing the nutritional value and taste of every dish.

People and Communities

Collaborative partnerships: We will commit to fostering strong partnerships and open communication between school communities and the council to achieve our shared goals of promoting healthy eating and supporting the well-being of children.

Inclusivity and accessibility: We will ensure that all children have access to nutritious meals, regardless of their background or circumstances. We will remove any barriers to access and promote inclusivity to ensure every child can enjoy delicious and healthy food at school.

Valuing kitchen and lunchtime staff: We will value the hard work, skill, and dedication of our kitchen and lunchtime support staff in preparing and serving nutritious meals to our students. We will ensure they receive ongoing training, support, and recognition for their efforts, creating a positive and rewarding work environment that enables them to excel in their roles. This includes paying the London Living Wage.

Culture and Environment

Food education and engagement: We will promote healthy eating habits and food literacy. We will provide opportunities for students to learn about nutrition, cooking and the importance of balanced eating; while also engaging parents and the community in supporting healthy food choices.

Creating positive food environments: We will create welcoming, inclusive and positive food environments in our schools, where children can enjoy meals together, socialize, and develop healthy relationships with food. By promoting a positive food culture, we will support the overall well-being and academic success of our students.

By signing this charter, we pledge to work together to foster a culture of healthy eating, sustainability, and community.

Sign here:



Appendix 4 – Packed Lunch Guide for Parents



Healthy Lives
TOWER HAMLETS

Two Week Packed Lunch Ideas

1. Chicken and salad wrap  water	2. Tuna and salad pitta  plain yoghurt	3. Hummus salad wrap  water	4. Roast vegetable couscous  berries	5. Tuna and sweetcorn pasta salad  water	6. Roast vegetable couscous  berries	7. Hummus and cucumber bagel  water	8. Couscous, beans, pears, and carrots  water	9. Leftover Dhal, rice, and tomatoes  water	10. Egg and lettuce sandwich (wholemeal)  water
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Try to include a variety of different food in your child's packed lunch.
Aim for a piece of fruit and some salad or vegetables every day.



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