

Multi Academy Trust Food and Nutrition Policy for Early Years Settings

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy outlines BDMAT's commitment to promoting healthy eating and ensuring food safety across all early years settings. It applies to all staff, children, and families involved in the provision or consumption of food within our academies.

2. Guiding Principles

- All food and drink provided must be healthy, balanced, and nutritious.
- Food practices must support children's development, cultural diversity, and individual dietary needs.
- We aim to educate children and families on healthy eating habits and safe food practices.

3. Food Safety and Hygiene

To ensure the safety of all children:

- All foods brought from home must be checked for potential allergens to reduce the risk of cross-contamination.
- All food served to children must be prepared to prevent choking. Staff must follow the Food Standards Agency's guidance on safe food preparation.
- Communication with parents/carers is essential. We will provide guidance on:
 - Packing food suitable for their child's developmental stage.
 - Using insulated bags for perishable items and applying the '4-hour rule' if refrigeration is not available.
 - Labelling lunch bags with the child's name and contents including any allergies.



- Choosing foods that are safe at room temperature if refrigeration is unavailable.
- Refrigeration and reheating: Settings are not required to refrigerate or reheat food brought from home.
- Staff will follow the Food Standards Agency's food safety management procedures for small settings and childminders.

4. Guidance for Children Aged 1 to 5 Years

A Healthy Plate

- Encourage a **balanced diet** using the **4 main food groups**.
- Promote **group eating** to support social learning and food exploration.
- Refer to the [Eatwell guide](#) for visual guidance on balanced meals (for children aged 2+).

The 4 Food Groups

Children's daily diets should include:

1. **Fruit and vegetables**
2. **Starchy carbohydrates** (e.g. bread, rice, pasta)
3. **Dairy or alternatives**
4. **Proteins** (e.g. beans, fish, eggs, meat)

 See the [DfE poster on food groups](#) for more.

Food Preparation & Choking Prevention

- Prepare food to **minimise choking risks**.



- Use these **FSA posters** and **Poster 2** for safe preparation tips.

Food & Drink Guidelines

- **Provide:** Include daily (e.g. fruits, whole grains).
- **Limit:** Reduce frequency (e.g. salty or sugary snacks).
- **Avoid:** Do not serve (e.g. fizzy drinks, sweets).

5. Food Brought from Home

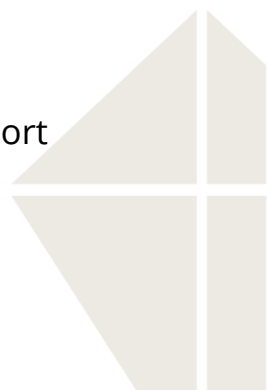
- Parents/carers are encouraged to provide nutritious, balanced meals.
- Foods high in sugar, salt, and saturated fats should be limited.
- We will provide sample menus and guidance to support families in making healthy choices.

6. Celebrations and Special Events

- To promote healthy habits, we encourage non-food-based celebrations (e.g., bubbles, stickers).
- If food is brought in for celebrations:
 - It must be checked for allergens.
 - Families should be encouraged to bring healthier options such as fruit platters.
 - Staff will communicate the setting's food guidelines clearly to parents/carers.

7. Communication and Partnership with Families

- We will maintain open communication with families about food practices.
- Regular updates, workshops, and resources will be provided to support healthy eating at home and in the setting.



8. Medical Diets and Allergen Management

Chartwells, our school meals provider, follows strict protocols to ensure the safety and inclusion of all pupils requiring medical diets:

Lunch bags must be clearly labelled with the child's name, contents, and any allergens.

All meals that follow a medical diet menu will be prepared and plated separately to avoid cross-contamination.

A medical diet will continue to be provided for future menu cycles by Chartwells until written confirmation is received that it is no longer required.

Clients and parents must inform Chartwells and the school about any leavers and confirm the list of pupils requiring medical diets on a termly basis.

Caterers will collaborate with suppliers to ensure clear ingredient labelling and appropriate allergen declarations.

Schools with pupils following a medical diet menu will implement a system to identify these pupils at food service points.

All food provision will comply with the School Food Standards to ensure nutritional adequacy and consistency across settings.

9. Monitoring and Review

- This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to updates in government guidance.
- Feedback from staff, parents, and carers will be considered in policy updates.



