



Gosfield School

EYFS Food and Drink Policy

Rationale

At Gosfield School, we regard snack and mealtimes as an important part of the day. Eating together provides opportunities for children to develop social skills, independence, communication and positive attitudes towards food and healthy lifestyles.

We are committed to promoting good health and wellbeing through the provision of nutritious food and drinks, in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework effective from 1 September 2026. We recognise the importance of establishing healthy eating habits in the early years and aim to provide children with balanced and varied food choices that support their growth, development and learning.

Through our curriculum and daily practice, we encourage children to develop an understanding of healthy lifestyles, food choices and self-care.

Procedures

Before a child starts attending Gosfield School, we obtain information from parents regarding their dietary requirements, religious or cultural preferences, food allergies, food intolerances and medical conditions that may affect eating or drinking (see Managing Children with Allergies Policy).

We record this information on the school management information system and ensure that it is regularly reviewed and updated.

Parents must inform the school immediately if there are any changes to their child's dietary requirements, allergies, intolerances or medical needs.

All staff who work with EYFS children have access to relevant dietary information and are responsible for following individual health care plans and allergy management procedures where applicable.

Staff show sensitivity and respect when meeting children's dietary needs and never use a child's dietary requirement, allergy or medical condition as a label or reason to single them out.

Systems are in place to ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their individual dietary needs, medical requirements, cultural practices and parental wishes.

Menus are available to parents via the school website and provide information regarding the food offered each day.

Healthy Eating and Nutrition

Gosfield School aims to provide food that is nutritious, balanced and appropriate for young children.

We provide meals and snacks that:

- Support healthy growth and development.
- Encourage healthy eating habits.
- Include a variety of foods from the main food groups.
- Limit foods and drinks that are high in saturated fat, sugar or salt.
- Encourage children to explore and enjoy a wide range of foods.

We aim to include foods from the following groups each day:

- Fruit and vegetables.
- Grains, cereals, bread, rice, pasta and potatoes.
- Milk and dairy products or suitable alternatives.
- Meat, fish, eggs, beans, pulses and other sources of protein.

Fresh fruit and vegetables are offered regularly and menu planning takes account of current nutritional guidance for young children.

Food is presented in an appealing manner and portion sizes are appropriate to the age and stage of development of the children.

Allergies, Intolerances and Medical Diets

We take food allergies and medical dietary requirements extremely seriously.

Gosfield School operates as a **nut-aware school**. Whilst every effort is made to minimise the presence of nuts and nut products, the school cannot guarantee a completely nut-free environment.

We:

- Maintain accurate and up-to-date allergy records.
- Ensure staff know which children have allergies or medical dietary needs.
- Follow individual healthcare plans where applicable.
- Implement measures to minimise the risk of cross-contamination.
- Ensure that all staff understand emergency procedures relating to allergic reactions and anaphylaxis.
- Work closely with parents and healthcare professionals where necessary.

Children are discouraged from sharing or swapping food in order to reduce the risk of allergic reactions and to promote safe eating practices.

Cultural, Religious and Ethical Dietary Requirements

We recognise and respect the diverse cultural, religious and ethical beliefs of families.

When planning menus and providing food and drink, we take into account:

- Religious dietary requirements.
- Cultural food practices.
- Vegetarian and vegan preferences.
- Medical requirements.
- Food allergies and intolerances.

Suitable alternatives are provided whenever necessary.

Safe Eating

Children's safety during meals and snacks is of paramount importance.

In accordance with the EYFS Statutory Framework, children are fully supervised during all meals and snacks.

To promote safe eating:

- Children remain seated whilst eating.
- Staff are positioned to be able to monitor children effectively.
- Wherever possible, staff sit with and face children during meals and snacks.
- Children are encouraged to eat at an appropriate pace.
- Food is prepared and presented in an age-appropriate manner.
- Staff support children in developing safe eating habits.
- Children are encouraged to concentrate whilst eating and are not permitted to walk around with food.

A member of staff with a current paediatric first aid qualification is present during meals and snack times.

Any concerns relating to a child's eating, chewing, swallowing or choking risk will be recorded and discussed with parents and, where necessary, appropriate professionals.

Mealtimes and Social Development

Meal and snack times provide valuable opportunities for developing social, communication and independence skills.

Staff encourage children to:

- Make healthy choices.
- Develop independence when serving food and drink.
- Use age-appropriate utensils.

- Develop good table manners.
- Say "please" and "thank you".
- Respect others during meal times.
- Explore unfamiliar foods in a positive way.

Children are encouraged, but never forced, to try new foods.

Second helpings may be offered where appropriate.

Drinks and Hydration

Fresh drinking water is available and accessible throughout the day.

All children are encouraged to bring a named water bottle to school, which can be refilled as required.

To support healthy eating and oral health, children may only bring water in their water bottles.

The following are not permitted:

- Fizzy drinks.
- Squash.
- Fruit juice.
- Smoothies.
- Energy drinks.
- Flavoured milk drinks.

Staff actively encourage children to drink water throughout the day, particularly during warm weather and periods of physical activity.

Food Hygiene

All food is prepared, stored and served in accordance with current food hygiene requirements.

Staff follow the school's food hygiene procedures and ensure:

- Hands are washed before handling food.
- Children wash their hands before meals and snacks.
- Food preparation and serving areas are kept clean.
- Food is stored safely and at appropriate temperatures.
- Any concerns regarding food safety are reported immediately.

Nursery Provision

For admission to the Nursery, children should normally be able to eat solid foods independently and drink from an open cup or appropriate drinking vessel.

Where a diagnosed medical condition requires alternative arrangements, these will be considered and supported through an agreed healthcare plan.

Children attending full-day sessions are provided with:

- Two healthy snacks each day.
- A balanced and nutritious lunch.
- Unlimited access to drinking water.

Children attending shorter sessions are offered the meals and snacks that fall within their attendance period.

Morning snacks are provided between approximately 9:15 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.

Afternoon snacks are provided between approximately 2:30 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.

Snacks are low in sugar and may include fresh fruit, vegetables, toast, crackers or other healthy options.

Lunch is served at approximately 12:00 noon and consists of a balanced meal accompanied by water.

Staff monitor children's food intake and communicate any significant concerns regarding eating, drinking or appetite to parents.

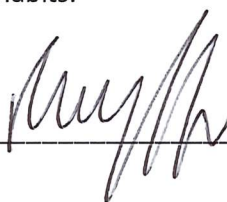
Partnership with Parents

We work closely with parents to promote healthy eating and ensure children's dietary needs are met.

Parents are encouraged to:

- Inform the school of any dietary requirements or changes.
- Support healthy eating habits at home.
- Provide only permitted drinks in children's water bottles.
- Share relevant information about their child's eating habits or medical needs.

We believe that consistent messages between home and school help children to develop healthy relationships with food and positive lifelong habits.

Principal's Signature:  Date: 1/9/26

Date of next review: September 2027

