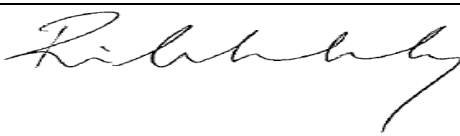

ANSTEY FIRST SCHOOL

Whole School Food Policy

Approved by: Full Governing Board
Last reviewed on: July 2026
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Date: July 2026

Approval

Approved by: Full Governing Body	
Chair of Governors Name	Tom Sealy
Signature	
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Version

Version	Author	Notes
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1. Statement of Intent

- 1.1 At Anstey First School, we are committed to helping children develop a positive, balanced and confident relationship with food. We recognise that food is more than just fuel, it's part of culture, social connection, identity and enjoyment. Using a whole school approach to food (WSAF), involving the whole school community, we aim to create a safe, inclusive and curious food environment where children feel free to explore and enjoy a wide range of nourishing foods without pressure or judgement.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 At Anstey First School, we believe that building a strong food culture begins with leadership. The way food is spoken about, modelled and valued by adults in school directly influences how children relate to food. We are committed to creating an environment where nourishing food is celebrated and positive eating habits are supported throughout the school day.

3. Policy Commitments

Leadership and staff role modelling:

- 3.1 All staff, including senior leaders, teachers, teaching assistants, lunchtime supervisors, kitchen staff and club leaders, are expected to model curiosity and positive attitude towards food. This includes eating with pupils; speaking about food using neutral, inclusive language; and showing a willingness to try new foods. Staff are offered training to support this approach.

Governance and compliance:

- 3.2 We follow the School Food Standards [See appendix]. Miss Fee, Assistant Headteacher and Head of KS1, is responsible for compliance, supported by kitchen leads and monitored termly with school governors. Where possible, a School Nutrition Action Group (SNAG) will include pupils, staff and governors in reviewing and improving food practices.

Positive language around food:

- 3.3 Staff are encouraged to avoid terms such as “good”, “bad”, “junk”, or “treats” when discussing food. Instead, we promote a neutral and balanced approach, focusing on how different foods support our health, energy, and well-being. Our aim is to move away from diet culture language and instead highlight how food helps us feel and function (e.g. “this gives us energy to run and play”).

No food as reward:

- 3.4 We do not use food as a reward or incentive. Research shows this can harm children's relationship with food and encourage overeating or emotional eating. At our school, we reward pupils with praise points, extra play time and achievement certificates. We involve children in deciding rewards through our school council.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

- The senior leadership team will observe lunch/snack times termly, focusing on adult modelling and food-related language.
- Pupil, parent and staff feedback will inform improvements annually.
- Annual training will cover key topics like food neutrality and inclusive language.
- Governors will receive a termly update on policy implementation.
- All clubs and external partners (e.g. breakfast, after school, holiday clubs) will be expected to align with this policy.

5. Food provision and Dining environment

- 5.1 At Anstey, we believe that every meal is an opportunity to support children's wellbeing, learning and relationship with food. We are committed to providing a variety of nourishing meals, aligned with the School Food Standards, in a welcoming environment that supports autonomy, inclusion and enjoyment.

School Food Standards (SFS) compliance:

- 5.2 We ensure our menus comply with School Food Standards [Appendix 1] across all food provided in school. This includes breakfast clubs, lunch service, after school clubs and break time. A member of the senior leadership team is responsible for ensuring ongoing compliance in partnership with catering teams.

Breakfast, lunch, and after school provision:

- 5.3 Food provided at any time of day reflects our approach to gentle nutrition and variety. Our food services are inclusive and consider dietary, sensory, and cultural needs. Club leads are supported to follow school food policies and offer consistent messaging.

Breakfast club food:

- 5.4 We offer a breakfast club which serves a range of nutritious food (including wholemeal carbohydrates, fruits and protein-based foods) to support children's health and concentration and ensure they have energy for learning, play and social interaction.
- 5.5 Our breakfast club is run by two school teaching assistants.
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- 5.6 The school office manager ensures all food served at breakfast club aligns with the School Food Standards.
- 5.7 We regularly consult with the school community regarding breakfast club options. Children who attend breakfast club are consulted through termly feedback and tasting sessions to encourage a variety of options. Parents are encouraged to provide feedback and offer suggestions to the breakfast club staff.
- 5.8 For more information about the breakfast club (timings, menu, charges), please visit our website.

Lunchtime food:

- 5.9 Our school meals are provided by Herts Catering Ltd.
- 5.10 The menu rotates on a three weekly rota and is monitored by the kitchen team and the school office manager to ensure it's in keeping with the School Food Standards. The food served has halal options and is nut-free. Vegetarian options are available every day, and a vegan menu for children is provided where this is required. Menus are adjusted to cater for children with medical allergies.
- 5.11 For more information, including menus, timings and costs, please visit our website.

After school club food:

- 5.12 Our after school club is run by our staff team. We offer a light snack to children which complies with the School Food Standards [see appendix].
- 5.13 We do not allow children to bring in their own snacks or packed food. For more information about our after school club (timings, menu, charges), please visit our website.

Fruity desserts:

- 5.14 To ensure balance within our lunch offering, we offer a range of nutritious dessert options. This includes days where we serve fresh fruit and yoghurt, or a 50% fruit-based dessert

Becoming a water-only school:

- 5.15 To encourage proper hydration while reducing the intake of sugary drinks, our school permits only water and milk throughout the school day.
- 5.16 At Anstey, we promote drinking water by allowing refillable water bottles in class and incorporating water breaks.

Dining environment:

- 5.17 We are committed to creating a calm and positive dining experience.
- 5.18 This includes:
- reducing noise and queue times
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- having staff eat with pupils when possible
 - offering opportunities for choice and autonomy
 - using language that encourages children to listen to their appetite signals
 - ensuring the dining area is welcoming, clean and promotes social interaction and inclusivity
 - providing adequate time for children to enjoy their meals without feeling rushed
 - involving pupils in aspects of mealtime planning and feedback, helping them feel ownership over their dining experience
 - encouraging children to try different vegetables during lunchtime through our lunch ambassadors' group

Special educational needs support:

5.19 Our dining environment is inclusive of pupils with:

- sensory, physical or emotional needs. This may include:
- flexible seating options
- noise-reducing strategies
- visual menus or food introduction strategies

6. Food brought in (packed lunches and celebrations)

6.1 At Anstey, we recognise that food brought in contributes to the school's overall food culture. Whether through packed lunches or celebrations, it is important that this also aligns with the School Food Standards. We aim to support families in making food choices that reflect our wholeschool approach to food while ensuring no child is excluded or made to feel different due to what they bring or eat.

School Food Standards alignment:

6.2 We strive to ensure that food brought into the school complies with School Food Standards. We use the standards [see appendix] as a guide to ensure fairness and consistency. Families are supported with practical and inclusive advice on how to pack balanced meals and snacks.

Packed lunches:

6.3 We promote variety and balance in packed lunches, with an emphasis on including fruit, vegetables, whole grains and protein rich foods, while avoiding items high in salt, sugar or saturated fats. Packed lunches include those brought from home as well as those provided by the school or by parents for trips.

6.4 What should a packed lunch consist of?

What should be in packed lunches ✓	What shouldn't be in packed lunches ✗	What can occasionally be in packed lunches
At least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables	Salty snacks such as crisps, or nuts, seeds, vegetables and fruit with added salt, sugar or fat.	Meat products such as sausage rolls, individual pies, corned meat and sausages
Meat, fish, eggs, or a non-dairy protein (e.g. lentils, kidney beans, chickpeas, falafel)	Confectionery such as chocolate bars, chocolate-coated biscuits, chocolate spread, cereal bars, processed fruit bars and sweets.	
Starchy food (preferably wholegrain where possible) such as any type of bread (rolls, pitta bread or wraps), pasta, rice, couscous, noodles, potatoes or another cereal	Sugary soft drinks, such as squash and fizzy drinks (even if labelled as 'sugar-free', 'no added sugar' or 'reduced sugar', as these drinks can contribute to tooth decay and provide little nutritional value)	
Dairy food such as milk, cheese, yoghurt, cream cheese, fromage frais or custard	Nuts	
A drink of water, semi-skimmed, 1% fat or skimmed milk.		

6.5 If a child brings in something that doesn't comply with the packed lunch guidelines, then:

- Staff will speak directly with the child (in an age-appropriate and supportive way) to explain why the item is not allowed, helping to build understanding.
- On the first occasion – a polite note will be sent home in the child's lunchbox as a gentle reminder of the guidelines.
- On subsequent occasions – the item will be returned at the end of the school day and a conversation will be had between school/parents. If necessary, the child will be compensated with food from the main school lunch.

6.6 On days when our school lunch includes fruit or yoghurt-based desserts, we ask that packed lunches reflect this too. Families are also invited to take part in our planet-friendly lunch

days, where we encourage more sustainable, meat-free options. For more ideas or support in preparing packed lunches, please visit our website.

- 6.7 We communicate these expectations through this policy, newsletters, family events and our website. We approach any concerns with sensitivity and support.

Water-only policy:

- 6.8 To support hydration and reduce sugar intake, we are committed to being a water-only school. Children can bring reusable water bottles. Exceptions may apply for specific health or SEND needs.

Celebrations and events:

- 6.9 Celebrations in school reflect our food ethos and are inclusive of all pupils. This applies to breaktimes, parents' evenings, sports days/events, school council meetings, school trips and birthdays.
- 6.10 At Anstey, we believe all children should feel equally celebrated on their birthdays and special occasions. For this reason, we kindly ask that families do not bring in cakes or sweets to share in class. While well-intentioned, this can create inequity, as not all families are able to contribute in the same way. It can also raise concerns around allergies and dietary restrictions.
- 6.11 Instead, we encourage other meaningful and inclusive ways to celebrate, such as:
- wearing a birthday badge, hat or sash for the day
 - a classroom cheer or birthday song
 - having their photo featured on a birthday display board
 - choosing a story to be read to the class
 - leading a class game or being the helper for the day
 - receiving a birthday certificate or card from the class or teacher
- 6.12 We also strive to ensure that nutritious food and drink options are available at the following school events and celebrations: fundraising events, seasonal celebrations (Christmas, Easter, Eid etc.), summer and winter fairs and international events/cultural weeks.

7. Monitoring and evaluation

- 7.1 Staff observe lunch and snack times and respond to concerns by notifying senior leaders if they see prohibited food items or observe language/role modelling not in line with the school food policy
- Packed lunch expectations are reviewed annually with input from families
 - Celebrations are discussed with pupil councils and staff to ensure alignment

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- Clubs and PTA-led events follow the same principles as the core school day

8. Positive relationship with food

8.1 At Anstey, we believe that developing a positive relationship with food is foundational to pupils' wellbeing, autonomy and long-term health. Our approach is grounded in principles of gentle nutrition, sensory food education and intuitive eating which foster curiosity, body awareness and a lifelong enjoyment of food.

8.2 Our commitment is to:

- use inclusive, empowering language around food
- avoid the use of food as a reward
- support each child's unique food journey with compassion and consistency

Language around food:

8.3 We intentionally use language that supports food confidence and emotional wellbeing.

- All staff are encouraged to use neutral, inclusive terms when discussing food. We avoid labels such as "good", "bad", "junk", "treats" or language rooted in diet culture.
- We speak about food in terms of how it helps us feel and function (e.g. "this gives us energy to play and learn" or "protein helps our muscles grow").
- We use the term "nourishing" to describe food that provides key nutrients, rather than the subjective term "healthy".

Food as a reward:

8.4 Using food as a reward can undermine children's ability to self-regulate and may contribute to emotional eating or anxiety around food. This practice may unintentionally stigmatise or create feelings of inequity for children with allergies, dietary restrictions or different food rules at home. We do not use food, including sweets or snacks, as a reward or punishment. Instead, we reward pupils with:

- praise and encouragement
- extra playtime or responsibilities
- special roles (e.g. helper, line leader)

8.5 Pupils and families are involved in shaping these reward systems through consultation, such as student council feedback or parent forums.

Supporting children's food journey

8.6 We recognise that every child is on their own path when it comes to food preferences, comfort, and needs. Our role is to meet children where they are, with support, not pressure.

8.7 We promote:

- sensory exploration of food (e.g. look, smell, touch, taste) without expectation of eating
- repetition and exposure rather than forcing children to try foods
- celebrating variety while respecting individual needs, including sensory sensitivities, allergies, and cultural practices
- autonomy in deciding how much or whether to eat, within the boundaries of mealtime routines

8.8 This supports children in:

- learning to trust their hunger and fullness signals
- building confidence in trying new foods over time
- understanding the function and benefits of different foods (especially in KS2/KS3)
- developing a lifelong positive relationship with eating

Monitoring and evaluation

8.9 To ensure the success of this approach:

- the senior leadership team will observe lunch/snack times termly to monitor the use of language, autonomy and reward practices
- training sessions will be offered annually on topics including food neutrality, language around food and intuitive eating principles
- pupil voice (via council/ambassadors) will be used to reflect on food experiences and identify areas for improvement
- all staff and club leaders are expected to align with this approach

9. Food Education

9.1 Food education plays a vital role in helping children develop confidence, curiosity and a lifelong positive relationship with food.

9.2 Cooking and nutrition is a statutory part of the primary design and technology curriculum and is taught at an age-appropriate level throughout each key stage. Pupils are given opportunities to explore nutrition, health, and food origins through engaging and practical learning experiences.

9.3 Key learning outcomes include:

- understanding that all food originates from plants or animals
- identifying and sorting foods into the five groups of the 'Eatwell Plate'

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- recognising the importance of eating at least five portions of fruit and vegetables each day
 - preparing simple dishes safely and hygienically, without the use of heat
 - developing practical skills such as cutting, peeling, and grating

9.4 As pupils progress, they also learn:

- that different foods are produced in various regions of the UK, Europe, and the wider world
- how seasonal changes impact food availability
- how food is processed into ingredients that can be used in cooking

9.5 These lessons are designed not only to build essential life skills but also to deepen pupils' understanding of food culture, sustainability, and positive food choices.

Teacher training and support

9.6 Teachers are supported through continuing professional development (CPD) to confidently deliver food education that reflects age-appropriate, inclusive, and culturally relevant content. Training includes guidance on how to talk to children about food.

Curriculum Support

9.7 Food education is embedded across subjects including science, PSHE and design and technology. Lessons link to real-life skills and promote food confidence. We support food learning through growing projects, cookery clubs, local food trips and tasting sessions.

Exposure to new foods

9.8 We use sensory food education to encourage exploration without pressure. Children learn to look, smell, touch and taste at their own pace.

Supporting the food journey

9.9 We teach pupils about the full journey of food from its origins to how it arrives on our plate, to help them develop a deep and respectful understanding of food systems, sustainability and the impact of their choices.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Pupil voice is used to shape future food education activities
- Teachers reflect annually on curriculum strengths and gaps
- Family engagement is used to extend food education at home (e.g., newsletters, workshops)
- Impact is evaluated through confidence, participation, and enjoyment rather than consumption

10. Equity, inclusion and sustainability

- 10.1 We believe all children deserve access to nourishing food, regardless of background, ability or belief. A whole-school approach must reflect dignity, sustainability and inclusion in every aspect of food provision and education.

Cultural and dietary requirements:

- 10.2 Menus and classroom activities reflect the diversity of our school community. We ensure that the food offer considers the diverse ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds of our students and the varying medical / dietary needs some may have.
- 10.3 We ensure students and staff who are fasting are supported, allowing all to flourish spiritually and academically.

Free school meals (FSM) uptake:

- 10.4 We encourage families to take up the free school meal offer, as it provides a balanced, nourishing lunch that supports children's health, learning and wellbeing

Allergies and special diets:

- 10.5 All food activities and services are inclusive of children with allergies, sensory, medical or learning needs. Tailored support is offered where required, such as texture modifications or alternative spaces.

Food waste reduction:

- 10.6 We educate children about food waste and implement practices such as:
- encouraging appropriate portion sizes
 - promoting leftovers for compost or use in cooking clubs
 - celebrating planet-friendly choices

Planet-friendly days:

- 10.7 We promote environmentally conscious food habits through:
- meat-free or plant-forward menu days
 - local food sourcing
 - celebrating food sustainability in lessons and assemblies

Monitoring and evaluation

- Menus and curriculum activities are reviewed for cultural representation
- FSM uptake is monitored and supported with family outreach
- Environmental impact is reviewed in partnership with eco clubs or pupil groups
- Annual policy review includes consultation with staff, pupils, and families

11. Appendix1

The revised standards for school food came into force on 1 January 2015 and are set out here:

[School Food Standards practical guide - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

To receive an editable version of this policy document, please email

enquiries@schoolfoodmatters.org.