



Food Policy

The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee is responsible for this policy.

Last Reviewed: 1st September 2026

Policy status and related guidance

Highfield Priory School and Nursery is committed to providing healthy, balanced, nutritious and enjoyable food and drink across the school day. This policy applies to the School, Nursery and Preschool and should be read alongside the Allergy Safety Policy, First Aid Policy, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Educational Visits Policy and relevant EYFS procedures.

Highfield Priory is an independent school and the Requirements for School Food Regulations 2014 do not apply to independent schools in the same way as they do to maintained schools and academies. The School nevertheless has regard to the Department for Education (DfE) School Food Standards and the practical guidance updated in July 2026 as a benchmark for good practice. For children within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the School follows the statutory EYFS framework and has regard to the DfE Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance, which providers are required to follow unless there is good reason not to.

Food safety, hygiene and allergen information are managed in accordance with applicable food safety and food information law. Detailed arrangements for allergy identification, prevention, emergency response, adrenaline devices, mealtime identifiers and allergy governance are contained in the separate Allergy Safety Policy.

Aims

Proper nutrition supports children's health, development, concentration and learning. Highfield Priory aims to:

- provide food and drink that is healthy, balanced, nutritious, varied and appropriate to pupils' ages and needs;
- promote positive attitudes to food and encourage children to develop healthy eating habits;
- provide regular access to fresh drinking water throughout the day;
- respect medical, allergy, cultural, religious and ethical dietary requirements;
- create positive, sociable mealtimes which support independence, good manners and social development;
- involve pupils and parents appropriately in feedback about food provision and menus; and
- ensure food is prepared, stored and served safely and hygienically.

Healthy and balanced eating

Menus and food provision are planned to offer variety across the main food groups and to support a balanced diet. The School encourages pupils to try a range of foods and to make healthy choices without using food in a way that creates unnecessary pressure or stigma.

- fruit and vegetables are offered regularly and form part of school meals;

- starchy foods such as bread, rice, pasta and potatoes are included as appropriate sources of energy;
- appropriate sources of protein, iron, calcium and other key nutrients are included across menus;
- foods and drinks high in sugar, saturated fat and salt are limited;
- portion sizes are appropriate to the age, appetite and needs of the child; and
- menus are reviewed periodically by the School and catering team, taking account of current nutrition guidance and feedback.

School catering and lunch

School lunchtime menus are agreed and reviewed by the School and catering team. Pupils are offered a balanced meal with vegetables and/or salad and are encouraged to try foods while being supported to recognise their own appetite and fullness cues. Portion sizes are adjusted to reflect the differing needs of younger and older pupils.

Vegetarian provision is available. The School will also make appropriate arrangements for religious, cultural and medical dietary requirements where these have been notified in advance and can be safely accommodated. Allergen management is governed by the Allergy Safety Policy.

Breakfast

Breakfast Club is available each school morning. A range of suitable breakfast foods is offered, which may include cereal, toast, yoghurt, fruit, milk and water. Choices are reviewed periodically to ensure they remain appropriate and balanced.

Mid-morning snacks

Pupils may bring fruit or vegetables as a mid-morning snack. Food brought into school must be suitable for the child's age and stage of development and prepared in a way that reduces choking risk.

Where an additional snack is permitted, the School encourages simple, nutritious, lower-sugar options. Confectionery-style or high-sugar snacks are not permitted as routine snacks. Any food brought from home must comply with allergy restrictions communicated by the School.

Drinks and hydration

Fresh drinking water is available throughout the day. Pupils are encouraged to drink regularly, particularly after physical activity and during warm weather. Pupils from Preschool to Year 6 are encouraged to bring a refillable water bottle to school. Water is the routine drink available in classrooms. Milk is offered where appropriate, including to younger children.

The School does not routinely provide sugary or artificially sweetened drinks as an alternative to water. Additional fluids will be encouraged in hot weather and according to individual health needs.

After-school care and sporting fixtures

Children attending after-school care are offered an appropriate snack or light meal. Menus are reviewed regularly to ensure provision remains balanced and suitable for the children attending. Food and drink offered after sporting fixtures is intended to support hydration and refuelling. Water will always be available. Any additional snack provided will be proportionate to the activity and will take account of dietary and allergy requirements.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Food and drink for Nursery, Preschool and Reception children is planned in line with the EYFS statutory framework and the DfE Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance. Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, these must be healthy, balanced and nutritious.

Safer eating and choking prevention

Nursery, Preschool and Reception children are seated safely at appropriately sized tables and chairs for meals and snacks. Children are never left alone while eating and remain within sight and hearing of a member of staff. Wherever practicable, staff are positioned facing children while they eat so they can monitor safe eating and respond promptly to any concern. Food is prepared and served in a way that reduces the risk of choking, taking account of each child's age and stage of development. Staff follow current EYFS and DfE safer-eating guidance, and the setting maintains appropriate paediatric first aid cover while children are eating.

- Nursery and Preschool children attending for a full day are provided with appropriate meals and snacks across the day;
- menus are planned in advance, rotated regularly and displayed or otherwise made available to parents;
- fresh fruit and vegetables are offered every day;
- fresh drinking water is available at all times and milk is offered as appropriate;
- individual dietary requirements are identified before admission and reviewed when circumstances change;
- staff support children to develop independence in eating and drinking according to their age and stage of development;
- meal and snack times are positive social occasions and children are given sufficient time to eat without being rushed;
- children are not forced to eat food they do not want, and appropriate alternatives are considered where necessary;
- staff remain alert to choking risk and food is prepared and served in an age-appropriate way; and
- parents receive appropriate information about what their child has eaten where this forms part of the setting's usual practice.

Packed lunches for funded Early Years places

Where parents provide a packed lunch or snacks for a funded Early Years place, the School encourages food that complements the setting's healthy eating approach. Guidance will be provided to families where appropriate. Packed lunches should contain suitable, age-appropriate foods and should comply with any allergy-related restrictions communicated by the School.

Perishable food must be kept at a safe temperature. Where refrigeration is not available, parents should provide an appropriate cool pack or insulated container. Water is available throughout the day.

Special dietary requirements

Parents and carers are responsible for informing the School in writing of any medical, allergy, religious, cultural, vegetarian or other dietary requirement and for notifying the School promptly of any change. The School will make reasonable arrangements to meet identified needs, working with families and catering staff as appropriate.

Food allergy and intolerance information is managed under the Allergy Safety Policy. The School's catering and supervising staff must use the current allergy/dietary information provided to them and must not rely on assumptions or informal verbal messages when serving food.

Food brought into school, treats and celebrations

The School aims to keep treats occasional and proportionate. Certificates, stickers and other non-food rewards are preferred for routine recognition. Where food is provided for a celebration or event, it must be suitable for the pupils involved and must comply with current allergy controls.

Parents must not send homemade cakes or other unlabelled foods for sharing. Where the School permits birthday or celebration food, it must be shop-bought, individually portioned where practicable, and supplied in original packaging with a complete ingredients and allergen label. The School may decline or withhold food where the ingredient information is incomplete or where it conflicts with a pupil's safety arrangements.

Food education and the curriculum

Healthy eating and food are addressed through appropriate curriculum areas including Science, PSHE and practical food-related activities. Pupils may have opportunities to taste, touch, smell and prepare a variety of foods and to learn about food from different cultures and traditions.

All practical food activities must take account of known allergies and dietary requirements. Staff must check relevant pupil information and follow the Allergy Safety Policy before planning or delivering activities involving food.

Food hygiene and safety

Food must be prepared, stored, transported and served in accordance with applicable food hygiene requirements and the School's food safety procedures. Staff involved in food preparation and handling must receive appropriate instruction, supervision and training for their role.

- appropriate handwashing and hygiene procedures are followed before food preparation and eating;
- food preparation areas and equipment are kept clean and maintained appropriately;
- food is stored at appropriate temperatures and cross-contamination risks are controlled;
- suppliers and food products are selected with due regard to safety, quality and allergen information;
- allergen information required by law is available for food supplied by the School; and
- food safety incidents are reported and managed promptly.

Food poisoning and notifiable incidents in EYFS

The School will meet applicable EYFS notification requirements in relation to food poisoning or other serious incidents affecting children in its care. Where notification to Ofsted or another regulator is required, this will be made within the statutory timescale and the School will cooperate with any public health or regulatory advice.

Parental involvement and communication

Menus and appropriate information about school catering are made available to parents. Parents are encouraged to provide accurate information about dietary requirements and to

raise questions or concerns with the School. Feedback may be provided through the School Business Manager, catering team or Headteacher as appropriate.

Monitoring and review

The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee has oversight of this policy. Food provision and relevant food safety matters will be reviewed as part of the School's normal monitoring arrangements. The policy will be reviewed annually, and sooner where there is a significant change in legislation, guidance or School practice. The next scheduled review is August 2027.

Authority

The Full Board of Governors, by delegation to sub-committees, is responsible for formulating the policies and procedures that will ensure the school continue to achieve the aims of the overall school strategy. Hence, each sub-committee has Terms of Reference and assigned responsibility for policies within that scope. The sub-committees are: Audit and Compliance Committee, Education Committee, Finance and General Purposes Committee, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee, Safeguarding and Child Protection Committee and Sales and Marketing Committee.