



The Mall School

Healthy Eating and Snacks Policy

This policy applies to all children including those in the nursery and Early Years foundation stage.

Rationale

At The Mall School, we aim to provide an environment and learning opportunities that support our children to physically and mentally thrive and lay the foundations for them to make positive health choices in the future. The Mall School is committed to encouraging and developing positive attitudes towards food and a healthy diet for everyone in our community. Promoting a healthy lifestyle is integral to our curriculum and we recognise the importance of offering the children the opportunity to make informed choices about what, when, and where they eat. As a school we know that food is fundamental to quality of life, not just in providing essential nutrition but in communicating and sharing positive values, attitudes and experiences with each other. We believe that adults (staff, parents and carers) should be good role models and should support pupils in understanding how balanced nutrition contributes to a person's health, happiness and general well-being.

Within the school day, we would like children to eat nutrient-dense and minimally processed foods that provide necessary nutrients and energy and to eat limited amounts of highly processed foods that are often high in refined sugars, artificial sweeteners, salt and refined oils. We are also mindful of current NHS guidelines which set very low daily limits for free sugar consumption in children (e.g., sugars added to food and drink) and can easily be inadvertently exceeded. The school has an important role to play in helping children keep within these guidelines.

In determining this policy, the school has referenced specific guidance from the NHS which relates to Government Dietary Recommendations, issued by Public Health England, along with the [Eatwell Guide](#). The guidance specifically explains the proportions of the different food groups needed for a healthy diet and also emphasises the importance of regular



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exercise. The guide specifically references concerns over the amount of sugar consumed by children and adults, and that many of us are taking in 2-3 times the recommended amount each day.

In devising this policy and considering the snacks and treats consumed at The Mall School, the staff are mindful of the positive impact of a diet on children's overall health. This relates to the school breakfast and lunch provision, and snacks, seeking to achieve a diet for each child which contains low proportions of processed foods and reduced levels of sugar but also mindful of personal choice and helping children to learn to take responsibility for their eating habits.

Aims and Objectives

- To improve the health of pupils, staff and the whole school community by helping to influence eating habits through increasing knowledge and awareness of food issues including what constitutes a healthy diet.
- To ensure the children are well nourished at school and that every child has access to safe, tasty and nutritious food and a safe, easily available water supply during the school day.
- To ensure that food provision in the school acknowledges the ethical and medical requirements of staff and pupils e.g. religious, vegetarian, medical and allergenic needs.
- To introduce and promote practices within the school to reinforce these aims and to remove or discourage practices that negate them.
- To re-consider the perception of sugary foods as a treat or reward and limit the occasions where this is reinforced in school.



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With these aims in mind, we have started to develop recommendations which also consider the regularity of different situations. If situations arise which are not covered within this policy, we ask for the principles of this policy to be followed.

The Role of Families

We wish to build a positive and supportive relationship with the parents of children at our school through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation. In promoting this objective regarding food, we will:

- Inform parents about the school healthy eating policy and practice.
- Encourage staff and parents to be involved in reviewing school policy.
- Inform parents about the best practice known regarding healthy eating so parents can support the key messages being given to the children at school.
- Be respectful of each family's views on what constitutes healthy eating and be mindful of special occasions, birthdays and festivals which may be associated with celebratory foods.

Snacks

Our aim is to encourage the children to eat healthy food to sustain their energy across the day and give their bodies the nutrients that they need. We recognise the difficulty in navigating the large offering of so-called 'healthy snacks' being marketed to us all. Many of the fruit bars, fruit derived products and cereals bars contain high levels of refined sugars, artificial sweeteners, salt and refined oils. The processing of the fruit in many of these products means you are left with the fruit sugars and not the fibre: a key reason why fruit is so good for you. Given this difficulty and



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for simplicity and consistency, we are discouraging consumption of these fruit derived/cereal-based products.

Children are also regularly reminded that they are not allowed to share or 'trade' snacks, for safety reasons. Fruits such as grapes and cherry tomatoes should be cut lengthways.

Snacks for consumption at school, including breaktimes:

These snack options are encouraged:

Juniors (Rec-3)

- Fresh or dried fruit (care needed with portion sizes with dried fruit)
- Fresh vegetables

Seniors (Y4-6)

- Fresh or dried fruit (care needed with portion sizes with dried fruit)
- Fresh vegetables
- Plain rice cakes, corn cakes, oatcakes, lentil cakes, savoury breadsticks or savoury crackers e.g. cream crackers
- Savoury seeds e.g. sunflower or pumpkin seeds (but please avoid sesame – see below)
- Cheese e.g. diced cheddar (not processed)
- Pitted olives
- A savoury sandwich for children in Year 4+

We also request the children to bring in a named water bottle (size limit of 500 ml) to refill at the school water fountains.

These options are actively discouraged and should not be brought to school in any year group:

- Products derived from fruit e.g. winders, bars, drops, peelers etc. (exception – dried fruit)
- Popcorn



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- Crisps, including vegetable crisps
- Fruit/cereal/oat bars and energy balls
- Biscuits, breakfast bars, sweets, crisps, cakes,
- Chocolates or pastries
- Crackers such as Mini Cheddars or Ritz biscuits which contain processed ingredients and oils
- Pastries such as Pain au Chocolat or croissants.
- Any drinks other than water (note: milk is available at morning break in Reception)
- Any foods containing tree nuts or peanuts or traces of tree nuts and peanuts
- Any foods containing sesame, including houmous, halvah and tahini (note some seed snacks contain sesame seeds)
- Any food items that include the use of single use plastic

Nuts, sesame and any foods containing traces of these ingredients are not permitted in school. Some children and staff at school have serious allergies to nuts or sesame and therefore these must not be consumed at any time in the school day. The most common tree nuts are almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, pecans, pistachios and walnuts; peanuts are not tree nuts, but many people are allergic to them. Houmous, Tahini and Halvah are three very popular sesame products, which are sometimes added to other foods. Other common sources of sesame include bakery products, biscuits, crackers, breadsticks, rice cakes and bagels.

Lunch

The staff recognise that at lunchtime the children will want a more substantial meal and that a sweet item may be included, in parallel with the school lunch offering. Our school lunches are cooked on site using fresh ingredients and we aim to provide flavoursome, balanced and nutrient- rich meals and encourage children to enjoy eating a diverse range of foods.



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Special Celebrations

Birthdays, special events and school parties in class are also times where food contributes to a sense of celebration and sharing. On these occasions, foods other than fruit or vegetables may be offered, but the staff will remind the children that this is an 'occasional' treat and not 'everyday food'.

Any treats brought into school for these occasions should only be individual portions for the child's class and parents may wish to consider alternatives to sugary treats. (e.g. non-food presents such as rubbers, small pencils, stickers and bookmarks). Food should be labelled with ingredients including allergens. Packs of sweets e.g. Haribos or larger sweets are not permitted, nor are hard candies or caramels due to them being choking hazards, particularly for younger children. Children will be encouraged to bring treats home rather than consume in school and will be handed out at the end of the day. If you prefer your child not to receive birthday treats at school, please speak to your child's class teacher.

Cake sales are popular at school and enable children to enjoy baking with their families. Given these are not regular events and parents have some oversight regarding what their children are buying, these will continue to run. All donations must be nut, peanut and sesame-free and must be labelled with ingredients allergens.

Parents or carers of children who are on special diets for medical or religious reasons, or who have allergies, will be asked to provide as much information as possible about which foods are suitable or foods which must be avoided. If they have any concerns, they should contact the school's welfare officer.

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Autumn 2025

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