



Food and Nutrition Policy

Approved by: Full Governing Body

Date: September 2025

Review: September 2026

Signed: Chair: Mr. C Harris

Food and Nutrition Policy – 2025 - 2026

Statement of Intent

At Reddal Hill, we are committed to promoting the health and wellbeing of our pupils through a whole school approach to food and nutrition. We recognise the vital link between a nutritious diet, pupils' health, and their ability to learn, concentrate and grow. This policy outlines how we aim to foster a school culture which promotes healthy lifestyle choices that will benefit pupils throughout their lives. In line with national guidance and statutory requirements, we ensure food provided in school is safe, healthy, varied, and inclusive of dietary and cultural needs. We work collaboratively with parents and carers to educate pupils about healthy eating and instil positive habits early in life.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance, including but not limited to:

- The Requirements for School Food Regulations (2014)
- The Food Information (Amendment) (England) Regulations (2019), Natasha's Law
- Food Safety Act (1990)
- School Standards and Framework Act (1998)
- Public Health England (2024) 'Example menus for early years settings in England'
- DfE (2025) 'Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance'
- DfE (2023) 'School Food in England'
- DfE (2025) 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage'

Aims

- To provide a curriculum and ethos which promote a positive attitude towards healthy eating and a balanced diet.
- To ensure that all pupils have access to healthy, nutritious meals which cater for the diverse religious, cultural, medical and sensory needs of our pupils.
- To encourage appropriate hydration and discourage the consumption of unhealthy drinks such as sugary or energy drinks.
- To ensure all food provided by the school meets appropriate nutritional standards.
- To involve the school, community, including staff and parents, in promoting healthy eating.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All food and drink provided in school, including those provided at breakfast club, break and lunch

times and after-school club.

- Packed lunches brought in from home.
- Food used in curriculum-based activities.
- Whole school events involving food such as celebrations and fundraising events.

Food and Drink Provision

Break Times and Snack Time

At Reddal Hill, we participate in the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme, which provides one portion of free fresh fruit or vegetables daily, to all pupils in Early Years and Key Stage 1. Older pupils are encouraged to bring a healthy snack from home. Toast can be purchased twice a week via the school office. Free Fruit Friday offers an opportunity for all pupils to access a free portion of fruit. On arrival to school, bagels are provided for pupils who are hungry or those who have not had their breakfast. Bagel portions are cut in half for older pupils and quarters for younger pupils. We also participate in the Cool Milk scheme, offering pupils the opportunity to receive a daily portion of chilled milk. Pupils under the age of five are entitled to this milk free of charge, whilst older pupils purchase milk through this scheme.

Lunch Time Meals Provided by School

Lunch time meals provided by the school's catering service (SIPs), are balanced, nutritious, and varied, incorporating a selection from the four key food groups: fruit and vegetables, starchy carbohydrates, dairy or dairy alternatives, and proteins. Foods that are high in fat, sugar, and salt are limited in both portion size and frequency. Menus are designed to reflect cultural diversity and provide pupils with opportunities to explore a variety of flavours and textures. SIPs have their own comprehensive food policies in place. All pupils in Early Years and Key Stage 1 are entitled to a free school meal each day. In Key Stage 2, school meals are accessible to those who are entitled to free school meals or those who choose to purchase a meal.

Packed Lunches and Food Brought from Home

Parents/ **carers** are encouraged to provide healthy, balanced packed lunches which comply with the school's healthy eating guidance. These should include items from the major food groups and avoid high-sugar or high-fat foods. Items not permitted include chocolate bars, sweets, fizzy drinks, and products containing nuts including chocolate spreads. Any food not in line with this policy will be confiscated and returned to the parent or carer at the end of the day. In some cases, if the packed lunch is unsuitable, a school meal may be provided and charged to parents or carers. All lunch boxes will be clearly labelled with the name of the pupil.

Celebrations

To support our commitment to healthy eating and ensure compliance with **Natasha's Law, 2019, and the**

Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance, 2025, pupils are not permitted to bring any food items to share for birthdays or other celebrations. This is to protect pupils and staff with allergies and to ensure consistent food safety practices. Instead, at Reddal Hill, we invite pupils to wear their own clothes to school on their birthday (or the closest school day if it falls during a weekend or holiday) as a fun and inclusive way to celebrate. Individual birthdays will be celebrated in class and pupils will receive a birthday certificate.

Whole School Events

While we place a strong emphasis on healthy eating, we also recognise the importance of balance and celebration. On special occasions, pupils may be offered treat items as part of a reward or school tradition for example:

- An ice-cream on Fun Day;
- Ice cream or sweet treats during fundraising sales or charity days organised by the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) or school council;
- Hot chocolate and biscuits during a school movie night; and/ or
- Festive snacks or themed treats during religious and cultural celebrations.

All treats provided by the school are carefully considered and provided in a safe, controlled manner that adheres to allergy guidance and supervision.

Allergens and Dietary Requirements

The health and safety of pupils and staff with allergies and special dietary needs is of paramount importance. Medical and allergy needs of an individual pupil will be obtained in advance of them starting at the school. All known allergies, intolerances, and dietary requirements are recorded and communicated to relevant staff. Individual Healthcare Plans (IHPs) are created, by the school nursing team, where needed, and appropriate risk assessments are carried out. Relevant emergency medication will be provided by parents/ carers and the necessary paperwork completed. Staff receive annual allergy awareness training, including how to recognise symptoms of allergic reactions and respond appropriately, including in the event of anaphylaxis. If a food intolerance is suspected, staff will work with parents/ carers to keep a diary of the foods eaten within the setting/ at home and any symptoms experienced. If an allergy is suspected, the food will be avoided whilst the parent/ carer seeks medical advice from an appropriate health professional. Food will not be excluded from a pupil's diet without a valid reason, as this can result in an unnecessarily restricted diet, which could have a negative impact on nutrition.

At Reddal Hill, we strive to be a **nut-free school** due to the life-threatening risk nut allergies pose to some pupils and staff. If a pupil brings in any food items, including snacks or packed lunch items, that contain nuts, staff will confiscate the item, provide an appropriate alternative, and return the original item to the parent or carer at the end of the day.

We liaise closely with our catering providers to ensure that the allergy and dietary requirements of our pupils are met safely and effectively. Our caterers (SIPs) follow their own robust food safety policies and adhere to strict guidelines that prevent cross-contamination of allergens during food preparation. For pupils with coeliac disease or gluten intolerance, our catering team provides a dedicated coeliac-friendly menu. All meals for pupils with special dietary needs are prepared in line with agreed protocols and best practices to ensure their safety and inclusion. Separate utensils, preparation areas, and labelled storage are used where necessary to avoid cross-contact with allergens. Our school lunch menu ensures that there is at least one vegetarian option available each day to accommodate religious, cultural, or ethical preferences. Pupils are not permitted to share or swap food at any time, whether it is provided by school or brought from home.

Pupils with Additional Needs

Some pupils may have specific dietary needs because of physical or development difficulties, which may impact upon their ability to eat independently, for example a pupil with swallowing difficulties. Staff will follow the guidance of parents/ carers or professionals when preparing food for mealtimes and when providing additional support during meal and snack times.

Some pupils may experience sensory needs in relation to food for example sensitivity to textures, tastes or smells, which may lead to limited preferences or aversions towards specific foods. Staff will consider these needs when preparing food and will communicate these needs with the catering company if required.

Pupils who require a special diet for a medical reason will have written confirmation from an appropriate health professional. This information will be recorded, updated regularly and communicated with all necessary staff.

Early Years Nutrition Guidance (Nursery and Reception)

In line with the DfE's **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Nutrition Guidance, 2025**, Reddal Hill recognises that the early childhood years are a critical period for establishing healthy eating habits, addressing health inequalities, and laying the foundations for lifelong well-being. Pupils in our Nursery and Reception classes are supported to eat well through a structured approach to food provision that meets both their developmental and nutritional needs.

To ensure food safety and reduce the risk of choking, all food items provided to pupils **under the age of five** are prepared and served in line with national food safety advice:

- Small, round foods such as grapes, cherry tomatoes, and blueberries are always cut lengthways into quarters.
- Hard foods like raw carrots or apples are either finely grated, steamed until soft, or cut into matchstick-sized pieces.

Staff will monitor pupils to ensure that they are putting appropriately sized portions into their mouths. Any food that poses a choking hazard is removed or modified in line with current safety recommendations from the Food Standards Agency and NHS Start for Life guidance. All our staff involved with food preparation have appropriate food hygiene training, including learning support practitioners (LSPs).

Pupils are **always supervised during meals and snack times**. Staff sit with or closely monitor pupils, model appropriate behaviour, encourage positive eating habits, and respond promptly to signs of difficulty, discomfort, or distress. At least one member of staff present during eating times is trained in **paediatric first aid**.

Staff will monitor a pupil's appetite and adjust portion sizes to ensure pupils get enough energy and nutrients. Although staff will encourage pupils to eat their lunch and try different foods, pupils will not be encouraged to clear their plate or eat more food than they want to. Reward incentives, such as stickers or planet points, will not be used during meal or snack times.

Within Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception):

- **Only milk or water** will be provided within the classrooms as drink options, in support of hydration and dental health, and in line with the DfE's Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance, 2025. Pupils can bring a small bottle of squash to drink at lunch time alongside their school meal or packed lunch.
- Pupils in Nursery and Reception can access the **Cool Milk scheme** providing one carton of milk per day.
- **Daily fruit or vegetable snacks**, provided through the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme, will be offered to all Nursery and Reception pupils.

Pupils are encouraged to develop independence at mealtimes and try a wide variety of healthy foods. Our school catering service (SIPs) avoids processed and packaged foods in favour of freshly prepared meals that expose pupils to a range of textures and flavours. Our menus rotate on a three-week cycle and are adapted to reflect seasonal produce, dietary requirements, and cultural diversity.

Our EYFS staff are trained to observe signs of hunger or fullness and respond to pupils' cues during meals. Pupils are never forced to finish their food; instead, we promote positive, pressure-free eating environments. Fussy eating is managed with patience and consistency, using strategies that align with home practices and encourage the gradual acceptance of new foods.

Curriculum and Education

Healthy eating is embedded across the curriculum and will be taught directly through subjects like science, PSHE, design and technology. Whole-school initiatives such as Healthy Schools Week and themed

assemblies will reinforce this learning. Pupils are educated about nutrition, hygiene, cooking skills, and the importance of balanced diets and hydration. Practical cooking and tasting opportunities are offered to engage pupils and help them develop confidence with food choices. Pupils with additional needs may be provided with food play opportunities to support their sensory needs and development.

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

We understand that food can be connected to emotional wellbeing, and staff are trained to recognise early signs of disordered eating or food-related anxiety. This includes patterns such as skipping meals, eating in isolation, or showing signs of physical distress related to food. Any concerns are discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Senior Mental Health Lead, and support is provided in line with safeguarding and mental health policies. We strive to promote positive body image, emotional resilience, and healthy attitudes toward food and physical health.

Role of Staff and Parents

Families are vital partners in promoting a healthy eating culture. The school regularly communicates menus, healthy eating tips, allergen information and updates to this policy via letters, newsletters, and the school website. Staff will provide feedback on pupils' food intake and engage parents/ carers in menu planning and routine where necessary. Where concerns arise regarding a pupil's eating habits, staff will contact parents/ carers to work together on a suitable approach. Staff are encouraged to model healthy eating behaviours and are responsible for ensuring that any food brought into school or ingredients used within lessons complies with this guidance and follows healthy and safety regulations regarding allergens.

Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Assistant Headteacher of Inclusion and EYFS, **the Headteacher and the** governing body. Updates or amendments will be made in response to statutory guidance, school priorities, or feedback from stakeholders. All updates are communicated clearly to the relevant parties. Compliance with food standards will be regularly monitored by senior leaders.