

St James the Great School RC (VA) Primary and Nursery School



Food Policy

Spring 2007

St James the Great School's Whole School Food Policy

Mission/Rationale

Our school, as a place of learning, belongs to the parish communities of Thornton Heath and Norbury and exists to educate children of the community with the Gospel values, traditions and beliefs of the Catholic Faith at the centre of its ethos, whilst recognising and understanding the individuality of the 'faith journey'.

Taking account of National Curriculum requirements, the school will provide a framework within which all pupils are enabled to develop the highest possible level of achievement, fulfilling their academic, moral, physical and spiritual potential.

The school will foster a respect for self and others in a climate of tolerance of individual differences, whilst recognising the importance of striving for excellence and enhancing children's transition to responsible adulthood.

We as a school understand the importance of investing in health to assist in the process of raising the level of pupil achievement and improving standards. We recognise the need to provide a physical and social environment that is conducive to learning. We acknowledge the importance of food and food choices – research has shown us the impact on learning, attention and behaviour of a diet low in essential nutrients and high in fats, sugar and salt.

Ultimately we are aiming for all members of the community to sign up to the principles of this policy in order to fully embed healthy eating as a way of life in order to optimise future life chances.

Description of the school

St James the Great RC Primary School is a two-form entry Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided school located in the Thornton Heath area of Croydon. It has approximately 420 pupils. Although the majority are White British there are over 10 ethnic groups represented in the school of which Black Caribbean, Black African and Indian form the largest. The proportion of children who have English as an additional language is approximately 20%. 15.97% of pupils are on the SEN register. The free school meal entitlement is low at approximately 9%. The school attains well in National Curriculum test results in comparison with similar schools in Croydon and England.

Parental involvement in the school is strong. We have an active Friends Association and dedicated governors. Attendance of meetings to inform parents is high

The school has its own catering service which is run from a newly fitted kitchen. Pupils dine in the hall in two sittings, junior and infants. Arrangements are made for pupils to take a school meal, which most do, or a packed lunch. The menu cycle is regularly circulated to parents and copies are always available in the main reception area. The menu for the day is also displayed on a board at the school's main entrance. Pupils are permitted to choose daily whether or not to take a school meal.

We are rightly proud of the very high standard of meals service we provide, which always includes at least three main course choices including a vegetarian option and a range of salads from our self service salad bar. Special diets are catered for on request.

School milk is available to all children and there is a ready access to fresh drinking water. We have a policy of not allowing drinks of any kind to be brought into school. This applies to all children including those who bring a packed lunch. Allied to this is our policy of disallowing the bringing of sweets to school. Pupils are encouraged to bring in a piece of fruit for a playtime snack.

Why have a whole school food policy?

In the last 30 years we have seen dramatic increases in adult diseases such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease. These are related to a poor diet as a result of dietary imbalance. We are now beginning to see children developing symptoms of these diseases whilst still in childhood.

We also know that if children's diets are inadequate or provide insufficient fluid their performance at school will be affected due to difficulty in concentration and being more likely to be absent from school through ill health.

As a result of these increasing concerns healthy eating has become a core part of the National Healthy Schools Scheme and in order to fulfil this, healthy schools will be required to have a whole school food policy. This will ensure that the school meets the standards for the NHSS, offers consistent messages relating to nutrition that are appropriate to the school and is able to communicate these to the whole school community.

What is a whole school food policy?

A whole school food policy provides a framework to enable our school to:

- Set out a coordinated approach to food and drink
- Ensure equality of access for all
- Reinforce appropriate messages relating to food and nutrition, ensuring consistency between the curriculum and food provision
- Provide parents/carers with information on and involvement with aspects of food in school
- Establish effective working partnerships with the local community, for example local procurement
- Make provision for staff training and resources
- Undertake work to contribute towards healthy schools action plans

The aim of the whole school food policy

The aim of this policy is to further develop the outcomes specified in Every Child Matters. We believe that a policy promoting healthy eating in schools and setting out appropriate standards will contribute to the health of pupils – both short-term and long-term – and, by promoting a healthy diet, children will be more readily equipped to enjoy and achieve within and beyond school. We also take into account the national and local health concerns as laid out in the **Croydon Key Health Facts and Statistics** document **May 2006** showing that Croydon is ranked the 140th most deprived local authority out of 354 local authorities in England and 21st out of 33 local authorities in London with Thornton Heath being in the category of the 2nd most deprived wards in Croydon. This we are aware has implications for healthy and obesity. However Croydon as a whole fairs better than the national average.

Name of member of SLT responsible for school food

Terry Cefai and Mary Berkeley-Agyepong are the appointed members of the School Leadership Team responsible for food in the school.

People with key responsibilities for food in schools

The Headteacher is the named person with overall responsibility for food in the school.

The Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 Co-ordinators are responsible for overseeing the planning and co-ordination of nutrition education for pupils within the framework for PSHE and PE.

The Deputy Head and PSHCE and Healthy Schools Co-ordinator, are responsible for overseeing the planning and co-ordination of nutrition education for staff.

The Catering Manager is supported by the assistant manager who assumes this role in her absence. The Catering Manager is responsible for training the catering staff. She is also responsible for the provision of food throughout the school day, meeting the needs of children with specific dietary requirements and ensuring the appropriate physical resources are in place such as furnishings and utensils.

The Headteacher and the Chair of Governors are responsible for determining the length of lunch breaks.

The lunchtime co-ordinator is responsible for leading the lunchtime supervisors and ensuring that systems are in place for a smooth transition in and out of the lunch hall.

The Chair of the Curriculum Committee is responsible for overseeing any policies and recommending policies / policy reviews to the main Governing Body.

The Chair of the Finance Committee is responsible for ensuring appropriate allocation of budgets for catering.

Whole School Food Audit

The audit of school food (*Food in Schools Toolkit*) revealed the following:

- Lunchbox Newsletters are on display in the main entrance for parents. In addition, children's lunchboxes are monitored. Where there is concern, individual parents / carers are highlighted and made aware of issues regarding their child's lunch-box and given support on potential modifications and feedback as a result.
- The School menu is constantly review by pupils catering staff and governors. Pupils meet with catering staff on a regular basis to discuss and share ideas concerning the menu. Many changes have been made in the light of these meetings, such as the salad bar, fruit and soup at playtimes and fruit smoothies.
- Children eat in a specific dining area. Due to the introduction of classes being called from the playground there are no queues of significance. In order to ensure a fair system, classes rotate over a week so that it is not always the same class last. However year 6 have the opportunity to lunch first.
- All classes have drinking water available and children are also encouraged to bring in water bottles. During hot weather additional water is made available throughout the lunch-time period.
- Pupils are encouraged to try healthy choices and incentives are on offer, e.g.: stickers. Healthy menu choices and information about a balanced diet are displayed in the canteen to inform pupils and encourage a higher uptake of healthy choices. Lunch supervisors also monitor the pupil's choices and recommend healthy options.
- Food is covered across the curriculum. Year groups undertake food technology projects incorporating the testing, designing, making and evaluating process. These projects are geared towards healthy food choices. Children are taught about nutrition through a cross curricular approach. Displays and work from children demonstrate the inclusion of nutrition into the curriculum and a classroom kitchen in the nursery is well used. Pupils are involved in cooking for activities such as the Harvest lunch thus incorporating cooking skills as well as nutrition knowledge.
- Where possible, we develop further opportunities to promote healthy eating, for example, when investigating senses, children are encouraged to taste different fruits and vegetables.
- The school has effective systems to address pupil care at lunchtimes. The school has employed a Play leader on the playground throughout the lunch time for Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. A buddy system is also in operation in which years 5 and 6 buddy Reception and year 1, the buddies eat together and take part in lunch time activities.

During lunch times the junior playground has Year 6 play leaders where team captains and helpers structure and lead games using a variety of equipment. This is in the process of being rolled out to the infant playground.

Trained Squabble Busters are also on hand to intervene or deal with minor disputes on the playground.

- The audit was undertaken by the Student council who chaired a discussion in each class and fed back to the senior management and catering staff.
- Parents have been involved and consulted concerning our new menu. Recently pupils have undertaken a questionnaire for parents about our school dinners. The findings were then published in our school magazine. The results showed an overwhelming satisfaction with our school dinners.
- Parents have also been asked for feedback through our school newsletter.
- From the consultation, the priorities in terms of Food in School are:
 - to continue developing healthy menus for lunch-time
 - to further promote the uptake of school meals
 - to work with parents / carers on ensuring lunch-boxes are healthy and balanced

Objectives of the Whole School food policy (including responsibilities)

Nutrition in the curriculum

- To ensure our PSHCE policy states our commitment to the long-term health and well-being of all pupils and to ensure staff, parents/ carers and members of the wider community have an understanding of the policy.
- To give a consistent message relating to healthy living, hygiene and safety in preparation through a wide and varied curriculum.

The eating environment

- To ensure that the dining area remains bright and welcoming and that in warmer weather we continue to make use of our outdoor area to seat some pupils while they eat.
- To ensure tables and chairs are appropriate to the age of the children and suitable cutlery is provided.
- To continue to ensure behaviour and noise levels in the dining room are appropriate and that all children are aware of the rules and are supported by lunch time supervisors.
- To continue to allow Juniors to have 1hour for their lunch and infants 1hour 15mins, to ensure pupils have enough time to get their lunch, eat in comfort and then have time to play outside before afternoon lessons commence.
- To ensure all staff in the school are aware of the importance of acting as good role models and continue to eat with the pupils in the dining hall on a rota basis.

School food and drink provision

- To regularly monitor the school menu and consult with parents concerning new changes.
- To ensure our menu meets the food-based standards and the nutrient-based standards.
- To continue to ensure our menus are made available to pupils and parents and that menus are displayed around the school.
- To continue our policy of not allowing any chocolate, chocolate products, sweets and fizzy drinks in lunch boxes.
- To support parents in providing lunch boxes which are balanced and nutritious.
- To continue to talk to parents / carers individually where we see evidence of children bringing inadequate lunches to school.
- To ensure packed lunches are stored in a cool place in the classroom.

- To support our catering staff in keeping the Gold Hygiene award.

Cultural diversity

- To encourage children to draw appreciation and inspiration from food, reflecting the school's diverse cultural backgrounds.

Rewards and Special occasions

- To ensure food in school should not be used as a reward under any circumstance unless it is a healthy treat of fruit / vegetables.
- As a school we have taken into consideration food provided for special occasions such as 'birthday sweets or parties. We understand the need to keep sugar and saturated fat intake for children at a minimum but believe that to eliminate these totally in our school environment is not ideal, as the concept of a healthy and balanced diet is not about eliminating food types but teaching children moderation. This means we are dealing with issues that arise for pupils outside the school environment in the 'real world' where sugary/fatty snacks and food are available to them and teaching them the concept of a balanced diet rather than unrealistic abstinence.

Communication

- To continue to ensure parents are constantly consulted concerning food in school via discussions and newsletters.
- To continue consultation with pupils through discussions at School Council.

Quality assurance

- To ensure catering staff have the opportunity to attend training courses
- The catering manager to give training sessions/ prompt sheets to support other staff in the teaching of cookery, hygiene and nutrition.
- To ensure outside visitors are made aware of the policy and ethos of the school towards healthy eating before planning their sessions.
- To ensure expert advice is sought, when necessary, for matters outside of basic healthy eating advice to ensure an evidence based approach to nutrition within the school.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Catering staff are in the best position to actively monitor the uptake of particular choices on the menu. Evidence from monitoring will be used to plan future menus as appropriate.
- School council constantly feedback to catering staff,
- Parents are informed and given opportunity to feedback concerning the food available in school.
- Lunchboxes are regularly monitored by catering staff, lunch supervisors and monitors.
- Ongoing education of children in relation to a healthy and balanced diet.
- Review our PSHCE policy, and other relevant policies, to ensure they reflect changes in our whole school food policy.

Inclusion- Meeting the dietary needs of all pupils

Any child with a medical condition which impacts on dietary needs is highlighted to relevant staff. All new pupils and parents attend pre meetings where any issues are discussed. Parents / carers are given copies of menus to discuss appropriate choices for their child. Catering staff and lunchtime supervisors are made aware of children with specific dietary requirements and children are carefully monitored to ensure they do not have food which may be harmful to them.

Where appropriate, training will be given to relevant members of the staff team, e.g.: training in the administration of the epi-pen for children with severe nut allergies.

Lunch supervisors and catering staff work with fussy or faddy eaters to ensure that the child eats an optimum diet and is encouraged to try new things at a suitable pace. We acknowledge that for some children this is a very long process and that praise, encouragement and patience is required and that the eating experience should be as positive as possible.

If a child is not eating in school, it is quickly picked up by lunchtime staff and parents / carers will be informed and encouraged to explore any issues surrounding food with their child. As above, support will be given to the child to ensure that s/he eats as wide a range of healthy options as possible.

The policy will be available on our school website and parents notified. Copies will also be available from the school office on request.

Links to other policies

- Physical activity policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Equal opportunities and inclusion
- PSHCE
- DT
- Science

Staff team to review in Spring 2009