



Food and Nutrition Guidance

This guidance has been approved and adopted by the school; St Polycarp's Catholic Primary School

To be reviewed; Date: September 2026

Xavier Catholic Education Trust Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide an outstanding Catholic education for all the pupils in our schools. We will follow the example and teachings of Christ and everything we do will be inspired by gospel values. We will strive for excellence in all areas of our work and cherish every child in our care.

Introduction

At St Polycarp's Catholic Primary School, we are committed to supporting children's health, development, and well-being through the provision of nutritious, balanced, and age-appropriate food. We follow the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the updated 2025 Nutrition Guidance for Early Years Providers to ensure the food and drink we provide meets the highest standards.

Providing healthy, balanced and nutritious food ensures that all children:

- Get the right amount of nutrients and energy they need while they are growing rapidly, which is especially important for children who might not have access to healthy food at home. This can help prevent children from becoming overweight or obese.
- Develop positive eating habits early on. Children's early experiences with food can shape future eating habits. This can impact children's long-term health including maintaining a healthy weight, and good oral health.

The early years are a crucial time to reduce health inequalities and set the foundations for a lifetime of good health.

**Aims:**

- Promote lifelong healthy eating habits from an early age.
- Provide meals and snacks that meet children's nutritional, cultural, and dietary needs.
- Comply with statutory guidance on food and drink for children under five.
- Partner with families to support and respect children's individual food requirements.
- Encourage a positive, inclusive, and sociable dining experience.

We provide:

- Healthy, balanced meals and snacks based on the four food groups: fruit and vegetables, starchy foods, proteins, and dairy.
- Age-appropriate portion sizes.
- Water freely available throughout the day, and milk at designated snack times.
- We avoid:
- Foods high in sugar, salt, or saturated fats.
- Artificial sweeteners and sugary drinks.
- Our food provision reflects the guidance in 'Example Menus for Early Years Settings' and supports healthy growth and development.

Paediatric first aid

A qualified paediatric first aider will always be present in the room during all snack and meal times.

Supervision when eating

An adult will always supervise children closely when they are eating. Where possible will sit facing children while they eat to monitor for choking hazards, prevent food sharing and quickly identify any allergic reactions.

Special Dietary Needs and Allergies

- We maintain a current list of children's allergies, intolerances, and cultural dietary needs.
- Allergen information is displayed and followed in food preparation areas.
- All staff receive training in allergy management and emergency response.
- We work closely with parents and healthcare professionals to develop individual care plans as needed.

Learning and Mealtime Environment

- Mealtimes are a key learning opportunity and are used to teach children about healthy food, hygiene, and manners.
- We support children to serve themselves where appropriate, promoting independence.
- Positive role modelling and discussions about food and health are encouraged.
- Mealtimes are social, inclusive, and calm.
- Children sit together with staff who model positive eating behaviours.
- Independence is promoted by encouraging children to serve themselves where age-appropriate.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

- Menus are shared regularly with families and feedback is welcomed.
- We provide information on healthy lunchbox choices (for children bringing food from home).



- Families are consulted about dietary needs, food preferences, and cultural or religious requirements.
- We signpost parents to external guidance and support where appropriate.

Sustainability

- We aim to reduce food waste and promote recycling in food-related activities.
- Our menus favour seasonal, locally sourced, and sustainably produced ingredients where possible.

Cooking with Children

- Cooking and food preparation activities are part of our curriculum.
- These activities promote fine motor skills, maths, science, and cultural learning.
- Health and safety guidelines are followed at all times.

Celebrations and Special Occasions

- We celebrate in healthy and inclusive ways.
- Families are encouraged to share culturally significant foods that meet our nutrition and allergy guidelines.

Cultural and Dietary Preferences

- We respect and accommodate dietary needs related to religion, culture, and ethical beliefs.
- Parents are consulted to ensure inclusive meal planning.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

- This policy is reviewed annually or in response to updated statutory guidance.
- Menus and food practices are reviewed regularly and adapted based on feedback and nutritional standards.
- Compliance is monitored by the leadership team through regular audits.



- All staff are kept informed of any updates to guidance or training requirements.

Key References

- *Statutory Framework for the EYFS (2024, effective September 2024)*
- *Nutrition Guidance for Early Years Providers (DfE, 2025)*
- *Example Menus for Early Years Settings (Public Health England, 2025)*
- *Food Standards Agency: Safer Food Better Business*
- *Eat Better, Start Better (Public Health England / Action for Children)*
- *Start for Life - NHS*