

Healthy Eating, Break and Lunchtimes

At Rachel Madocks we are committed to giving our pupils consistent messages about all aspects of health to help them understand the impact of particular behaviours and encourage them to take responsibility for the choices they make. This will be done at a level that is appropriate to the needs of the individual.

As mealtimes can also be a source of anxiety for our pupils, this is an opportunity to expand and consolidate communication skills, tolerance of trying new foods, using cutlery and being in a social situation such as a dining hall or food technology room. This should be seen as a learning opportunity and an extension of the school curriculum

It is important that we consider all elements of our work to ensure that we promote health awareness in all members of the school community. We can provide a valuable role model to pupils and their families with regard to food and healthy eating patterns and actively support healthy eating and drinking throughout the school day. Our school ensures that healthy choices are available and that national standards are met, and fruit and vegetables are included as part of the meal and salad is available for the children. Where possible, meals have a reduced fat, salt and sugar content, with vegetarian and medical needs met in appropriate ways. Our school aims to support parents in making healthy choices when preparing packed lunches, and to promote this we send out information on healthy choices, however, many of our pupils due to their SEN do have limited dietary preferences and although they are not always the healthier option, this must be recognised.



Why is healthy eating important?

A healthy diet is one of the best ways of maintaining young people's health, both now and in the future. Recent research has shown that diets of some young people are not meeting government recommendations for optimum growth and development.

Our aims are:

- To promote lifelong learning about food, nutrition and eating where appropriate or at a level that is meaningful and appropriate to the child's needs;
- To develop knowledge and understanding of a balanced diet or to experience what these foods are;
- To encourage children to enjoy food and make informed choices to enable them to keep healthy or to make choices between healthy options;
- To understand that good, nutritious food is essential to their ability to learn as well as to their long-term health;
- To promote a positive outlook on healthy lifestyles and an awareness of the consequences of healthy and unhealthy choices;
- To encourage a healthy lifestyle through association of healthy food, exercise and healthy habits;
- To ensure that we are giving consistent messages about food and health to the children that require embedding of familiar choices;
- To ensure that the school meets the outcomes of 'The Every Child Matters' legislation.
- To allow opportunities for children with limited diets chances to explore food in various ways via the curriculum through taster sessions, fun with food or other sensory activities.
- To teach accurate factual information or through sensory activities about food and nutrition through PSHE and Food Technology as part of the curriculum.
- Healthy Lifestyles are to be promoted daily through positive role models within the school community.
- To promote healthy snacks as part of morning break including milk if they are applicable.
- To promote the importance of drinking water
- To promote a healthy balanced menu at lunchtime through school and packed lunches.
- Any specific medical/cultural requirements concerning food and nutrition will be respected and treated individually.

Special occasions and Rewards

Special occasions, such as Christmas, and the end of terms are a time when teachers and pupils like to have a class party or treat. Class parties should reflect our ethos on having a balanced diet and sweet and fatty foods will be given in moderation. Theme day lunches are also provided by HC3S to reflect key events.

Food across the Curriculum

We recognise that food has great potential for cross-curricular work. There are many opportunities to promote healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle in most subjects, and this should be considered when planning topics. Opportunities to explore or try different foods are available in PSHE, Food Technology lessons and Theme days. Due to the complexity of some of our pupils, eating foods is not appropriate, but are still given opportunities to explore or smell various ingredients and/ or foods. For some pupils it will be about supporting tactile defensive behaviours and/or communication opportunities.

Opportunities for learning with food in social situations can also be done through;

- Breakfast, snack and lunch are also opportunities for pupils to be supported in using their communication aids (Proxtalker, PECs, Aided Language Board Displays etc)
- To tolerate sitting and eating appropriately. Providing adequate seat time for meals allows students to socialize and connect with their peers
- Involved at an appropriate level in a social situation. Encourage students to eat together and share their meals.

