



Early Childhood Food and Nutrition Policy

Policy Owner:	Early Childhood Manager
Formally Endorsed By:	Council of Trustees
Endorsement Date:	September 2025
Next Review Date:	September 2026

Human connection in all we do

1. Introduction

At Michael Hall Early Childhood Department, we recognise the critical importance of healthy eating habits in supporting children's overall development and wellbeing. In alignment with the values of Steiner Waldorf education, we aim to create an environment where food is nourishing, mealtimes are harmonious, and children are supported in developing a lifelong positive relationship with food.

2. Aims and Ethos

We are committed to:

- Providing children with safe, nutritious, and balanced meals and snacks following government guidance and Waldorf nutrition principals where ever possible.
- Fostering a mealtime culture that is respectful, and social.
- Encouraging children to develop autonomy, good table manners, and healthy habits.
- Promoting the wellbeing of all children through inclusive and culturally respectful food provision.

3. Meals and Snacks

- All food and drink served for snacks in Early Childhood is vegetarian and organic. It is prepared in the Early Childhood building in accordance with the school's whole-school food ethos.
- All food and drink served for Lunch in Early Childhood is vegetarian and organic (where possible). Cooked meals are prepared on-site in the main kitchen with sides and puddings prepared in the Early Childhood building in accordance with the school's whole-school food ethos.
- Fresh fruit, vegetables, and whole grains form the basis of our menus, and we avoid refined sugars, highly processed foods, and artificial additives.
- Meals and snacks are provided at regular intervals (every 1½-3 hours) and are age-appropriate in both nutritional content and portion size.
- Fresh drinking water is available to children at all times.
- Milk (semi-skimmed after age 2) may be offered in accordance with parental preferences and dietary needs.

4. Allergies, Intolerances and Dietary Requirements

- We obtain detailed dietary information from parents before a child starts, and this is reviewed regularly.
- Early Childhood is a nut and seed free environment.
- Reasonable adjustments are made for children with allergies, intolerances, medical needs, and dietary preferences including cultural, religious, or ethical requirements.
- Allergen information for all meals and snacks is documented and available to parents upon request.
- Staff receive training in food hygiene and allergy awareness, and steps are taken to avoid cross-contamination.

5. Food from Home

- As part of our pedagogy, we work with shared meals where children and adults eat together and eat the same thing (dietary requirements included in this). Therefore there are rarely times when food from home is brought to our setting. However, we ask that teachers have requested food be brought from home, that it complies with our healthy eating ethos. For shared food brought from home for festivals, we ask that parents bring organic items when possible.
- Items not permitted include: glass containers, fizzy drinks, sweets, chocolate, food with high salt or sugar content, and known allergens that present a risk to others (e.g. nuts).

6. Mealtimes Environment

- Mealtimes are valued as social, nurturing moments in the rhythm of the day.
- Educators eat with the children, modelling healthy eating, conversation, and good manners.
- Children are never pressured to eat. They are encouraged to try new foods but respected if they decline.
- Children are offered small portions with the opportunity for more if desired, supporting the development of intuitive eating habits.

7. Food Education and Involvement

- Children are involved in age-appropriate food preparation, table setting, serving, and tidying, promoting independence and care for others.
- Seasonal festivals and birthdays are celebrated with healthy food or non-food treats in keeping with our values.
- Food activities (e.g. baking bread, growing herbs) are integrated into the curriculum to deepen connection to nature and nutrition.

8. Health, Safety and Hygiene

- All food is prepared and served in line with food safety legislation and Safer Food, Better Business guidelines.
- Surfaces and utensils are cleaned and sanitized before and after use.
- Children are always supervised when eating, and all staff are trained in pediatric first aid and choking response procedures.
- Food is prepared and cut according to children's developmental abilities.
- If a child becomes ill after eating, parents are contacted, and any incidents of food poisoning involving two or more children are reported to Ofsted within 14 days.

9. Working with Families

- Sample menus are available, and feedback is welcomed to ensure cultural, medical, and personal preferences are respected.
- Information is shared verbally to parents when requested about what children have eaten and enjoyed.

- Parents are asked in initial intake if there are any considerations the setting needs to take to support their child's dietary requirements.

10. Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed annually and updated in consultation with parents, staff, and trustees. We welcome dialogue with families and carers as partners in supporting the health and wellbeing of the children in our care.

This policy is based on guidance in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6839b752210698b3364e86fc/Early_years_foundation_stage_nutrition_guidance.pdf