EYFS FOOD AND NUTRITION POLICY

Queen's College Preparatory School

(including Early Years Foundation Stage)

Due for review Michaelmas 2027

Food and Nutrition in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Introduction
This policy has been developed in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements and with regard to the Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance, May 2025. It recognises that good nutrition is fundamental to children's health, development, and learning outcomes.

Aims
The primary aim is to provide nutritious, balanced meals and snacks, supporting children's optimal growth and development during the Early Years. Queen's College Preparatory School is committed to creating positive mealtime experiences, not only supporting pupils' physical development, but also promoting lifelong healthy eating habits through enjoyable, social dining.

The safety and wellbeing of all pupils remain paramount during all aspects of food preparation, serving, and consumption, with robust procedures in place to protect every girl in our care. We work collaboratively with parents to meet each child's individual dietary needs, recognising that consistency between home and school support the best outcomes for children.

We view food experiences as valuable opportunities for holistic learning and development, incorporating nutrition education naturally into our curriculum.

Staff Supervision and Safety Requirements

Staff Positioning During Meals
All staff members sit facing the pupils whilst eating, wherever possible, supporting continuous visual supervision. This enables staff to respond promptly to any situation that may arise, including potential choking incidents, to prevent the sharing of food, and to remain vigilant for any signs of allergic reactions.

First Aid Requirements
When Early Years (Reception and Little Corgis) pupils are eating, a member of staff holding a current Full Paediatric First Aid qualification is present. This essential safety requirement applies to all meal and snack times without exception, ensuring that should any emergency arise, particularly choking incidents which can occur silently and require immediate intervention, appropriately trained staff are immediately available to respond. Staff rotas are carefully arranged to ensure this requirement is consistently met, with first aid qualified staff clearly identified and their qualifications maintained through regular updates and renewal programmes.

Pre-Admission Requirements

Essential Information Required
Before any pupil joins the School, comprehensive information on dietary requirements, which may stem from cultural, religious, or preferences are obtained.

Food preferences are individual choices relating to food, which may arise from culture, religion, ethics, health needs, or sensory sensitivities.

The School will accommodate children's religious and cultural dietary needs and will work closely with families where a child has sensory sensitivities affecting their eating. In these circumstances, the child's teacher will work in partnership with parents through ongoing discussion regarding menus, and any strategies that may support a positive and consistent approach to mealtimes. This shared understanding helps gently support the development of the child's palate and confidence around food.

While the School aims to provide a positive and inclusive mealtime experience for all children, it is not possible to accommodate individual likes and dislikes where there is no underlying need or agreed dietary requirement of the type outlined above.

Critical to child safety, we collect thorough documentation, details regarding any food allergies, including medical information and emergency procedures that must be followed in the event of an adverse reaction. Additionally, we record information regarding food intolerances, documenting associated symptoms and the specific management strategies that have proven effective for each individual child. We also gather information about any special health requirements that may impact nutrition ensuring we are able to provide appropriate care that supports each child's individual needs.

Meal and Snack Provision

Meal Scheduling
Meals and snacks are thoughtfully provided at regular intervals throughout the day, with careful attention to children's natural rhythms and nutritional needs. Understanding the high energy demands of early childhood growth and development, we ensure that children are offered a meal or snack every one-and-a-half to three hours, supporting sustained energy levels and healthy appetites for nutritious foods. Portion sizes are carefully calibrated to be age-appropriate while allowing children the opportunity to request additional servings, supporting their natural ability to self-regulate their intake. Our mealtimes are deliberately designed to be relaxed, calm occasions, encouraging shared conversation and social interaction, creating positive associations with food and eating that will benefit children throughout their lives.

Food Quality and Variety
All food served is carefully selected to meet the comprehensive nutritional requirements necessary for growing children during these critical developmental years. Menus are thoughtfully designed to reflect and celebrate the rich cultural and ethnic diversity of our school community, ensuring that all children see their heritage represented and valued while also being introduced to new flavours and traditions. We prioritise fresh, wholesome ingredients wherever possible, recognising that quality nutrition forms the foundation for optimal physical and cognitive development. Throughout all aspects of food preparation, we adhere strictly to relevant health and safety guidelines, maintaining the highest standards to protect the wellbeing of every child in our care.

Responsibility and Monitoring

Designated Responsibility
At each mealtime and snack time, including during in the wraparound care provision, there is a designated member of staff responsible for checking that the food and drink being provided meets all requirements for each child.

Comprehensive monitoring ensures that special dietary requirements are met with accuracy, consistency, and careful attention to individual needs. Allergenic foods are robustly managed through appropriate separation, labelling, and handling procedures that eliminate cross-contamination risks.

Additionally, we ensure that portion sizes are suitable for each child's age, developmental stage, and appetite patterns, supporting healthy growth while respecting individual differences in nutritional needs.

Record Keeping
All adverse reactions or concerns are thoroughly documented, including the specific foods involved, symptoms observed, timing, and actions taken, creating a comprehensive record that supports both immediate care and long-term health management.

Allergy and Special Dietary Management

Allergy Management
Comprehensive individual care plans are developed for pupils with food allergies, working closely with parents and healthcare professionals to ensure all aspects of the child's condition are understood and managed appropriately. Clear labelling and physical separation of allergenic foods are maintained throughout food preparation, storage, and serving processes, with dedicated equipment and preparation areas used where necessary to prevent cross-contamination.

All staff receive thorough training on recognising the early signs of allergic reactions and responding appropriately, including when and how to seek emergency medical assistance.

Emergency medication prescribed for individual pupils is kept readily available in designated, easily accessible locations, with multiple staff members trained in its proper administration and emergency protocols clearly posted and regularly reviewed.

Special Diets
Commitment is made to accommodating medical and dietary needs while, as far as reasonably possible, respecting religious and cultural practices, recognising that food is often central to family identity and wellbeing. Through regular review meetings with parents, the School ensures that understanding of each child's special dietary needs remains current and accurate as children grow and family circumstances evolve. When complex medical dietary requirements are involved, consultation with healthcare professionals is actively sought to ensure that the approach is both safe and nutritionally appropriate. For every child with specific dietary needs, suitable alternative options are provided that are equally nutritious, promoting inclusivity.

Drinks Provision

Water serves as our primary drink offerings, recognising these as the healthiest options for supporting both dental health and overall physical development in early years children.

Pupil Involvement and Independence

Active Participation
Pupils are actively engaged in age-appropriate preparation activities, supporting their development while fostering positive relationships. These meaningful opportunities include setting the table, serving food, and clearing up, helping children develop independence and an understanding of mealtime routines. Self-serving skills are encouraged and supported, with guidance and assistance provided as needed to promote growing confidence and autonomy.

Food exploration activities are thoughtfully incorporated into the broader learning programme, using cooking and food preparation as natural opportunities to develop fine motor skills, mathematical concepts, scientific understanding, and cultural awareness.

Choice and Autonomy
Early Years children are empowered to decide which foods they will eat from the healthy options provided, supporting their developing autonomy while ensuring all available choices are nutritionally beneficial. Food is never used as a reward or punishment, recognising that such practices can create unhealthy relationships with eating that may persist throughout life. Children's individual preferences are respected, while gentle encouragement is provided to try new foods and expand dietary variety. We trust in children's natural ability to self-regulate appetite and nutritional intake, allowing to eat according to cues rather than adult expectations regarding portion sizes or food combinations.

Parent Partnership

Communication
Weekly menus are available to parents through the School's website. Ready access to the menus enables parents to make informed decisions about complementary meals and snacks provided at home.

Celebrations and Special Occasions

Healthy Celebrations
Birthdays and special occasions are celebrated in ways that align with the School's commitment to healthy nutrition, offering creative alternatives to traditional sugary treats while ensuring children feel special and valued. Engaging non-food options, such as bubbles or stickers, are actively promoted, creating positive memories without compromising nutritional goals. When food is included in celebrations, it is carefully planned to complement the balanced meal provision rather than replace nutritious options, ensuring that special occasions support, rather than undermine, healthy eating objectives. Cultural and religious celebrations are thoughtfully acknowledged and incorporated in ways that respect diverse traditions while maintaining the School's commitment to promoting healthy eating practices.

Health and Safety

Food Safety
All Early Years staff hold a Level 2 qualification in Food Hygiene.

Choking Prevention
When preparing food, small fruits including grapes, olives, raspberries, strawberries and cherry tomatoes are cut lengthways and then halved again (quarters).

Continuous, attentive supervision is maintained during all eating times, with staff positioned to observe all children clearly and respond immediately to any signs of difficulty. All staff receive thorough training in choking response procedures, including recognition of choking signs and appropriate emergency interventions, with regular practice sessions to maintain competency.

In the event of a choking incident, comprehensive records will be maintained, and parents will be notified of the circumstances as promptly as reasonably possible. In line with the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, paragraph 3.71, all choking incidents are reviewed through the School's Health and Safety meetings, with any emerging trends carefully examined.

Training and Development
Regular, comprehensive staff training programmes cover all aspects of nutrition, food safety, and management of special dietary needs, ensuring all staff members have the knowledge and skills necessary to support children's nutritional wellbeing effectively. When guidance or regulations change, immediate updates are provided to all relevant staff members, with additional training sessions arranged as needed, to ensure smooth implementation of new requirements.

Monitoring and Review
This policy is reviewed annually or more frequently, as required by changes to regulatory guidance, best practice recommendations, or specific needs identified Queen's College Preparatory School.

Related documents

First Aid Policy
Administration of Medicines in the Early Years Foundation Stage Policy
Early Years Foundation Stage Policy
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Policy Information

Policy Title	EYFS Food and Nutrition Policy
Version	v. Approved
School	Queen's College Preparatory
Category	EYFS
Statutory policy	Yes
Policy owner 1	Head of EYFS
Policy owner 2	
Approval	Council
Submission to Council	Required
Publish on website	Required
Date of last review	Summer 2026
Approved by SLT	Approved
Staff notified	In progress
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