Balksbury Federation
Food Policy

Introduction

At Balksbury Federation, we recognise the important part that a healthy diet plays in a child's wellbeing and their ability to learn and achieve effectively. We believe that the federation in partnership with families can make a major contribution to improving children's health by increasing their knowledge and understanding of food and helping them to make healthy food choices. As part of this, the federation is dedicated to providing an environment that promotes healthy eating and enables children to make informed choices about the food they eat. This will be achieved by a whole federation approach to food and nutrition documented in this policy. We know from research that children need support and guidance to eat healthily at school, not just in their learning but also exposing them to good food environments.

The Balksbury Team and our caterers Dolce, have a key role in influencing children's knowledge, skills and attitudes about food, so we support a whole federated approach where our children receive consistent messages about healthy eating across the curriculum, lunchtime food provision, and federated practices.

As a federation we recognise the important connection between healthy eating and a child's ability to learn effectively and achieve high standards at school. In addition, we recognise the importance of supporting children to be healthy for their wellbeing and health in later life. Research for this policy has been taken from the NHS Change4Life campaign.

Key Aims

- To ensure that all food and drink served is in line with the Government's mandatory standards
- To ensure that all aspects of food and nutrition in the federation promote the health and wellbeing of the whole federated community
- To make every reasonable effort to ensure that food provision in the school reflects the ethical and medical requirements of children and staff. For example, religious, cultural, vegetarian and medical needs and that all relevant staff members (including non - teaching staff such as midday supervisors) are aware of these
- To ensure that all food and drinks consumed at break time as snacks are healthy
- To take a whole federated approach to healthy eating to ensure that messages taught in the curriculum are reflected throughout the school day
- To raise awareness and promote the eligibility criteria in relation to free school meals for parents and carers, as well as increasing the uptake of school meal

Break Time Snacks

At Balksbury Federation, we understand that a break time snack can play an important part in the diet of our federated children and can contribute positively towards a balanced diet.

Infant School

The Government school fruit and vegetable scheme entitles Early Years and Key Stage 1 children to a piece of fruit or vegetable each day.

Junior School

We only promote healthy snacks so ask that families provide their child with fruit or a vegetable; the only biscuit that we allow is a plain biscuit.

Lunchtime

The federation will provide our children with the opportunity to eat a healthy, balanced meal and will ensure that there is a range of meals which take into account health needs and religious and ethnic preferences. We will ensure the meal is consistent with our teaching of healthy eating and part of the '5 a day' message, and compliant with School Food Standards. The federation aims to provide a positive lunchtime experience and will promote an environment where children can eat a meal feeling refreshed and relaxed and ready for learning in the afternoon.

Dolce is the meal provider for both the Infant and Junior School. Food prepared by Dolce meets national standards. The Smart School Council will feedback on school meals to the Leadership Team so that the federation can ensure meals reflect the needs of our children. Dolce state:

'As our understanding of food evolves, as well as the tastes of those we serve, we aim to offer both a popular meal choice and an experience that helps children and young adults adventure in food. Science is providing new insights into the effects of nutrition on our health, as well as the food choices we make in our early years. By providing popular and relevant menus that are created using the best quality ingredients, as well as training and supporting staff, we can produce the same consistent high quality on every plate. This provides a positive platform from which children can grow and learn.'

In the Infant School, all children are entitled to a government universal free school meal and the federation will encourage all families to take this option by promoting Dolce on our federated website, and in our newsletter 'Across the Playground'. This will ensure that families have an easy way of ensuring children get a nutritionally balanced meal.

Packed lunches

Where families do not take up the midday hot meal option, and in line with our food policy aims, families are encouraged to provide a well balanced packed lunch. In order to support families, the two links below will provide advice and ideas on healthy options.

https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/about-change4life
https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes

The federation will not allow chocolate, sweets or fizzy drinks as part of a lunch box.

Water

Drinking water will be available for all children throughout the day; children will be encouraged to drink water at frequent intervals. All children will have access to water at lunch time, including those whom a packed lunch is provided. Children are encouraged to bring a water bottle every day so that they can refill as necessary; this will go home at the end of every day so they can be washed before the next day.

No drinks other than water, 100% fruit juice or milk can be brought into school by children for packed lunches unless recommended by a doctor for medical needs.

Curriculum

Cooking and nutrition education is part of the National Curriculum. Children will be taught how to cook and apply the principles of nutrition and healthy eating and will be provided with opportunities to cook both indoors and outdoors across their learning journey at the federation. Children will encounter different aspects of cooking, food preparation and nutrition across different curriculum subjects including:

- **Science unit:** Animals Including Humans
- **Health and Wellbeing:** Change4Life eating well, and growing food to understand nutrition
- **Design and Technology:** preparing food, cooking a variety of dishes (predominately savoury dishes, range of cooking techniques, understanding seasonality and knowing how a variety of ingredients are grown, reared, caught and processed, principles of a healthy and varied diet
- **Outdoor Learning:** growing food in our community garden to understand how food is grown, and for cooking food

Events and Celebrations

Although the federation recognises the importance that a healthy diet plays in a child's wellbeing, we also recognise how important it is to celebrate children's birthdays for their wellbeing, and shared culture and social values. We understand that this celebration is not a daily occurrence and is carried out in moderation for special occasions and treats. Therefore, we accept families sending in birthday cake or sweets for class peers to take home to honour that birthday. Any family who does not wish their child(ren) to participate will be supported.

Health and Safety

The Executive Headteacher has a responsibility to ensure that all food produced, prepared or served on the premises is safe. The activity of food preparation, handling and serving of food in the classroom is distinct from the provision of school lunch by caterers.

It is part of the federation's normal school procedure that children will be reminded to wash their hands before eating, or preparing food in curriculum lessons. All staff and volunteers involved in food preparation will be aware of food safety and hygiene and behave accordingly.

Catering staff will hold the required food hygiene certificates which is the responsibility of Dolce to ensure that these are up to date.

Monitoring

We consult with Dolce annually to discuss the service they provide. Our federation takes a group of children each term to discuss the meals that are provided at lunchtime. The Smart School Council in reviewing meals and report to our caterers Dolce.

Governors

Governing bodies have a key role to play in food in school. They have a duty to ensure that healthy eating is promoted, encouraged and embedded within the federation ethos.

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring:

- All food and drink provided meets the national school food standards. They will ensure that food standards are specified within the catering contract or service level agreement. Governors should check with the Executive Headteacher and Catering Manager that standards are being met

- That the federation is compliant with promoting the take up of school lunches and obtain meal data each term for both the Infant and Junior School. Governors should work with the Business Manager and Pupil Premium Leader to identify trends and issues to increase take up

- When making a school visit, governors should monitor that the lunchtime experience contributes to the culture and ethos of the federation

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