

ROYAL ALEXANDRA & ALBERT SCHOOL



FOOD AND HEALTHY EATING POLICY

The Governors and staff at The Royal Alexandra and Albert School are committed to providing a safe and happy learning environment, promoting equality and diversity and ensuring the well-being of all members of the community. It is their clear intention to promote good behaviour and to exercise their responsibilities in ensuring the safeguarding and welfare of all students and staff within the community.

The policy applies to **all** staff & pupils

Governors' Committee Responsible: Pupil Matters Committee
Governor Lead: Chair of Pupil Matters Committee
Nominated Lead Member of Staff: Deputy Head (Boarding & Pastoral)
Status & Review Cycle: Three years

Last Action	Approved by Pupil Matters Committee	15 June 2021
Next Action	To be reviewed	Summer 2024

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1. Rationale

The Royal Alexandra & Albert School (RAAS) recognises the importance of a healthy diet and the significant connection between a healthy diet and pupils' ability to learn effectively and achieve high standards at school. It is important that RAAS considers all elements of work to ensure that awareness of healthy eating is promoted to all members of the school community and also the role the school can play to promote family health. Through effective leadership, the school ethos and curriculum, all school staff can bring together elements of the school day to create an environment that supports sustainable healthy eating habits as part of a healthy lifestyle.

The Governing Body recognises that sharing mealtimes is a fundamental experience for all people; a primary way to nurture and celebrate cultural diversity and an excellent bridge for building friendships and inter-generational bonds.

The policy was formulated through consultation between members of staff, governors, parents and pupils.

The principles of this policy incorporate those outlined in the School Food Plan

<http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/>

The nutritional principles of this policy are based on the 'eatwell guide'

<https://www.nhs.uk/livewell/goodfood/pages/the-eatwell-guide.aspx>

and the School Food Standards <http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/standards/>

2. Aims

The main aims of our school food policy are:

- To ensure that all aspects of food and nutrition in school promote the health and wellbeing of the whole school community
- To ensure that all members of the school community are able to make informed choices and are aware of the importance of healthy food, where food comes from and the need to support sustainable food and farming practices
- To enable pupils to make healthy food choices through the provision of information and development of appropriate skills including food preparation.
- To ensure that the mandatory food based standards are implemented
- To ensure that the school follows the principles laid out in the School Food Plan
- To take a whole school approach to healthy eating to ensure that messages taught in the curriculum are echoed and reinforced by the type of food and drink provided in school
- To ensure that food provision in the School reflects the medical and/or religious requirements of staff and pupils

3. School Food Plan

The School Food Plan <http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/> is an agreed plan published in July 2013 with the support of the Secretary of State for Education and of the diverse organisations who can support head teachers to improve the quality and take-up of school food and put the kitchen at the heart of school life. The plan outlines how schools should improve their attitude to school food by:

- Adopting a 'whole-school approach': integrating food into the life of the school: treating the dining hall as the hub of the school, where children and teachers eat together; lunch as part of the school day; the cooks as important staff members; and food as part of a rounded education
- The head teacher leading the change
- Concentrating on the things children care about: good food, attractive environment, social life, price and brand
- Encourage take up of school meals to improve school food economics and in particular encourage take up of the new Universal Free School Meals for all KS1 from September 2014

4. Curriculum

Food and nutrition is taught at an appropriate level throughout each key stage. Cooking and nutrition was brought in as a compulsory part of the national curriculum from September 2014. Schemes of work at all key stages reflect the whole school approach to healthy eating and incorporate the DFE statutory guidelines:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-design-and-technology-programmes-of-study/national-curriculum-in-england-design-and-technology-programmes-of-study>

This is addressed through:

4.1 Teaching methods

Effective teaching requires pupils to develop their understanding of healthy eating issues and appropriate skills and attitudes to assist them in making informed decisions. Schemes of work at all key stages reflect the whole school approach to healthy eating.

4.2 Cooking and nutrition

As part of their work with food, pupils are taught how to cook and apply the principles of nutrition and healthy eating. Learning how to cook is a crucial life skill that enables pupils to feed themselves and others affordably and well, now and in later life. All Pupils are taught the basic principles of a healthy and varied diet, to prepare simple dishes and understand where food comes from. Older pupils are taught about seasonality and a range of cooking techniques.

4.3 Co-Curricular

The school recognises that food has a great potential for co-curricular work and is incorporated in to the co-curricular programme.

4.4 Staff training

School staff including teachers, TA's and lunch time supervisors have a key role in influencing pupils' knowledge, skills and attitudes about food and healthy eating, so it is important that they are familiar with healthy eating guidelines. To facilitate this staff are signposted towards the School Food Standards and the Catering Manager offers an open door policy to staff wishing to discuss nutrition.

4.5 Resources

Resources used to deliver healthy eating are current and up to date and all staff are consistent in the resources used throughout the curriculum. These reflect the 'eatwell guide' where appropriate.

5. Food and Drink Provision

5.1 Food Standards

National Nutritional Standards for school Lunches became compulsory in 2009.

As a result of the School Food Plan, the standards have been reviewed and Food Standards for school lunches came in to force in January 2015. Together with the existing standards they cover all food sold or served in schools: breakfast, lunch and after-school meals; and tuck, vending, mid-morning break and after-school clubs.
<http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/standards/> .

5.2 Breakfast

Breakfast is provided Monday to Saturday for Flexi Boarders and all week for Boarders.

5.3 Lunch

Lunch is provided to all pupils Monday to Friday and for Boarders on Saturday. On Sunday, Boarders are provided with Brunch

5.4 Milk

The Food Standards require that milk must be available for drinking at least once per day during school hours. This standard is not met by providing milk at breakfast or after school clubs. Milk is available in the boarding houses during the school day.

<https://www.coolmilk.com/>

5.5 Snacks

The school understands that snacks can be an important part of the diet of young people and can contribute positively towards a balanced diet.

The school discourages the consumption of snacks high in fat and sugar. Advice on this standard is available from the Children's Food Trust

<http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/schools/the-standards/revised-standards/other-than-lunch>

5.6 Vending machines

The School has no vending machines.

5.7 Use of food as a reward

The school does not encourage the regular eating of sweets or other foods high in sugar or fat, especially as a reward for good behaviour or academic or other achievements. Other methods of positive reinforcement are used in school.

5.8 Drinking Water

Drinking water is available to all pupils, everyday, and free of charge. The water is provided through fountains strategically located around site, a water dispenser in the dining hall and from clearly labelled taps in boarding houses. All pupils are provided with a water bottle.

6. Food and Drink Brought in to School

6.1 Packed Lunches

Packed lunches are not brought in to school.

6.2 Food brought in to the boarding environment

Pupils are encouraged to bring healthy food in to the boarding environment and house staff monitor this.

7. Special Dietary Requirements

7.1 Religious diets

Many people follow diets related to their religious beliefs and the school will make every effort to provide meals for all children. The school operates a procedure for both parents to inform the school of a special diet and for identifying children to ensure that every child receives the correct meal particularly as many of these children are very young and eating school meals for the first time.

For further guidance on Special Diets please access

<http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/schoolfoodplan/uifsm/special-diets/catering-for-religious-diets>

7.2 Medical Diets

Individual care plans are created for pupils with medical dietary needs/requirements. These document symptoms and adverse reactions and actions to be taken in an emergency.

8. Anaphylaxis

8.1 Rationale

Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction at the extreme end of the allergic spectrum, affecting the entire body, and can occur within minutes of exposure. The main causes are attributed to nuts, seeds and seafood. This section focuses on the management of nut allergies.

One approach could be to ban nuts from Royal Alexandra and Albert School (the School); however, the *Anaphylaxis Campaign* highlights a number of problems with this approach as follows:

- It would be impossible to provide an absolute guarantee that the School is nut free, given that pupils regularly bring in food from home and food items bought on the way to School
- There would be a risk that children with allergies might be led into a false sense of security
- The nut ban would be seen as a precedent for demands to ban other potentially 'risky' foods.

There is a strong case to be argued that children with food allergies will develop a better awareness and understanding of how to manage their allergies if they grow up in an environment where allergens are regularly present.

Our caterers, Harrison Catering Services do not use nuts (tree nuts, peanuts and pine nuts) and nut related products in the Dining Hall nor in the foods they issue from the Dining Hall to the School, Boarding Houses and Health Centre, recognising the potentially severe allergic reaction, for some people. They also avoid the use of sesame seeds and sesame related products.

The School does not claim to be a 'nut-free' school. The Anaphylaxis Campaign advises that this is a pragmatic approach, for the following reasons:

- It would be impossible to provide an absolute guarantee that the school is nut free. Pupils regularly bring in food from home and food bought on the way to school
- There would be a risk that children with allergies might be led into a false sense of security
- There is a strong case to be argued that children with food allergies will develop a better awareness and understanding of how to manage their allergies if they grow up in an environment where allergens may be present but, as at the School, are restricted and monitored, as much as is reasonably possible.

8.2 Precautions

Within the catering facilities at the School, we take precautions to minimise the risk of anaphylaxis and other allergenic reactions occurring:

- 8.2.1 We never knowingly use any nuts (including pine nuts and peanuts) or sesame seeds and associated nut/sesame products in the kitchens in the Dining Hall, Gatton Hall or in the Food Technology classroom.
- 8.2.2 Pupils who are known to have food allergies (e.g. nuts, egg, milk, gluten, fish, molluscs, and crustaceans) are introduced to key members of the catering team, on their first day at the school, and are encouraged to seek guidance from catering staff – on a daily basis, if necessary – on what they can have, from the menu, for lunch.
- 8.2.3 Catering staff receive regular training in respect of food allergies.
- 8.2.4 Food preparation staff take precautions to reduce the risk of cross contamination
- 8.2.5 Our recipes are analysed, and allergens contained therein are highlighted and recorded
- 8.2.6 The kitchen produces daily allergen sheets for all items produced and served. This information is held by the lead chef on shift. All catering staff are briefed before every service on what allergens are present in all items served.
- 8.2.7 It should be acknowledged that, given current food manufacturing processes, it is impossible to guarantee that all products will be free from possible ‘traces of nuts’ and other allergens.
- 8.2.8 EU allergen regulations, effective from December 2014, relating to pre-packaged food and ‘loose’ food offered in retail and other food outlets require food service operators to provide information on 14 specified allergens (three of which are nuts, peanuts and sesame). Our commitment to flagging selected allergens on the service counter menu cards now extends to the additional newly prescribed allergens when present in the food we serve. We keep detailed allergen information on all our recipes and other food and drink items, enabling catering staff to be able to provide allergen information whenever asked.
- 8.2.9 Whilst most allergic reactions are the result of food ingestion, we recognise, too, that severe allergic reactions can occur as a result of individuals being susceptible to airborne allergens. Allergic reactions can also be triggered by touching surfaces – such as computer or piano keyboards which may have been inadvertently contaminated.

- 8.2.10 The success of minimising anaphylaxis risk – and all other allergenic reactions - requires the cooperation of pupils, staff and parents. Parents are asked not to provide pupils with snacks and cakes (birthdays are potentially high risk occasions) that contain nuts and sesame seeds. A written reminder will be communicated to parents at least once each year.
- 8.2.11 It is essential that the School has full details of all our pupils' allergies. This information is requested by the School, and must be provided by parents when their child joins the School and then updated by parents if allergies are discovered at a later stage. The Health Centre should also be provided with a treatment plan and Epipen, clearly marked with the pupil's name.
- 8.2.12 Within the parameters of confidentiality, the School provides – to the catering department and other relevant parties – a list of names and photographs of pupils with severe medical conditions including severe allergies.
- 8.2.13 When the School provides packed lunches for trips away, catering staff are provided with a list of pupils who have allergies and specially labelled packed lunches are provided, accordingly.
- 8.2.14 When pupils take part in single or multi-day school trips, participating pupils' allergies, their respective treatments and other associated requirements are factored into the planning process.
- 8.2.15 Whilst the School will exercise all due care and attention to minimise risk, pupils are expected to self-manage their allergy, too, having an understanding of;
- Foods which are safe or unsafe
 - When to ask staff to change serving utensils, if they think cross-contamination has taken place
 - Their specific symptoms, if an allergic reaction occurs
 - Their responsibility to carry their Epipen with them at all times
 - Who to advise, if and when an allergic reaction happens
 - Letting friends and staff know about their allergy, in case of emergency
 - When to seek guidance (and from whom) – if in doubt

9. Food Safety

Appropriate food safety precautions are taken when food is prepared or stored. These vary depending on the food on offer and include: ensuring that adequate storage and washing facilities are available; that food handlers undergo appropriate food hygiene training; and that suitable equipment and protective clothing are available. Any food safety hazards are identified and controlled. We consult our local Environmental Health Department about legal requirements.

10. The Eating Environment

The School operates a Dining Hall code of conduct to help achieve an enjoyable and safe eating environment. In order to enhance the dining experience, the School organises special cultural or national food events on a regular basis.

11. Monitoring and Evaluation

Pupils views are gathered through the regular food committee meetings and the annual pupil survey. Parents views are collected using their annual survey, whilst staff views are collected on a more informal and frequent basis. All these views are considered when reviewing the policy and to help senior leaders make decisions on food and healthy eating.