Food, Nutrition, Weaning and Allergy Policy

Reviewed: September 2026

Next Review: September 2027

Approved by: the Board of Governors

Aim and Ethos

At Bevington Primary School, we recognise that good nutrition during the earliest years of life provides the foundation for children's health, growth, wellbeing and future learning. We believe that every child deserves access to healthy, balanced and nutritious food within a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment where positive relationships are developed around mealtimes.

This policy applies to the whole of Bevington Primary School, including our Day Care, Nursery, Reception and Years 1 to 6, and covers all aspects of food provision for children from six months of age until they leave us at the end of Year 6. It sets out how we provide meals, our requirement for all children to have a school meal, how we support babies in our Day Care through their individual weaning journey, how we manage allergies and medical conditions, promote healthy eating habits and ensure that every child is safe while eating and drinking.

We recognise that every child develops at their own pace and has individual nutritional needs. Our approach places the child at the centre of all decisions and ensures that feeding arrangements, portion sizes, textures and dietary provision reflect each child's age, stage of development, medical needs and family preferences wherever possible.

We believe that mealtimes should be calm, relaxed and enjoyable experiences where children feel secure, valued and encouraged to become increasingly independent. Staff sit with children, model positive eating habits, encourage conversation and support children to develop confidence in trying new foods without pressure. Children are never forced to eat or drink and are supported to recognise and respond to their own feelings of hunger and fullness.

We understand that healthy eating habits begin long before children start school. Through strong partnerships with parents and carers, we work together to provide consistency between home and school wherever possible, recognising that families are the child's first educators. We value the knowledge parents and carers have about their child and involve them fully in decisions relating to feeding routines, weaning, allergies, dietary requirements and cultural preferences.

Our aim is for every child attending Bevington Primary School to develop a healthy relationship with food that promotes lifelong physical health, emotional wellbeing and confidence around eating.

Statutory Framework

This policy has been developed in accordance with current legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers (September 2026)
- Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance (2026)
- Food Information Regulations 2014
- Requirements for School Food Regulations 2014 (School Food Standards)
- Food Safety Act 1990
- Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013
- Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions
- Human Medicines (Amendment) Regulations relating to the use of spare adrenaline auto-injectors
- Food Standards Agency guidance on safer eating and choking prevention
- NHS guidance on infant feeding and complementary feeding (weaning)

The Executive Headteacher or Head of School will ensure this policy is reviewed following any changes to legislation or statutory guidance so that our practice continues to reflect national expectations and best practice.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Governors is responsible for approving this policy and ensuring appropriate arrangements are in place for its implementation and monitoring.

The Head of School has overall responsibility for ensuring the policy is implemented consistently across the school, including the Day Care provision, and that appropriate procedures, staffing, training and resources are available to meet statutory requirements.

The Executive Headteacher or Head of School will monitor practice through regular observations, audits of food safety and allergy procedures, reviews of accident and incident records, staff supervision, and ongoing quality assurance activities. Any lessons learnt following incidents involving food, allergies or choking will be used to improve practice across the school.

Class teams and Day Care staff are responsible for the day-to-day implementation of this policy, ensuring that children's dietary requirements are communicated effectively between families, class teachers, key persons and the catering company's kitchen team, and that all documentation relating to allergies, medical conditions and feeding routines remains accurate and up to date. Our catering company and its kitchen team are responsible for preparing food safely, following all food hygiene legislation, preventing cross-contamination, maintaining accurate allergen information and adapting meals to meet individual dietary requirements.

All staff are responsible for promoting healthy eating, supervising children appropriately during meals and snacks, following children's individual feeding plans, recognising the signs of allergic reactions or choking, maintaining high standards of hygiene and immediately reporting any concerns relating to children's health or nutrition.

Parents and carers are expected to provide accurate information about their child's dietary needs, allergies, medical conditions and feeding routines, notify the school promptly of any changes, and work in partnership with staff to support their child's nutritional development.

Our Approach to Food and Nutrition

At Bevington Primary School, we are committed to providing children with healthy, balanced and nutritious meals and snacks that support healthy growth, physical development and lifelong wellbeing.

Menus are carefully planned to ensure children receive an appropriate balance of carbohydrates, protein, fruit, vegetables and dairy or suitable dairy alternatives throughout the day. Meals are designed to introduce children to a wide variety of flavours, textures and foods from an early age, encouraging curiosity and enjoyment of healthy eating.

Our menus meet the School Food Standards for pupils in Reception to Year 6 and reflect current government guidance on nutrition for children under five in our Day Care and Nursery. They are reviewed regularly to ensure they remain nutritionally balanced, varied and appropriate for the ages of all the children we serve.

Fresh fruit and vegetables are provided daily, together with suitable sources of protein and starchy carbohydrates. Where appropriate, wholegrain options are included to increase fibre intake. Foods high in saturated fat, sugar and salt are limited, and confectionery, sugary drinks and unnecessary processed foods are not routinely provided.

We understand that developing healthy eating habits is a gradual process. Children are encouraged to explore and taste new foods without pressure or expectation. Staff understand that repeated exposure to unfamiliar foods supports acceptance over time and therefore children may be offered foods on several occasions without being forced to eat them.

Food is never used as a reward or punishment. Staff avoid placing unnecessary emphasis on finishing meals and instead encourage children to listen to their own appetite and feelings of fullness. Children are praised for their independence, willingness to explore new foods and positive participation in mealtimes rather than the quantity of food consumed.

We recognise that children's appetites naturally vary from day to day due to growth, activity levels, illness or developmental stages. Staff respond sensitively to these variations and adjust portion sizes where appropriate while ensuring children have opportunities to eat throughout the day.

Meals Prepared On Site

All meals and snacks provided across Bevington Primary School, including the Day Care, are freshly prepared on site by our catering company. Preparing food within school allows us to maintain high standards of quality, freshness and food safety whilst responding quickly to individual dietary requirements.

Menus are planned several weeks in advance and follow a rolling cycle to ensure children experience a wide variety of foods throughout the year. Seasonal ingredients are used wherever possible and menus are reviewed regularly to reflect children's preferences, nutritional guidance and feedback from parents and carers.

Preparing food on site enables meals to be adapted for individual children without compromising quality. This is particularly important for babies progressing through different stages of weaning, children with allergies or intolerances, and those with cultural, religious or medical dietary requirements.

The catering company's kitchen team works closely with class teams and Day Care staff to ensure every child's dietary needs are fully understood before meals are prepared. Alternative meals are prepared separately where required and strict procedures are followed to minimise the risk of cross-contamination.

Food preparation areas are cleaned and maintained in accordance with current food hygiene legislation. Kitchen staff receive regular training in food hygiene, allergen awareness, safer food preparation for babies and young children, and choking prevention. Records of cleaning, temperature monitoring and food safety checks are maintained in accordance with legal requirements.

School Meals and Our Catering Company

At Bevington Primary School, we require all children to have their lunch provided by the school through our contracted catering company. Packed lunches and other meals brought in from home are not permitted, except in the circumstances set out below, where medical evidence shows that our catering company is unable to meet a child's dietary needs safely.

We have made this decision because we believe it is the most effective way to keep every child safe, healthy and ready to learn. Meals provided by our catering company are planned to meet the School Food Standards, which means every child receives a hot, nutritious and balanced lunch each day that supports their concentration, behaviour and learning throughout the afternoon. Providing all meals through one catering company also allows us to manage allergens far more safely. Every meal is prepared with full ingredient and allergen information, and the risk of children being exposed to foods from outside school that could trigger a serious allergic reaction in themselves or in others is greatly reduced. In the same way, it removes the choking and food safety risks that can arise when food has not been prepared, stored or transported in line with food hygiene requirements.

There are also important wider benefits for our children. When every child eats a school meal, lunchtime becomes a shared social experience where children sit together, enjoy the same food and talk with one another and with staff. Children are not compared on the contents of their lunchboxes, which supports our inclusive ethos and removes any stigma associated with what a child eats. Regular exposure to a varied menu also encourages children to try new foods, tastes and textures, helping them to develop healthy eating habits that will benefit them throughout their lives.

School meals are currently provided free of charge for all pupils from Reception to Year 6, so there is no cost to families for their child's school lunch. Free meals for pupils in Years 3 to 6 are funded through the Mayor of London's Universal Free School Meals scheme, which has offered a free lunch to every child in a London state-funded primary school since September 2023, while pupils in Reception to Year 2 receive free meals through the government's Universal Infant Free School Meals. We continue to ask all eligible families to register for means-tested free school meals, as this ensures the school receives Pupil Premium funding that directly supports children's learning and wellbeing. Should the funding arrangements for free school meals change in the future, families will be informed in advance of any changes and what these mean for them.

Where a parent or carer believes that our catering company cannot provide a suitable meal for their child, for example because of a severe or complex allergy or a medically prescribed diet, they must provide medical evidence to support this. This should be a letter or report from a GP, consultant, paediatric dietitian or other relevant healthcare professional which sets out the child's medical condition, the foods that must be avoided and the reasons why the child's dietary needs cannot be met through an adapted school meal.

On receiving this evidence, the Executive Headteacher or Head of School will share the information with our catering company, who will first consider whether an adapted meal can be provided safely. In the vast majority of cases, including for most allergies and intolerances and for religious, cultural, vegetarian and vegan diets, our catering company is able to provide a suitable alternative meal. Only where the catering company confirms that it cannot safely meet a child's dietary needs will an alternative arrangement, such as a packed lunch provided from home, be agreed. Any agreed arrangement will be recorded in the child's Individual Healthcare Plan and reviewed at least annually, or sooner if the child's medical needs change. Food brought in from home under such an arrangement must follow the expectations set out in the Food Brought from Home section of this policy.

Requests for a child to bring food from home that are not supported by medical evidence, such as a child's food preferences or reluctance to try school meals, will not be agreed. Instead, staff will work closely with parents and carers to support children to become more confident with the school menu, encouraging them to explore new foods gradually and without pressure.

Menu Planning

Menus are designed to provide children with a balanced diet across the week while exposing them to a broad range of foods, tastes and textures.

Menus are reviewed at least twice each year to reflect seasonal produce, maintain variety and incorporate feedback from children, parents and carers where appropriate. We avoid repeating the same meals on the same day each week so that children attending on fixed patterns receive a varied diet.

When planning menus we consider:

- children's nutritional requirements;
- age-appropriate portion sizes;
- cultural and religious dietary requirements;
- vegetarian and vegan options;
- medical diets and allergies;
- seasonal availability of ingredients;
- sustainability and reducing food waste.

Parents and carers are informed of menus in advance and allergen information is made available for every meal served.

Drinks

Fresh drinking water is available to children throughout the day and children are encouraged to drink regularly, particularly during warm weather or periods of increased physical activity.

Only water and plain milk are routinely provided. Sugary drinks, fizzy drinks, fruit juices, flavoured milks and squash are not offered as part of the school's food provision.

Babies who are developmentally ready are encouraged to drink from open cups or free-flow cups without valves to support healthy oral and speech development. Children are gradually supported to become increasingly independent in pouring and drinking as their skills develop.

Milk provided within the Day Care and Nursery reflects children's age and nutritional needs. Where children require an alternative milk for medical, allergy, cultural or dietary reasons, suitable unsweetened fortified alternatives will be provided wherever appropriate.

At Bevington Primary School, we recognise that healthy eating is about far more than providing nutritious meals. It is about creating positive experiences around food, building children's confidence and independence, respecting individual needs and working in partnership with families to establish healthy habits that will benefit children throughout their lives.

Baby Feeding and Weaning

In our Day Care, we recognise that every baby's feeding journey is unique. We work in close partnership with parents and carers to ensure feeding arrangements reflect each baby's individual routine, nutritional needs and stage of development. Information about feeding routines is gathered before a child starts at the Day Care and is reviewed regularly with families to ensure it remains appropriate.

Babies are fed responsively, recognising and responding to their individual cues of hunger and fullness. Staff never rush feeds or encourage babies to finish bottles or meals against their wishes. Feeding times provide valuable opportunities to build secure attachments between babies and their key person and are approached as calm, nurturing experiences.

We actively support mothers who wish to continue breastfeeding after their child starts at the Day Care. A private, comfortable space is available should a parent wish to breastfeed on site. Expressed breast milk is welcomed and is stored, labelled, handled and served in accordance with current NHS guidance and food safety requirements.

Where formula milk is provided, it is prepared safely using sterilised equipment and in accordance with NHS guidance. Formula feeds supplied by parents are clearly labelled with the child's name and prepared immediately before use wherever possible. Staff follow robust procedures for storing, preparing and disposing of formula to minimise any risks to children's health.

The introduction of solid foods is planned collaboratively with parents and carers. No assumptions are made about a baby's readiness to begin weaning based solely on their age. Staff consider each baby's physical development, ability to sit with support, head control, coordination and ability to swallow food safely before introducing complementary foods.

Children are introduced to a wide range of tastes, textures and foods as their confidence develops. Progression from smooth purees to mashed foods, soft finger foods and more textured meals takes place gradually and always reflects the individual child's developmental stage rather than following a fixed timetable.

Throughout the weaning process, staff maintain close communication with parents and carers, sharing information about foods offered, foods accepted and any new textures introduced. This partnership approach ensures consistency between home and the Day Care and supports each child to develop confidence with eating.

Safer Eating and Choking Prevention

The safety of children while eating and drinking is of paramount importance. Staff understand that young children remain at increased risk of choking and therefore maintain constant supervision throughout every meal and snack time.

Children are always within sight and hearing of a member of staff whilst eating. Staff remain seated with children wherever possible, enabling them to observe eating closely, encourage safe eating behaviours and respond immediately should any concerns arise. Staff recognise that choking is often silent and understand the importance of continuous observation.

Children are always seated appropriately for their age and stage of development. Babies are securely positioned in suitable highchairs or low chairs with appropriate support, whilst older children sit comfortably at tables that allow them to eat safely and independently.

Food is prepared to minimise choking risks in accordance with current Food Standards Agency guidance. Foods known to present an increased choking hazard are modified appropriately before being served. Grapes, cherry tomatoes and similar fruits are cut into quarters lengthways, hard vegetables are cut into narrow batons or cooked until soft, and meat is cut into small, manageable pieces. Whole nuts, popcorn and other foods unsuitable for young children are not provided.

Children are encouraged to sit while eating and drinking and are not permitted to walk, run or play with food in their mouths. Staff gently encourage children to chew food thoroughly, eat slowly and take manageable mouthfuls.

All staff receive training in paediatric first aid, choking prevention and safer eating practices. Training is refreshed regularly and forms part of the induction programme for all new employees.

Should a choking incident occur, staff respond immediately in accordance with their paediatric first aid training. Parents and carers are informed without delay and the incident is fully recorded. The Executive Headteacher or Head of School reviews every choking incident to identify any lessons that may further strengthen practice.

Food Allergies and Dietary Requirements

Bevington Primary School is committed to providing a safe, inclusive environment for every child, including those with food allergies, intolerances and medical dietary requirements.

Prior to admission, parents and carers are asked to provide comprehensive information regarding any diagnosed allergies, intolerances, dietary requirements or medical conditions that may affect their child's food provision. This information is reviewed with families before the child begins attending and updated immediately whenever changes occur.

Children with diagnosed allergies have an Individual Healthcare Plan developed in partnership with parents, carers and, where appropriate, healthcare professionals. These plans clearly identify allergens, symptoms, emergency procedures, prescribed medication and any additional precautions required to keep the child safe.

An up-to-date allergy register is maintained and shared appropriately with all relevant staff, including the catering company's kitchen team. The register is reviewed regularly and immediately following any changes to a child's medical information.

Meals prepared for children with allergies or medical dietary requirements are produced separately where necessary to minimise the risk of cross-contamination. Dedicated preparation procedures are followed and all substituted meals are clearly identified before being served.

Children are never made to feel different because of their dietary requirements. Staff promote an inclusive environment where all children are able to participate safely in mealtimes while developing an age-appropriate understanding of why some foods may not be suitable for everyone. Food sharing between children is not permitted.

Menus identify the presence of the fourteen recognised allergens in accordance with current food information legislation and this information is available to parents and carers.

Responding to Allergic Reactions

All staff receive regular allergy awareness training enabling them to recognise both mild allergic reactions and the signs of anaphylaxis.

Where a child displays symptoms of a serious allergic reaction, staff act immediately by following the child's Individual Healthcare Plan and administering prescribed emergency medication without delay where required.

Emergency services are contacted immediately whenever anaphylaxis is suspected. Parents and carers are informed as soon as possible and appropriate members of staff accompany the child to hospital if necessary, taking all prescribed medication and relevant medical documentation.

The school maintains spare adrenaline auto-injectors in accordance with current legislation and Department for Education guidance. These are checked regularly to ensure they remain within their expiry dates and are readily accessible during the school day.

Following any allergic reaction, the incident is thoroughly investigated and reviewed by the Executive Headteacher or Head of School. Individual Healthcare Plans and risk assessments are updated where necessary to reduce the likelihood of future incidents.

Food Brought from Home

Where food is brought into school from home, including where this has been agreed on medical grounds as set out in the School Meals and Our Catering Company section of this policy, parents and carers are asked to support the school's healthy eating ethos by providing nutritious, balanced food that is appropriate for their child's age and stage of development.

All food brought into school is checked by staff before being served to ensure it does not present an unacceptable allergy, choking or food safety risk. Where concerns are identified, staff will discuss these with parents and carers and, where necessary, alternative arrangements will be made.

Parents and carers are asked not to send foods containing whole nuts or products that may present an increased risk to children with severe allergies unless these can be managed safely within school.

Celebrations and Special Occasions

We recognise that birthdays and family celebrations are important occasions for children. Wherever possible, celebrations focus on experiences rather than food.

Where appropriate, non-food alternatives such as books, stickers, bubbles or special activities are encouraged, allowing every child to participate safely and inclusively.

Cultural, Religious and Medical Diets

We celebrate the diversity of our school community and respect the cultural, religious and personal beliefs of every family.

Menus are planned to accommodate religious, cultural, vegetarian, vegan and medically prescribed diets wherever reasonably practicable. Alternative meals are designed to provide equivalent nutritional value, ensuring children continue to receive a healthy, balanced diet.

Staff work closely with families to ensure dietary requirements are understood and respected whilst maintaining children's nutritional wellbeing.

Food Hygiene and Safety

High standards of food hygiene are maintained throughout the school, including the Day Care, at all times.

Food is stored, prepared, transported and served in accordance with current food safety legislation. Refrigeration temperatures are monitored regularly, food is clearly labelled and dated, and strict cleaning procedures are followed throughout the kitchen and food preparation areas.

Hot food is served at an appropriate temperature that is safe for young children whilst remaining suitable for consumption. Staff check food temperatures before serving and ensure meals have cooled appropriately where required.

All staff involved in preparing or handling food receive appropriate food hygiene training which is refreshed regularly.

Should two or more children experience suspected food poisoning linked to food consumed within school, the appropriate health authorities will be notified in accordance with statutory requirements, together with Ofsted where this involves children in our Day Care or Early Years provision.

Learning About Food

Healthy eating forms part of children's wider learning and development at Bevington Primary School.

Children are encouraged to explore different foods, tastes, textures and ingredients through everyday experiences, conversations, sensory exploration and age-appropriate cooking activities. These opportunities help children develop confidence, independence, communication skills and an understanding of healthy lifestyles.

Where food is used as part of play or learning experiences, it is always kept separate from food intended for consumption and managed in accordance with food hygiene guidance.

Staff Training

All staff receive appropriate training to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities under this policy.

Training includes food hygiene, allergy awareness, anaphylaxis, the use of adrenaline auto-injectors, paediatric first aid, choking prevention and safer eating practices, together with infant feeding and weaning for Day Care staff. Training forms part of staff induction and is refreshed regularly to ensure knowledge remains current.

The Executive Headteacher or Head of School maintains records of staff training and monitors compliance to ensure all statutory requirements continue to be met.

Monitoring and Review

The Head of School has overall responsibility for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently throughout Bevington Primary School, including the Day Care.

The Executive Headteacher or Head of School monitors compliance through regular observations of practice, audits of food safety procedures, review of allergy documentation, monitoring of accident and incident records, staff supervision and feedback from parents and carers.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there are changes to legislation, statutory guidance or following any significant incident relating to food safety, nutrition, allergies or choking.

Links with Other Policies

The following Bevington policies should be read in conjunction with this policy. All can be accessed from our website at: https://www.bevington.rbkc.sch.uk/Policies/

- Day Care Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- SEND and Inclusion Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- EYFS Policy

Together, these policies ensure that every child attending Bevington Primary School receives safe, high-quality care within an environment that promotes healthy development, positive relationships and the very best start in life.