



Food and Nutrition Policy

1. Overview

1.1. This policy is applicable to all pupils, including those in the EYFS. It has regard to the DFE guidance; DfE (2025) 'Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance', DFE (2025) 'Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework' and DFE (2025) 'School Food Standards'.

1.2. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Food Allergy Policy.

2. Ethos

2.1. Ripley Court is dedicated to providing an environment that promotes healthy eating and enables pupils to make informed food choices. This is achieved through a whole school approach to food provision and food education which focuses on pupils developing healthy eating habits and ensures that they get the energy and nutrition they need across the whole school day.

3. Aims

- To provide a range of healthy food choices throughout the school day in line with mandatory DFE guidance.
- To support pupils to make healthy food choices and maintain their energy across the school day.
- To ensure a consistent approach to healthy eating across the school community.

4. Catering

4.1. At Ripley Court we believe that eating should be an enjoyable experience and that shared meals and snacks provide valuable social experiences; it is time spent sharing good food with peers and teachers.

4.2. Catering at Ripley Court School is provided by Sodexo. The dedicated Head Chef and the Sodexo Team take great pride in preparing fresh, healthy and tasty meals that keep children energised and happy from morning until evening. Menus are devised by the Chef in conjunction with the school in order that meet statutory requirements and guidance as provided by the DFE are met. This guidance is based on the principles of the Eatwell Plate and focus on ensuring children receive a balance diet across the school day. There are specific guidelines regarding food groups where some are indicated to 'limit', which requires the school to restrict this food based on the guidance and others which are labelled 'avoid', which are not to be provided as part of any meals, drinks, or snacks. Menus are made available each week on the School website and are displayed in relevant locations around the School.

- 4.3. **Breakfast:** Breakfast club is on offer from 7:30am. Children can enjoy foods from a menu of toast, fruit, cereals, yoghurt, porridge, waffles, pancakes, eggs and more. A weekly menu is available in the Dining Room offering hot and cold options that ensure children have access to a balanced offering across the School day.
- 4.4. **Lunch:** Lunch time is held in the Dining Room where teachers join children creating a happy, family-style atmosphere. Little Court (Pre-Prep) and Nursery dine together at an earlier sitting, followed by Upper Court (Prep). Little Court pupils sit in mixed class tables, providing a time to socialise with peers and siblings and to allow older pupils the responsibility to support younger pupils. Upper Court have free choice to sit with their peers in the Dining Room. Everyday pupils have access to choices from the following:
- Homemade soups with fresh breads
 - Hot meals such as roasts, curries, pasta dishes including vegetarian options
 - Baked potatoes, rice and beans with a variety of fresh vegetables
 - A colourful salad bar with a wide choice, including protein options such as tuna and chicken
 - Fresh fruit, yoghurts, jellies and home-baked muffins and bars
- 4.5. Second helpings are always available at Lunch, ensuring every child leaves the table satisfied. In Nursery and Little Court staff closely monitor the balance of food consumed and work together with pupils and parents to ensure that a balanced, nutritious diet is maintained. Staff monitor the food choices made by Upper Court pupils, offering guidance where this is appropriate such as where overeating or an unbalanced plate is chosen by the pupil.
- 4.6. **Snacks:** Snacks are offered to all pupils' mid-morning. In Nursery and Little Court, a variety of fruit is served alongside water. Pupils sit together at this time encouraging discussion and providing the opportunity to explore and try new fruits. In Upper Court fruit and digestive biscuits are offered as part of breaktime. Children are able to self-select at this time. During sporting fixtures at Ripley Court, match teas are offered which consist of a cookie and a drink.
- 4.7. **Apres School (After School Club):** After School care at Ripley Court is provided by Apres School. For those in attendance a light tea is offered that ensures a nutritious balance and in consideration of lunch provided that day. A menu is made available to parents by Apres School.
- 4.8. **Off Site Visits:** Where visits offsite require a picnic lunch, children will be provided with; a choice of sandwich, fruit, crisps that are low in salt and an appropriate sweet addition such as a bar, biscuit or muffin.
- 4.9. **Dietary Requirements:** The school are committed to proactive risk-food-allergy management. Further details of this can be found in the 'Food Allergy Policy'.
- 4.10. **Drinks:** The school is a water only school but whole milk is offered within the Early Years. Diluted 'squash' type drinks may be served during match teas for older pupils. Water fountains and coolers are provided to refill bottles and fresh drinking water is always available throughout the day.

5. Celebrations

- 5.1. DFE guidance notes that celebrations can present challenges when it comes to nutrition. It is common for families to bring in cakes or sweets for birthdays or other occasions, but this can result in children consuming high-sugar foods multiple times a week. To address this, as a school, we would like to encourage a non-food alternative such as bubbles, stickers or a class book. We will not distribute food items during the school day bought in from home.
- 5.2. There are a number of special events that occur throughout the academic year including birthday tea, class parties, marketing events, fundraisers and themed lunch weeks. These events are a time of celebration and cultural sharing. They will always be planned to ensure children maintain a healthy dietary balance across the week in consideration of the DFE guidance.
- 5.3. At Ripley Court food will not be used as a means of reward. The Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy provides clear guidance on acceptable use of rewards.
- 5.4. Throughout the School year, the School's Parent's Association, RCPTA, arrange a number of activities and events for pupils. These are conducted outside of school hours and are not organised by the School. The School considers that these situations sit outside of the guidance issued to School and are therefore not subject to this policy.

6. Curriculum

- 6.1. There is a huge value in educating pupils about the origins and use of food both formally and in play. Cooking, growing vegetables, and sensory play with food, can help build positive relationships with food and promote healthy eating habits. These activities can also support children's development in areas such as communication, coordination and understanding the world.
- 6.2. At Ripley Court food is incorporated into the curriculum both in the Early Years and across the wider school. In the Early Years pupils are exposed to a range of tastes, cultures and food preparation skills. Formal food technology lessons are taught in Little Court and Upper Court, including the importance of the Eatwell Plate. Lessons are planned exposing children to a wide range of skills ensuring a balanced, healthy diet is promoted.
- 6.3. Forest School lessons (including Little Twigs) utilise the opportunity to further enforce these skills whilst using a fire. In the Early Years hot milk or water are provided alongside snacks and cooking activities that support provided guidance. In Little Court and Upper Court, hot chocolate and water are offered alongside snacks that are led and planned by the pupils.

7. School Community

- 7.1. Promoting healthy eating requires a partnership between school, pupils and parents. Appropriate guidance is available to families alongside this policy and referenced frameworks.

8. Monitoring and Review

- 8.1. The overall responsibility for the curriculum lies with the Headmaster. On a day-to-day basis, the curriculum is monitored and reviewed by the Director of Studies, the Head of Little Court (including Nursery) and the Heads of Departments/Subject Leads.

Revision History Table

Revision Number	Section/Paragraph number	Amendments
1 – Autumn 2025		New policy.



The School Food Standards

Eating in school should be a pleasurable experience; time spent sharing good food with peers and teachers.

These school food standards are intended to help children develop healthy eating habits and ensure that they get the energy and nutrition they need across the whole school day. It is just as important to cook food that looks good and tastes delicious; to talk to children about what is on offer and encourage choice; to select quality; and to serve the food in a pleasant environment where they can eat with their friends.

As a general principle, it is important to provide a wide range of foods across the week. Variety is key – whether it is different fruits, vegetables, grains, pulses or types of meat and fish. Children love to hear the stories behind their food. Use fresh, sustainably and locally-sourced ingredients (best of all, from the school vegetable garden), and talk to them about what they are eating. See www.schoolfoodplan.com/news for examples of what other schools are doing to encourage children to eat well.

Remember to see Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services alongside these standards to help reduce salt, saturated fat and sugar in children's diets.

* This standard applies across the whole school day, including breakfasts, morning breaks, snack times, and after school clubs.



Fruit and vegetables

One or more portions of vegetables or salad as an accompaniment every day

One or more portions of fruit every day

A dessert containing at least 50% fruit two or more times each week

At least three different fruits and three different vegetables each week



Foods high in fat, sugar and salt

No more than two portions of food that has been deep-fried, batter-coated, or breadcrumb-coated, each week*

No more than two portions of food which include pastry each week*

No snacks, except nuts, seeds, vegetables and fruit with no added salt, sugar or fat*

Savoury crackers or breadsticks can be served at lunch with fruit or vegetables or dairy food

No confectionery, chocolate or chocolate-coated products*

Desserts, cakes and biscuits are allowed at lunchtime. They must not contain any confectionery

Salt must not be available to add to food after it has been cooked*

Any condiments must be limited to sachets or portions of no more than 10g or one teaspoonful*



Milk and dairy

A portion of food from this group every day

Lower fat milk must be available for drinking at least once a day during school hours



Meat, fish, eggs, beans

and other non-dairy sources of protein

A portion of food from this group every day

A portion of meat or poultry on three or more days each week

Oily fish once or more every three weeks

For vegetarians, a portion of non-dairy protein on three or more days each week

A meat or poultry product (manufactured or home-made, and meeting the legal requirements) no more than once each week in primary schools and twice each week in secondary schools*

Food provided outside lunch

* Fruit and/or vegetables available in all school food outlets

* No savoury crackers and breadsticks

* No cakes, biscuits, pastries or desserts (except yoghurt or fruit-based desserts containing at least 50% fruit)



Starchy food

One or more wholegrain varieties of starchy food each week

One or more portions of food from this group every day

Three or more different starchy foods each week

Starchy food cooked in fat or oil no more than two days each week*

Bread – with no added fat or oil – must be available every day



Healthier drinks*

Fresh, fresh drinking water at all times

The only drinks permitted are:

• Plain water (still or carbonated)

• Lower fat milk or lactose reduced milk

• Fruit or vegetable juice (max 150 ml)

• Plain soya, rice or oat drinks enriched with calcium; plain fermented milk (e.g. yoghurt) drinks

• Combination of fruit or vegetable juice with plain water (still or carbonated, with no added sugars or honey)

• Combination of fruit juice and lower fat milk or plain yoghurt, plain soya, rice or oat drinks enriched with calcium; soya and lower fat milk; flavoured lower fat milk, all with less than 5% added sugars or honey

• Tea, coffee, hot chocolate

Combination drinks are limited to a portion size of 330ml. They may contain added vitamins or minerals, and no more than 150ml fruit or vegetable juice. Fruit or vegetable juice combination drinks must be at least 45% fruit or vegetable juice



Early years food choking hazards

Below is a table of advice on key foods for care givers who are involved with preparing and serving food for babies and young children (under 5 years old)

Vegetable and fruits	Advice
Pips or stones in fruit	Always check beforehand and remove hard pips or stones from fruit.
Small fruits	Cut small round fruits like grapes, cherries, berries, strawberries and cherry tomatoes, into small pieces: cut lengthways and then again cut them in halves (quarters).
Large fruits and firm fruits	Cut large fruits like melon and firm fruits like apple into slices instead of small chunks. For very young children, consider grating or mashing firm fruits, or softening them up by steaming or simmering.
Vegetables	Cut vegetables like carrots, cucumber and celery into narrow batons. For very young children consider grating or mashing firm vegetables and legumes like butter beans, chickpeas and tofu, or softening them up by steaming or simmering.
Skin on fruit and vegetables	Consider removing the skin from fruit and vegetables, especially for very young children. Peeled fruit and vegetables can be swallowed more easily.
Cooking fruit and vegetables	Consider softening firm fruit and vegetables (such as carrots, broccoli, yam and apples) by steaming or simmering until soft. Serve cut into slices or narrow batons.
Meat and fish	Advice
Sausages and hot dogs	Cut sausages and hot dogs into short strips. Cut them in half and then lengthways or as thinly as possible. Peeling the skin off the sausages helps them to be swallowed more easily.
Meat or fish	Remove bones from meat or fish. Cut meat into strips as thinly as possible. Remove skin and fat from meat and fish, it will help the food pass smoothly down the throat.
Cheese	Advice
Grate or cut cheese	Grate or cut cheese into short strips. Cut lumps of cheese as narrow as possible.
Nuts and seeds	Advice
Chop or flake whole nuts	Chop or flake whole nuts, peanuts and seeds. Whole nuts should not be given to children under five years old.
Bread	Advice
White bread and other breads	White bread can form a ball shape with a dough-like texture at the back of a child's throat, if not chewed properly. Brown bread or toasted white bread are good alternatives. Cut bread, chapatis, naan bread and other breads into narrow strips.
Snacks and other foods	Advice
Popcorn	Do not give babies and young children popcorn.
Chewing gum and marshmallows	Do not give babies and young children chewing gum or marshmallows.
Peanut butter	Do not give babies and young children peanut butter on its own, only use as a spread.
Jelly cubes	Do not give babies and young children raw jelly cubes.
Boiled sweets and ice cubes	Do not give babies and young children boiled, hard, gooey, sticky or cough sweets, or ice cubes.
Raisins and other dried fruits	Do not give babies under the age of 1 whole raisins or dried fruits. Cut them into small pieces.

Make sure food is prepared appropriately for children under 5 years old, see: <https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/weaning/>

It is also advisable that care givers are familiar with how to respond to a choking incident, see: How to stop a child from choking: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/first-aid-and-safety/first-aid/how-to-stop-a-child-from-choking/> and How to resuscitate a child: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/first-aid-and-safety/first-aid/how-to-resuscitate-a-child/>



Early years choking hazards food safety advice

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For babies and young children, food can be a choking hazard, especially when they do not chew their food well or they try to swallow it whole.

Choking can happen with any foods, but 'firm foods', bones and small round foods that can easily get stuck in the throat present a higher risk. Therefore, care givers should follow these five essential steps:

- 1** Make sure food is **suitably prepared and served** for babies and children under 5 years old. For suitable foods, see <https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/weaning/>. Introduce babies to solid foods from around 6 months of age.
- 2** **Think about size, shape and texture of food.** Cut food into narrow batons, avoid round shapes and firm foods. Firm fruit & vegetables can be softened by cooking.
- 3** Ensure that babies and young children are **alert and seated safely upright** in a highchair or appropriately sized low chair whilst eating.
- 4** **Babies and young children should be supervised at all times** while eating. You will be able to identify the early signs of choking and prevent harm.
- 5** **Encourage babies and young children to chew food well.** Teach children how to chew and swallow food properly, and ensure they take their time during meals. This will reduce their risk of choking.

Care givers and parents should be familiar with how to respond to a choking incident in line with guidance on first aid for children:

How to stop a child from choking: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/first-aid-and-safety/first-aid/how-to-stop-a-child-from-choking/>

How to resuscitate a child: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/first-aid-and-safety/first-aid/how-to-resuscitate-a-child/>