



The Gem Federation **Food Policy**

1. Introduction

The Gem Federation is dedicated to providing an environment that ensures the healthy choice, is the easy choice for all children. We promote healthy eating and enable pupils to make informed choices about the food and drink they consume. Through effective leadership and a strong school ethos, we take a whole school approach by bringing all elements of the school day together to support the health and wellbeing of all children. We recognise that we are invaluable role models to pupils and their families regarding food and drink choices and healthy living.

This policy will be reviewed annually to incorporate any new developments.

2. Policy Aims & Objectives

Our school food policy aims to ensure that all aspects of food and nutrition promote the health and well-being of pupils, staff, and visitors at our school.

The objectives of our school food policy are to:

- Provide a range of healthy food choices throughout the school day that are in line with the mandatory school food standards
- Provide food that promotes healthy choices and explain why they are good choices
- Provide all children with a free healthy school meal
- Provide safe, clean drinking water throughout the day
- Monitor healthy food choices, including packed lunches
- Ensure consistent messages about healthy eating are reinforced throughout the school day
- Increase knowledge and understanding of what a healthy diet is through workshops and through the PSHE, Science and DT curriculums
- Ensure that food provision in the school reflects the cultural and medical requirements of staff and pupils

3. Food & Drink Throughout the School Day

Key staff who serve food across the school day are trained in food safety and hygiene.

This includes Breakfast and After School Club staff and Early Years Staff who provide breakfasts and snacks for children.

3.1. Breakfast Club

We offer a breakfast club which serves a range of nutritious, school food standard compliant food to support children's health and concentration to ensure they have fuel for learning, play and social interaction.

The school is responsible for running breakfast club and ensuring a range of healthy choices are available for children.

We use the DfE checklist for school food: other than lunch in combination with the nutrition criteria of the Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services to ensure the food served in Breakfast Club complies with the School Food Standards, which falls under the section, 'Food other than lunch'.

We work with Magic Breakfast who provide cereal, bagels and bread to Breakfast Club. The aim of Magic Breakfast is to ensure that no child starts the day too hungry or malnourished to learn.

We have received funding for our Breakfast Club from Tesco Stronger Starts. The focus of Tesco Stronger Starts is to provide healthy food and activities that boost young people's mental and physical wellbeing.

For more information about the breakfast club please see here

<https://www.thegemfederation.co.uk/keyworth-primary/parent-hub/clubs/> for Keyworth Primary School and here <https://www.thegemfederation.co.uk/bessemer-primary/parent-hub/clubs/> for Bessemer Primary School.

3.2. School Lunches

Lunchtime offer

Please see the lunch menu here for Keyworth Primary School

<https://www.thegemfederation.co.uk/keyworth-primary/parent-hub/lunch-menu/> and here for Bessemer Primary School <https://www.thegemfederation.co.uk/bessemer-primary/parent-hub/lunch-menu/>

Our school meals are provided by ISS. ISS develop the menu which has a 3-week rotation and is updated each term. The menu is agreed by the Head of School.

ISS ensures that the menu complies with the healthy eating standards and the school checks compliance using the *DfE Checklist for school lunches* in combination with the nutrition criteria of the Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services.

The food provided at lunch time reflects the religious and cultural needs of the school community by serving pork-free and halal meat at all times, to all children. ISS also provide specialised diets to those with individual religious and cultural needs.

Planet friendly meals

Schools are a great place to encourage students to eat in a more environmentally friendly way.

The school provides at least one planet-friendly option on the menu every day (either vegetarian or vegan) and planet-friendly options are available on request for any child following a vegan, vegetarian, non-meat and other non-dairy requirements.

One day a week the menu is meat-free working toward ISS's sustainability aim to reduce meat consumption by 25%. ISS are also partnered with Love British Food and source ingredients from local and UK suppliers wherever possible.

Desserts

To ensure balance within our lunch offering, we offer a range of nutritious dessert options. We serve fruit, yoghurt or cheese and crackers as a dessert option every day.

Dining environment

The children refer to the dining area as The Dining Hall. We ask children to behave in a calm orderly manner during lunchtimes, ensuring that they are using indoor voices and refraining from disruptive behaviour. Children are expected to clean up after themselves and be respectful to staff and other students

To encourage development of social skills at lunchtime children sit at tables together to eat their lunch. Staff often eat with the children in The Dining Hall to encourage and model social skills. Midday Meal Supervisors and the Senior Leadership Team regularly review the dining environment to ensure it is fit for purpose and to monitor children's behaviour remains in line with this policy.

Independence is promoted during lunch time for all children. Where necessary some children receive additional support to work towards independent dining.

Feedback and consultation

A student survey and a parent survey is conducted each year to get a clear insight into school food wants, needs and preferences.

The survey contains clear information which is used to feed in to future school food policies and plans.

Free School Meals

From September 2023, all primary aged pupils in London are entitled to a free healthy school meal.

The government also provides additional funding for children from eligible low-income families to access a free school meal.

Those eligible for government free school meals and those with no recourse to public funds are able to access Breakfast Club for free and are also provided with Free School Meal Vouchers during school holidays. Additionally, Southwark Council organise easily accessible free food provisions during school holidays which are signposted by the school.

3.3. Packed Lunches

Packed lunches include those brought from home as well as those provided by the school or by parents for trips.

Packed lunches should contain a main item, such as a sandwich, wrap, rice or pasta salad, some fruit or vegetables and another snack such as crackers and cheese or a yoghurt.

Packed lunches should not include any drink other than water, nuts or nut products, grapes, sweets, crisps, cake, sweet biscuits or chocolate bars of any sort.

We do understand that when children have a packed lunch for a school trip they consider this a treat and this is reflected in the guidelines below. (Biscuits with some chocolate coating are acceptable).

Advice for parents/carers is often included in the school newsletter to encourage packed lunches that reflect the school food standards

Parents/carers can access further information and support on packed lunches on the school website, or by visiting NHS Healthier Lunchboxes <https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes/>

3.4. After School Club

Our After School Club provides tasty, nutritious and school food standard compliant food. After School Club is run for parents/carers who require wraparound care. The club is run internally by the school.

Children are provided a free meal and snack in After School Club. Parents/Carers can send in their own snack or packed lunch for After School Club. The same guidance applies to these snacks and packed lunches as at lunchtimes.

We use the *DfE checklist for school food: other than lunch* in combination with the nutrition criteria of the Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services to ensure the food served in Breakfast Club complies with the School Food Standards, which falls under the section, 'Food other than lunch'

For more information about After School Club please see here <https://www.thegemfederation.co.uk/keyworth-primary/parent-hub/clubs/> for Keyworth Primary School and here <https://www.thegemfederation.co.uk/bessemer-primary/parent-hub/clubs/> for Bessemer Primary School

3.5. Other Food in School

Fruit

Every child in KS1 is provided a free piece of fruit or veg from The School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme (SFVS). This is available during the school day.

Snacks

If children bring in snacks for after school clubs, we ask that they follow our packed lunch policy. When children are allowed to bring in snacks from home they are permitted to bring, plain breadsticks, plain rice crackers, fruit or vegetables.

Milk

All children under 5 years of age are provided with a portion of semi-skimmed milk (or an alternative where special diet requires) per day for free.

Birthdays

We ask that parents do not bring in any food to be shared as part of their child's birthday celebrations and that anything bought in, must be shared at the end of the day once the children have been dismissed to their careers.

3.6. Water Only

We are a water only school. This means plain water and plain reduced fat milk (plain semi skimmed or skimmed milk, lactose free or soya milk) are the only drinks allowed to be consumed on school grounds (unless for medical reasons).

Providing environments which encourage pupils to drink plain water and plain semi-skimmed milk will improve their health, behaviour and learning outcomes.

In compliance with the National School Food Standards, we provide water for all pupils during school meals. We will actively discourage pupils from bringing fizzy or sugary drinks to school. This means children are not drinking sugary drinks which contribute to many preventable health conditions like obesity, tooth decay and type 2 diabetes.

We promote water as the best option and help pupils understand the importance of healthy drink choices and the benefits of consuming water. We will also ensure our staff are committed to model healthy drinking habits.

We have water fountains at various locations throughout the school grounds, jugs of water on the table at meal times and pupils are encouraged to drink water regularly throughout the day and carry reusable water bottles to minimize the risk of spillages. Clean free drinking water is also available to staff and visitors throughout the school.

If pupils bring in a fizzy or sugary drink, they will be asked to put it away and take it home and we will remind families of the water only policy. We are a water only school

Reward Culture

Studies have shown that rewarding with food can have a negative impact on a student's relationship with food. It can increase preferences for sweets, lead to overconsumption, teach students to eat when they are not hungry, and contribute to problematic thoughts and behaviours for those who are predisposed to disordered eating.

Taking this into consideration, our school avoids using food as a reward and asks staff to follow this policy. As alternative we follow the Behaviour Policy as guidance to rewarding children. This can be found in the policy section of our website.

4. Allergies & Special Diets

When talking about allergies and special diets, we are inclusive of all allergies, intolerances, cultural and religious diets as well as medical requirements such as diabetes or blended diets. Parents/Carers should inform the school where a child has an allergy or special dietary requirement.

Where necessary a special diet form should be completed. This is managed by ISS who provide special diet menus individualised to the child's needs.

Children with allergies or special dietary requirements wear a lanyard during meal and snack times which allows all staff to recognise their needs.

Where necessary staff receive training for specific special diets.

Please refer to our Allergy Awareness and First Aid & Administration of Medicines policies for further information.

5. Food Education

Cooking and Nutrition is a compulsory subject within the Primary Design & Technology curriculum. We teach this at an appropriate level throughout each key stage. There are opportunities for pupils to develop knowledge and understanding of health, including healthy eating, food provenance as well as practical skills such as designing, preparing, and cooking predominantly savoury food.

6. Equal Opportunities

We recognise the importance of all pupils, staff and visitors having equal access to inclusive opportunities. We want to ensure that everyone is catered for and feels valued when food and drink is provided in school, and across all aspects of food education.

- We practise vigilance, noting and acting if we see signs that any student is not eating well/is not well-nourished.
- We ensure that the free food offer is accessed by those who need it, with no stigma attached.
- We ensure that the food offer considers the diverse ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds of our students and the varying medical / dietary needs some may have.
- We ensure students and staff who are fasting are supported, allowing all to flourish spiritually and academically.
- We check that events involving food are not exclusive culturally or economically.
- We ensure Pastoral and Safeguarding staff know the signs of disordered eating and can signpost students and their families to help.

7. Staff & Visitors Expectations

All adults, including staff and external visitors, influence pupils' knowledge, skills and attitudes towards food and drink. Therefore, it is important that they have a positive attitude and are healthy role models. At every opportunity they should promote healthy choices and reflect our philosophy and approach to food and nutrition.

8. Monitoring & Evaluation

At each review point, we will identify any areas of improvement to ensure that we maintain a balanced and wholesome approach to food & drink in our school. We will consider take up of school food, student/parent feedback and our ever-changing student population during each review.

1. Appendix

Appendix 1:

The revised standards for school food came into force on 1 January 2015 and are set out here:

[School food standards practical guide - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[School-Food-Standards-Guidance-FINAL-V3.pdf \(schoolfoodplan.com\)](http://schoolfoodplan.com)

Appendix 2:

[Free school meals: guidance for schools and local authorities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Appendix 3:

[National Curriculum - Design and technology key stages 1 to 2 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)