MARNER
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Whole School Food Policy

Policy Owner	Carol Doherty (AH)
Approval Body	Governing Body
Approval Date	October 2026
Review Date	September 2027

Whole School Food Policy

School Name: Marner Primary
Date policy was approved: May 2025
Review date: May 2027
Person responsible for overseeing Healthy Eating: **Carol Doherty**
Person writing this policy: **Carol Doherty**

Aim	The main aims of our school food policy are: 1. To provide a range of healthy food choices throughout the school day and in line with the mandatory School Food Standards 2. To support pupils to make healthy food choices and be better prepared to learn and achieve 3. To ensure a consistent approach to healthy eating across the school community including pupils, staff and parents/carers
Context	"Tackling obesity is one of the greatest long-term health challenges this country faces. Today, around two-thirds (63% of adults are above a healthy weight, and of these half are living with obesity[1]. We have 1 in 3 children leaving primary school who are already overweight or living with obesity with 1 in 5 living with obesity." Obesity prevalence is highest amongst the most deprived groups in society[3]. Children in the most deprived parts of the country are more than twice as likely to be obese as their peers living in the richest areas. This is sowing the seeds of adult diseases and health inequalities in early childhood. Obesity is associated with reduced life expectancy. It is a risk factor for a range of chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, at least 12 kinds of cancer, liver and respiratory disease, and obesity can impact on mental health." (Policy paper. Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives. Published 27 July 2020, Department of Health and Social Care https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-obesity-government-strategy/tackling-obesity-empowering-adults-and-children-to-live-healthier-lives) Locally, children in Tower Hamlets have high levels of excess weight (overweight or obesity). Among 4-5 year olds, 20.4% have excess weight (of whom 10.9% are obese) and among 10-11 year olds, 45.4% have excess weight (of whom 29.7% are

	obese) (NCMP data 2021/22 academic year). Both are above the average for London and England. The issue of oral health also continues in Tower Hamlets, with high levels of children aged 5 years old with experience of visually obvious dentinal decay (2021/22). Tower Hamlets has 29.6% compared to the national figure of 23.7% and 25.8% in London (Tower Hamlets Child Health Profile, Public Health England, https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/)

Curriculum Provision and Content

Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing (Health Education) – *Statutory*	• Mental Wellbeing • Internet Safety and Harms • Physical Health and Fitness • Healthy Eating • Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco • Health and Prevention • Basic First Aid • Changing Adolescent Body By the end of primary school pupils should know: Healthy eating • what constitutes a healthy diet (including understanding calories and other nutritional content). • the principles of planning and preparing a range of healthy meals. • the characteristics of a poor diet and risks associated with unhealthy eating (including, for example, obesity and tooth decay) and other behaviours (e.g. the impact of alcohol on diet or health). By the end of secondary school pupils should know: Healthy eating • how to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including tooth decay and cancer. (Guidance – Physical health and mental wellbeing (Primary and secondary) – Updated 9 July 2020 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education/physical-health-and-mental-wellbeing-primary-and-secondary)
Curricular and Extra-	Food and nutrition is taught at an appropriate level throughout each key stage in Science, PSHE and Design Technology (cooking and nutrition).

Curricular	The Eatwell Guide (Appendix 1) is used throughout the school as a model of understanding a balanced diet. All food provision within the curriculum or cookery clubs will be healthy at all times.

Food Provision

Breakfast club	Breakfast is an important meal that should provide 25% of a child's energy requirement and supports pupils to be ready to learn at the start of each day. The breakfast menu includes: cereal specifically weetabix and porridge bagels margarine and jam. We are a water school. Water is also provided.
Snacks	The school understands that healthy snacks can be an important part of the diet of young people. Pupils are able to bring fruit into school to eat at break-times. Any after school snacks must be healthy and fruit is recommended. They must follow the principles of this policy, whether provided by the pupil or the school. As a Healthy School we do not allow crisps, sweets, chocolates, biscuits or sweet items that do or do not contain chocolate.
School Meals	School meals are provided by Tower Hamlets School meals are planned on a 2 week cycle and as a Healthy School we have signed the Tower Hamlets Fantastic Food in Schools Charter (March 2024) (Appendix 2) which includes a commitment to the Tower Hamlets Dessert Policy (March 2024) (Appendix 3) with a focus on fresh fruit; low or no sugar yoghurt and cheese with unsweetened crackers as dessert options. We encourage and promote uptake of salad, fruit and vegetables at all times to all pupils. We consult termly with pupils, staff, governors and our catering provider around menu options, choices, portion sizes and quality control. We work with our school caterer to constantly review and improve school food. We have worked to improve the lunchtime experience for all pupils, making every effort to reduce queues and making lunchtimes a more enjoyable and stress-free experience for pupils.

Packed Lunches	Packed lunches should aim to include: • Some starchy foods such as bread (sliced bread, pitta bread, wraps, bagels), pasta, potatoes, couscous; choose wholegrain where possible. • 1 portion of fruit and 1 portion of vegetables or salad. • Dairy food such as cheese or yoghurt • Meat, fish, or another source of protein such as eggs, beans and pulses, hummus, falafel • Oily fish once every 3 weeks e.g. sardines or salmon • Packed lunches should not include: • Nuts of any kind • Crisps or crisp type snacks e.g. flavoured rice cakes or cheddars • Sweets • Any confectionary items including bars, biscuits, cakes or yoghurts/desserts. • Anything containing chocolate. The school provides water for all pupils at lunchtime; If a child brings in something that doesn't comply with the packed lunch guidelines, then the item will be removed from their lunch and returned at the end of the school day. A conversation will be carried out between the school and the parents and if necessary, the child will be compensated with food from the main school lunch. See Packed Lunch Guide for Parents (Appendix 4)
Water Provision	The school is a water only school.
School Trips	A healthy packed lunch will be provided by the school, for all children who usually have a school meal. On Mondays if a trip is planned the kitchen cannot provide a packed lunch and children will be asked to bring their own. Children are welcome to bring their own packed lunches on trips, however, these lunches must adhere to the same food and drink guidance described above.
Specialist dietary requirements	The school does everything possible to accommodate pupils' specialist dietary requirements including allergies, intolerances, religious or cultural practices.

	Individual care plans are created for pupils with food allergies and relevant staff are aware of these plans. We are a nut free school.

Initiatives

Fantastic Food in Schools	Our school has committed to the Fantastic Food in Schools Charter to make our whole school food environment as healthy and enjoyable as possible. As part of this we commit to healthy desserts with a focus on offering fresh fruit, low or no sugar yoghurt and cheese with unsweetened crackers.
Sugar Smart	Our school has signed the Sugar Smart Pledge, a national campaign backed by The Healthy Lives Team and the Public Health Team, with the aim of reducing sugar consumption, tackling obesity and improving oral health across the Borough.
	For further details on engaging with the Fantastic Food in Schools Programme or to celebrate this work with a Healthy Schools Award, please email Kate Smith, Head of the Healthy Lives Team: kate.smith@towerhamlets.gov.uk.

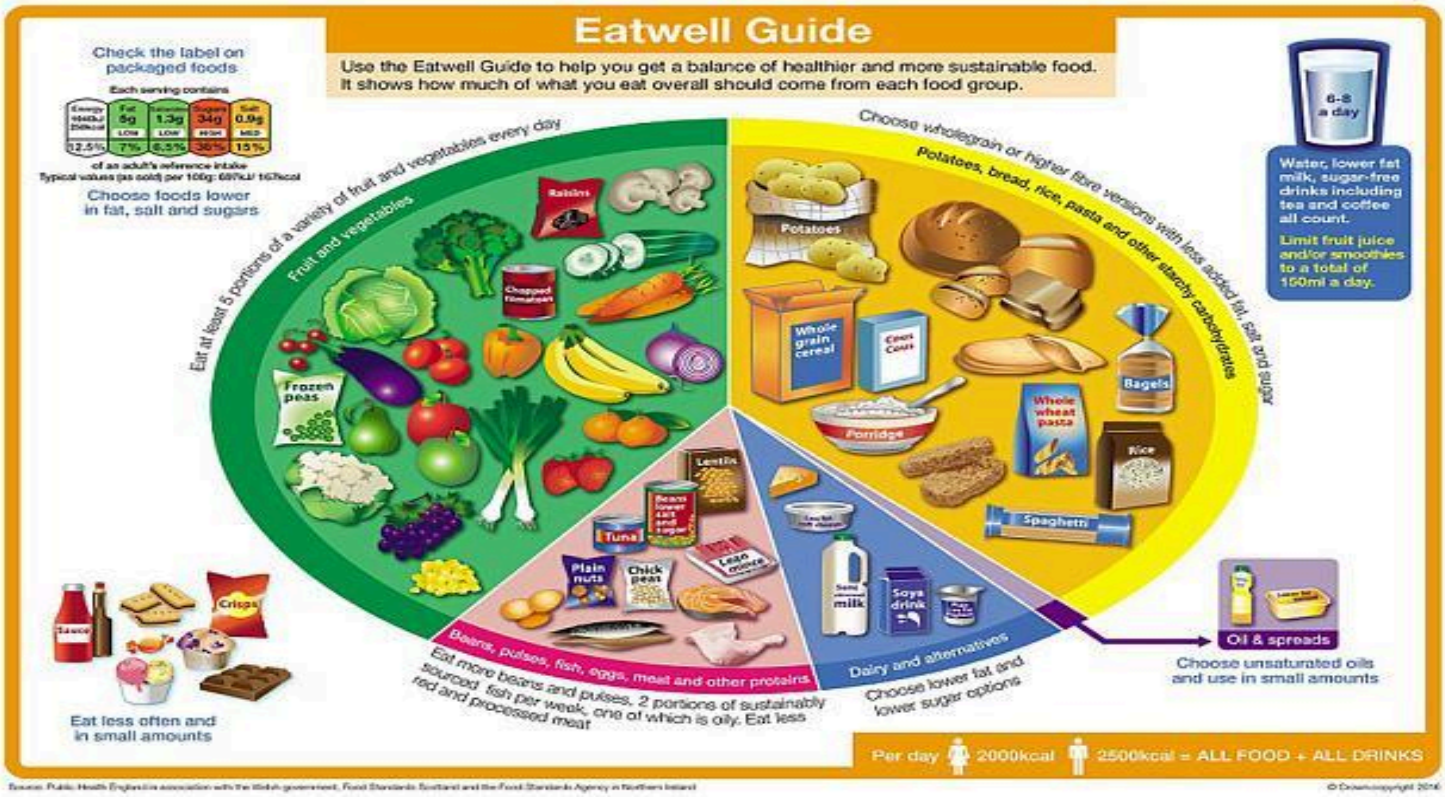
Rewards and Special Occasions

Rewards	The school does not allow food to be used as a reward for good behaviour or achievement.
Special events, celebrations and Birthdays	The school recognises the importance of celebrating birthdays and special occasions. For birthday celebrations, every effort will be made to celebrate birthdays in a healthy way, for example by celebrating with fruit or outside of school. For celebration events, we welcome a variety of foods, from different cultures, for children to try. We try to discourage sweet items altogether and instead allow parents to bring in any savoury items they want to make. On occasions cakes and biscuits are sold as part of fundraisers. We are moving the school towards a healthier approach to raising money and celebrating festivals.

Consultation and Partnership

Parents	Our relationship with parents/carers is very important and we aim to support them with information and advice around food, so that they are best prepared to make healthy choices for their families. Coffee mornings, events and food related workshops are delivered throughout the year for family members to attend.
Staff	The school encourages staff to contribute to and support this food policy across the school day. Staff and visitors will be encouraged to model good practice behaviour around food and drink and in line with the policy, when in the company of pupils.
Resources	The Healthy Lives Healthy Eating Toolkit with resources to support all this work can be found at the THEP website. Healthy Schools - Tower Hamlets Education Partnership (the-partnership.org.uk)

Appendix 1 - Eatwell Guide



Appendix 2 – Tower Hamlets Dessert Policy (March 2024)

TOWER HAMLETS

Tower Hamlets Dessert Policy

As part of the Fantastic Food in Schools, Tower Hamlets will be supporting all primary schools in Tower Hamlets to implement a new policy regarding healthy school desserts. In the interest of promoting the health, well-being and educational outcomes of our students, the policy will focus on offering **fresh fruit; low or no sugar yoghurt; and cheese with unsweetened crackers** as dessert options.

Examples of desserts that conform with the new policy:

- Fruit salad
- Cut pieces of fruit
- Plain yogurt (with or without fruit puree, made from fruits, or unsweetened oats)
- Fruit yogurt with less than 5% sugar
- Cheese with unsweetened crackers/breadsticks

Examples of desserts that do not conform with the new policy:

- Cakes, biscuits, ice-cream
- Fruit smoothies or yoghurt-based drinks
- Baked fruit
- Fruit-based desserts (e.g. apple crumble, 50/50 cakes)
- Yogurt with over 5% sugar
- Cheese-based baked goods (e.g.cheese straws)

Theme days

We understand that food is part of celebrations for specific religious and cultural days. During celebrations, schools are encouraged to use decorations and the main (savoury) part of the school meal to make the day feel special. To ensure the school meal continues to maximise the nutritional intake of children, this policy allows no more than 2 non-compliant desserts per term, as part of theme days.

Rationale for new policy

This decision reflects our commitment to combat high levels of dental decay and excess weight in Tower Hamlets, and to support children to develop healthy eating habits from an early age. We believe that by encouraging nutritious choices, we can contribute to the long-term health and success of our children and improved behavioural and educational outcomes in the long term.

We are committed to working closely with schools and caterers to explore cost-effective options and ensure that the school meal in Tower Hamlets is appropriately funded with support to ensure high uptake. We have worked closely with our own contract caterer to develop menus that reflect this policy.

The Fantastic Food in Schools programme has resources and offers individual school support in implementing a whole school approach to improving the school food environment. It is important to engage the whole school community when making these changes and creating a healthier school food environment for Tower Hamlet's students.

Appendix 3 – Fantastic Food in Schools Charter (March 2024)

CONTRACT CATERING SERVICES
healthy, honest, good food

Healthy Schools
TOWER HAMLETS

TOWER HAMLETS

Fantastic FOOD IN SCHOOLS CHARTER

Food

Nutritious meals: We will prioritise nutritious and balanced meals that maximise a child's nutrition across the school day. This includes working to comply with the borough's Healthy Dessert Policy in order to encourage healthy habits for life and maximise nutritional intake.

Variety and choice: We will offer diverse menus that cater to different tastes, dietary needs, and cultural preferences.

Cooking from scratch: We will endeavour to prepare meals from scratch, minimizing processed foods and additives, and maximizing the nutritional value and taste of every dish.

People and Communities

Collaborative partnerships: We will commit to fostering strong partnerships and open communication between school communities and the council to achieve our shared goals of promoting healthy eating and supporting the well-being of children.

Inclusivity and accessibility: We will ensure that all children have access to nutritious meals, regardless of their background or circumstances. We will remove any barriers to access and promote inclusivity to ensure every child can enjoy delicious and healthy food at school.

Valuing kitchen and lunchtime staff: We will value the hard work, skill, and dedication of our kitchen and lunchtime support staff in preparing and serving nutritious meals to our students. We will ensure they receive ongoing training, support, and recognition for their efforts, creating a positive and rewarding work environment that enables them to excel in their roles. This includes paying the London Living Wage.

Culture and Environment

Food education and engagement: We will promote healthy eating habits and food literacy. We will provide opportunities for students to learn about nutrition, cooking and the importance of balanced eating; while also engaging parents and the community in supporting healthy food choices.

Creating positive food environments: We will create welcoming, inclusive and positive food environments in our schools, where children can enjoy meals together, socialize, and develop healthy relationships with food. By promoting a positive food culture, we will support the overall well-being and academic success of our students.

By signing this charter, we pledge to work together to foster a culture of healthy eating, sustainability, and community.

Sign here

Appendix 4 – Packed Lunch Guide for Parents

Healthy Lives TOWER HAMLETS

Two Week Packed Lunch Ideas

Healthy Lives TOWER HAMLETS

1. Chicken and salad wrap water chopped fruit homemade popcorn	**2. Tuna and salad pitta** water plain yoghurt satsuma	**3. Hummus salad wrap** water cherry tomatoes frozen berries &plain yoghurt	**4. Roast vegetable couscous** water chickpeas berries plain yoghurt	**5. Tuna and sweetcorn pasta salad** water vegetable sticks mixed berries piece of cheese
6. Jerk chicken, rice and beans water cherry tomatoes baby sweetcorn mango	**7. Hummus and cucumber bagel** water carrot sticks grapes piece of cheese	**8. Couscous, beans, peas, and carrots** water plain yoghurt banana	**9. Leftover Dhal, rice, and tomatoes** water plain yoghurt grapes cucumber sticks	**10. Egg and lettuce sandwich (wholemeal)** water chopped fruit cherry tomatoes piece of cheese

Try to include a variety of different food in your child's packed lunch.
Aim for a piece of fruit and some salad or vegetables every day.

Healthy Lives TOWER HAMLETS

Healthy Lives TOWER HAMLETS