

EYFS Food and Nutrition Policy



Our Mission Statement – the reason our College exists

“Learning & Growing in the Light of the Gospel”

With Christ at the centre of our learning, we:

- *Help young people to achieve their greatest potential*
- *Guide their intellectual growth, nurture their God-given talents, and inspire them to live in service to others*
- *Aim to develop honest, confident, responsible and compassionate members of society, based on the educational values of Blessed Antonio Rosmini*

Our Vision Statement – the long-term change resulting from our work

‘Begin Here, Go Anywhere’

Ratcliffe’s unique educational offering based on our College motto, “Legis Plenitudo Charitas”, Love is the fulfilment of the Law, provides a perfect context within which young people may acquire the emotional knowledge and interpersonal skills necessary to live happy and purposeful lives. The College’s inclusive Catholic ethos is complemented by the outstanding quality of our College community through which our Mission, “Learning and Growing in the Light of the Gospel”, serves to nurture resilience and develop maturity. Young people leave Ratcliffe with a strong sense of who they are and their purpose in the world, equipped socially, emotionally, morally and spiritually to go forth and make a difference to the communities in which they live and work.

Author: R Ravat/G Studd/ J Campen	Receiver: Teaching staff
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Rationale and Introduction

This policy aims to ensure that all children in our setting receive healthy, balanced, and nutritious meals and snacks, supporting their growth, development, and well-being in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework and following the Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance (April 2025). Providing nutritious food helps children get the energy and nutrients they need during a critical period of rapid growth. It also supports the development of positive eating habits, helping to reduce future health risks and laying the foundations for lifelong well-being.

Nutritional Standards

We adhere to the School Food Standards and Department for Education's guidance when planning meals and snacks for Nursery children. Across the day, children will be eating a balanced diet, which incorporates the four main food groups:

- **Starchy carbohydrates:** bread, potatoes, pasta, rice, cereals.
- **Fruits and vegetables:** fresh, frozen, canned, or dried.
- **Proteins:** beans, pulses, meat, fish, eggs, meat alternatives.
- **Dairy and plant-based alternatives:** milk, cheese, yogurt.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Nutritional Guidance (April 2025) shares how foods within these groups are categorised into those that should be provided, limited and avoided. Appendix 1 shows this guidance, with which we will adhere to. Those that are in the 'avoided' category will not be given as part of our Nursery snacks and meals.

Portion sizes

Children aged 3–5 years will be given a portion size that is appropriate for their age. (Appendix 2)

Whilst children will be gently encouraged to try the variety of food on their plate, new foods or to 'eat a little bit more' staff will avoid:

- making children finish everything on their plate or eating more than they want to
- offering rewards (e.g. stickers or dessert) for finishing everything on their plate

Menu Planning

At Ratcliffe, the Catering Manager and Executive Chef work together to create a three-week menu. Each term, this is reviewed to reflect seasonal food changes and dietary interests of the school community.

Menus will include a variety of different foods, tastes, textures and colours, ensuring that children get the benefits from different nutrients in each food. Children will be encouraged to

experience flavours from around the world. This builds appreciation for food from different cultures at an early age as well as being good for children's sensory systems.

When creating menus, we carefully consider substitutions and replacement ingredients for children with special dietary requirements. These can be linked to food allergies, intolerances or coeliac disease, religious and cultural beliefs, and vegetarianism or veganism.

Meal Time Environment

Lunch

All children attend lunch in the Gentili Room. Children are presented with a choice of three hot meals: a meat option, vegetarian option and pasta or jacket potato option. The children choose a coloured band to represent their selection, and that tray of food is brought over to them. Dessert is served at their table with a main dessert or fruit option. Children are also able to have a slice of bread to accompany their meal.

Nursery staff and Lunchtime Supervisors help to serve and accompany the children whilst they are in the Gentili Room. Lunchtime supervisors assist children with cutting up their food and general support with eating lunch.

Aftercare Tea

In the Nursery, at approximately 4.20, a small tea is provided during Aftercare. This ensures that children are fed a further nutritional meal to keep them going if they are in school until 6pm. Your child will need dinner when they get home.

Nursery staff manage aftercare tea, which is delivered from the Main Kitchen in the Senior School.

Educational Trips

For school trips, a packed lunch is provided for all children by the Catering Department. Dietary requirements are catered for. We ask that parents do not supply children with their own packed lunch for school trips.

Dietary requirements

You will have informed the school of any special dietary requirements including food allergies or intolerances when completing the acceptance forms for your child's place. In addition, in the Nursery you will have received a Nursery or Home visit prior to your child starting at Ratcliffe, which provides a further opportunity to discuss your child's eating habits alongside any dietary requirements. Where there are amendments, please inform the following people to ensure we are all aware of changes to dietary needs:

rravat@ratcliffecollege.com – Head of EYFS

medical@ratcliffecollege.com – Medical Team

gstudd@ratcliffecollege.com – Catering Manager (01509 817007)

All dietary requirements are recorded in the child's medical file.

Communication with Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are informed about the meals and snacks provided, including ingredients and allergen information through the weekly menu that is emailed out to parents via the School App.

Your child's class teacher is also an important person to speak to if you need any further support to understand our approach to food provision and children's food intake across the day. We are committed to providing healthy balanced meals, which can also positively influence eating habits at home. Ongoing discussions about your child's cultural and dietary needs are crucial in creating a safe and inclusive environment for all children to eat.

Food Safety and Hygiene

All food is prepared in the Kitchen in the Senior School where all Catering Staff have received training in Food Safety and Hygiene. Additionally, members of Nursery staff who are involved in preparing and handling food also have a Food Hygiene Certificate.

The school will contact Ofsted where two or more children are affected by food poisoning on the Nursery premises. This will be completed within 14 days of the incident.

Foods are prepared to minimize choking risks with young children and parents are made aware of any choking incident, which is also recorded. Appropriate supervision is adhered to during mealtimes. Children are always within sight and hearing of a member of staff whilst eating any snacks or meals.

To create a safe environment for children with allergies we ensure the following:

- The class/lead teacher is responsible for liaising with the chef serving lunch who are then both responsible for checking that the food provided meets the requirements of each child
- all Nursery staff are aware of each child's allergies across the Nursery setting
- all medication (for allergies) is carried in bags that are always with the children in their classroom, lunch hall or specialist lessons such as music or PE
- all foods remain in its packaging, so ingredients lists are immediately available
- foods and items containing allergens are stored separately
- cross-contamination is avoided by:
 - washing hands
 - using colour-coded equipment and utensils, or practices such as labelling
 - having rules about visitors bringing food into your setting
- if a food intolerance is suspected, we work with parents and/or carers to keep a diary of foods eaten and any symptoms experienced.

Celebrations

Many families like to celebrate their child's birthday and other special events by bringing in a cake or sweets to the setting to share. As a school, we would like to recommend that you consider other small non-edible options to celebrate with, such as bubbles or stickers. If you are bringing in food, we ask that these are packaged sweets. These are then sent home in book bags, so the final decision is a parental choice.

Food Related Activities

In the Nursery, we like to give children the experience of working with food and cooking opportunities, as this helps to build a positive relationship with food. We always aim to explore and cook healthy foods.

Where a child has a dietary need, the class teachers will be in contact with you to ensure we have an alternative and where possible we use the alternative with all children to create an inclusive cooking environment.

Links to other policies

School Meals and Food Policy

Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Head of EYFS, Catering Manager and Executive Chef.

Appendix 1: Food and Drink Guidelines (Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance, April 2025)

Food Group	Provide	Limit	Avoid
Carbohydrates These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bread • potatoes, sweet potatoes and other starchy root vegetables • pasta and noodles • rice and other grains • breakfast cereals 	A portion of starchy food will be offered as part of each main meal (lunch and aftercare tea) each day.	Sugar and salt content in breakfast cereals will be limited. Cereals with the lowest sugar and salt content which are labelled as 'low' (green) will be used.	Cereals labelled as 'high' (red) in sugar such as sugar-coated or chocolate-flavoured cereals will not be offered.
	Plain starchy food such as plain savoury crackers, or unsalted unsweetened rice or corn cakes will be offered as part of a snack each day.	Salt content in bread and bread products will be limited. Those with a lower salt content which are labelled as 'low' (green) or 'medium' (amber) will be used.	Flavoured dried rice, pasta and noodle products e.g. packets and pots of instant flavoured noodles, pasta and rice will not be offered.
	At least 3 different types of starchy food and a variety of wholegrain and white starchy foods will be offered across snacks, lunch and aftercare tea each week.	Starchy foods which have been fried will only be offered as a maximum of once a week (e.g. chips, fried rice and fried noodles).	
	A wholegrain starchy food will be offered for at least 1 lunch and tea each week.	Tinned pasta in sauce (e.g. spaghetti hoops) will be limited and 'no added sugar' options always chosen.	
Fruit and vegetables These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fresh, frozen, tinned or dried fruit and vegetables • pulses such as lentils and beans. 	At least 1 portion of vegetables and 1 portion of fruit offered as part of each main meal (lunch, dinner) and as part of some snacks (not including dried fruit).	Baked beans limited to once a week where it is being counted as a vegetable.	Dried fruit as a snack will not be offered but could be provided as part of a meal.
	A variety of vegetables or fruit offered across the day and each week.		Fruit tinned in syrup will not be given. There may be options of fruit tinned in juice.
			There will be no 'added salt and sugar' in tinned vegetables and pulses. For tinned vegetables and pulses 'no added salt and sugar' options or those tinned in water will be chosen.
Dairy and plain, fortified plant-based alternatives These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • milk • cheese • yoghurt and fromage frais. 	The guidance suggests 3 portions of milk/unsweetened dairy products should be provided each day. On the assumption that children are likely to have a milk portion as part of their breakfast and dinner/bed time routines, 1 portion of milk will be offered each day.		Sweetened yoghurts and fromage frais (including non-dairy alternatives) will not be offered.
	Other unsweetened dairy foods may also be offered as part of lunch or aftercare tea each day.		
	Non-dairy alternatives that are unsweetened and calcium fortified such as oat milk or soya milk will be offered to those that need a dairy alternative.		
	Low-fat dairy options are given.		
Food Group	Provide	Limit	Avoid
	A portion of protein will be offered as part of lunch and aftercare tea each day.	Oily fish will be limited to a maximum of twice per week.	

<p>Proteins</p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • beans, pulses and nuts • meat and poultry • fish and shellfish <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eggs • meat alternatives. 	Provide oily fish (such as salmon, sardines or mackerel) at least once every 3 weeks; this can be provided as part of lunch or tea.	The provision of processed meat products (e.g. sausages, breaded chicken, meatballs), processed fish products (e.g. fish fingers, fish cakes), and products made from meat alternatives (e.g. vegetarian sausages), will be limited to once a week for each of the 3 types as these products can be high in saturated fat and salt.	
	At least 1 lunch and 1 tea each week will use beans, lentils, pulses or a meat alternative as the protein source.		
	Vegetarian and vegan children will be provided with a variety of protein sources such as beans, pulses, and meat alternatives each week as part of lunch and tea.		
	A variety of protein sources will be offered as part of lunch and aftercare tea across the week.		
<p>For all foods</p>			Foods high in saturated fat, salt, and/or sugars like cakes, sweet and savoury pastries, biscuits, crisps, chocolate and other confectionary will not be offered as a snack, part of lunch or aftercare tea.
			Foods will not contain artificial sweeteners as they can encourage children to prefer very sweet foods.
<p>Drinks</p>	Children have access to their water bottle throughout the day.		Skimmed and 1% cow's milk will not be offered.
	Only fresh tap water and plain milk is available to drink each day in Nursery.		Sugary drinks (including fruit juices, squash and smoothies) will not be offered.

Appendix 2: Portion Sizes, Dept for Education

https://assets.ctfassets.net/dvmeh832nmjc/10EirRzB8F7iMahdZkWnDb/3e7eb82bf95af23b06266b7fced62575/Portion_sizes.pdf

Portion sizes for children aged 5 and under



Food group	Portion size
A variety of fruit and vegetables (at least 5 portions each day)	
Cooked and raw	40g
Carbohydrates (4 portions each day)	
Cooked rice, pasta and potatoes	80g
Bread	25g
Average sized potato	1
Dairy and alternatives (3 portions each day)	
Milk	150ml
Cheese (sliced or grated)	15g
Cottage cheese	30g
Plain yoghurt	60g
Protein (2 portions each day)	
Baked beans	55g
Egg	55g
Meat, fish and poultry	40g
Most pulses and hummus	40g