

Maiden Erlegh Trust
**TRUST WHOLE SCHOOL FOOD
POLICY**



MAIDEN ERLEGH
TRUST

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Aims and purpose of the policy

Maiden Erlegh Trust (the Trust) promotes a whole-school approach to healthy, sustainable eating. We aim to ensure that all pupils and students have access to nutritious, affordable food and a positive dining experience, supporting wellbeing, learning and equality of opportunity.

Legal Framework and Standards

This policy implements the Requirements for School Food Regulations 2014 ('School Food Standards') as applied to academies and maintained schools.

It aligns with the Department for Education's updated School Food Standards practical guidance (2025) and any successor guidance.

The Trust will cooperate with any monitoring and compliance activity led by local authorities or the Food Standards Agency and will maintain evidence of compliance across all sites.

Scope

This policy applies to all Trust schools and covers:

- School lunches
- Breakfast provision
- Breaktime snacks
- After-school clubs and events, including trips
- Packed-lunch guidance

Roles and responsibilities

- The Trust Board: sets policy and monitors compliance and impact.
- COO/CFO: ensures resourcing, contracts, procurement and financial controls support compliance and sustainability targets.
- Headteachers: embed a whole-school food ethos and that pupil voice is captured.
- Trust Catering Manager: deliver menus that meet standards; ensure compliance across all settings.
- School chefs: deliver food in line with the Trust menu, record compliance, maintain allergen management and food safety.

- SENCO/Designated Safeguarding Leads: coordinate support where food insecurity, allergy or medical needs are identified.
- Teachers/Support Staff: promote healthy eating and model positive behaviours; integrate food education within the curriculum.

Food education

Food and nutrition education will be embedded across the curriculum, including practical cooking, growing and sustainability education. Pupils will learn food hygiene principles appropriate to age and stage and the links between diet, oral health, physical activity and wellbeing.

School meals

Menus and Standards

- Menus will comply with the School Food Standards across the whole school day, including limits on foods high in fat, sugar and salt.
- Across each week, pupils will be offered a wide range of foods, including at least one wholegrain starchy option and a variety of fruit and vegetables.
- Bread with no added fat or oil will be available at the primary schools every day; free, fresh drinking water will be accessible at all times, at all settings.
- Fried or pastry-based items will be restricted in line with the standards.
- Menus will reflect cultural and religious diversity, and be clearly communicated to parents/carers and students/pupils.

Menu Design and Communication

Menus will operate on seasonal cycles (minimum 3-week cycle), be published in advance, and highlight vegetarian/vegan options, sustainable fish, and allergen information.

Breakfast, breaktime and after school provision

Where provided, breakfast clubs and after-school food will meet the School Food Standards and prioritise fruit, wholegrains and low-sugar options. Primary schools will align practice with national initiatives for universal free breakfast provision where applicable.

Special dietary requirements and allergen management

- Medical, religious and ethical dietary requirements will be reasonably accommodated.
- Allergen management will follow statutory food information and food safety requirements, with clear signage, training and individual care plans where needed.
- The Trust will distinguish between allergies, intolerances and preferences to avoid unnecessary restriction and ensure inclusion.

Packed lunch guidance

- Encouraged contents: a starchy item; a protein item (no nuts); fruit and/or vegetables; and water, milk or no-added-sugar drinks.
- Discouraged: confectionery and high-sugar drinks; any nut or nut-containing products are not permitted due to allergy risk.
- Parents/carers should use cool packs; schools provide ambient storage only.

Payment and debt management

The Trust operates a cashless system. Meals and items must be paid for in advance via the Trust's secure online platform. Spending limits can be requested by the parent/carer through ParentPay.

No child will be denied a meal at the point of service. Where arrears arise, schools will provide a standard meal while working sensitively with families to clear balances and to offer support or sign-post to assistance as appropriate, through liaison with the school's safeguarding team as appropriate.

Free school meals

Pupils eligible for FSM will receive a daily allowance equivalent to the price of the meal deal / the cost of a main meal/dessert. FSM eligibility and funding will be administered in line with current national rules, including expansions linked to Universal Credit.

Applications will be made confidentially via the SBC FSM checking service – details available on the schools' website. Eligibility takes effect from the date evidence is received and will not be backdated.

Sustainability and procurement

- We will use fresh, seasonal and, where practicable, locally sourced ingredients; prioritise

higher-welfare meat and sustainable (e.g., MSC-certified) fish.

- We will reduce ultra-processed options, increase pulses and vegetables, and minimise single-use plastics.
- Catering contracts will reference Government Buying Standards and relevant sustainability criteria.

Dining experience and culture

Lunchtime is part of the educational day. Staff will promote a calm, inclusive dining environment, encourage healthy choices and pupil voice, and reduce queuing through effective service design.

Safeguarding and welfare

Concerns about a child's nutrition, food insecurity or eating behaviours will be raised with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and managed through established safeguarding procedures.

Monitoring, evaluation and compliance

- Catering teams will keep menu, recipe and purchase records to evidence standards compliance.
- Local authority/FSA checks will be supported; any actions will be addressed promptly through improvement plans.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

We have considered the impact of this policy on pupils with protected characteristics and will make reasonable adjustments to remove barriers and foster good relations.

Data protection

Personal data used to administer catering, FSM and dietary needs will be processed lawfully and securely in line with data protection legislation and Trust policies.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or sooner if there are changes to statutory requirements, national programmes or funding that materially affect school food.