Parent Coffee Morning

All about Nourish
Why children reject food
Encouraging children to try new food
How to talk to children about food
Ask a Nutritionist Q&A

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SCHOOL FOOD MATTERS

What is Nourish?

Nourish aims to create sustained changes to school food environments so that healthy food is prioritised throughout the school day.

We are working with Herbert Morrison to create a new school food policy.

We adopt a whole-school approach to help the school create its own school food policy that puts children's health first.

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Nourish: 6 Key Food Policy Areas

Packed lunches

Replace the High Fat & Sugar & Salt products from packed lunches with healthy alternatives so that they align with the School Food Standards.

Reward culture

Rewarding good work and behaviour with house points and other non-food related treats.

Food brought in

Increase awareness that good food policy applies to snacks brought into schools (breaktime, birthday cakes, school trips etc.)

Water only

Promote drinking water and milk all through the day over squash and juice.

Planet friendly lunches

Introduce a veggie or plant power day at least once a week.

Fruity desserts

Swapping high sugar desserts to fruit only at least once per week.

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Nourish is already been running successfully in other London boroughs

Healthy cooking workshops

Assemblies

Trying new foods

School Food Ambassadors

Healthy Eating workshop with parents

And much more!

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Survey results

Key takeaways

Response rate
- 33 parents
- 35 students
- 21 staff members

Students, staff and parents alike:
- Would like to see more staff modelling a positive relationship with food
- Would welcome more monitoring of packed lunches to make sure they are in line with the school food standards
- Parents and staff feel engaged in school food topics but all groups think that students should be more involved in decisions around food at school.

School food environment – parent and staff suggestions for change

Key Findings

- Staff modelling was consistently mentioned by parents and staff as a way to encourage a positive school food environment
- Parents and staff would like to see more monitoring of and guidance for packed lunches

Quotes

- *"I think staff eating with children is an excellent model, good for behaviour, table manners and most importantly, I think the children really enjoy it."* – Parent
- *"When children have opportunities to eat with adults that naturally start to try more foods."* – Staff
- *"Not sure what access they have to healthy snacks outside lunch.. but I'm aware they have a strict water policy which is good"* – Parent
- *"Some pack lunches are unhealthy and have to be challenged. Maybe have a standard image of healthy lunches we give out as families choose this option."* – Staff
- *"Checking more on pupils lunch boxes"* - Staff

School food environment – parents and students

Key Findings

- Parents want to see less food used as a reward
- Parents want students to be more involved in decisions around school food. Students mentioned this too

Quotes

- *"High sugar food given sometimes at events and parents giving out party bags after school with lots of unhealthy food." – Parent*
- 34% of students said that they receive food / drink as a reward at school. They were interested in 'own clothes days', raffles and sports for alternative rewards
- *"Ensure younger children can be heard when they ask for food choices"* – Parent
- *"Maybe more to encourage those who bring in packed lunches to access school food ie what are the barriers for them"* – Parent
- "*Make a survey of what foods people enjoy"* – Student
- *"Ask what we think about the food then you could take our advice"* - Student

Why is a healthy school food environment important?

- School lunches can be a major source of nutrients to nourish your child (190 days a year!)
- For many children, intakes of saturated fats and sugars are high, and intakes of essential nutrients are often low, compared with reference nutrient intakes
- Children are eating less than half the recommended 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day, and 20% of 4-18 year olds surveyed ate no fruit at all in an average week
- Eating a healthy balanced diet from a young age can help prevent lifestyle diseases and set your children up for a healthier, more successful life

Nourish: A Balanced Approach

- Our approach is all about balance, ensuring children are getting the nutrients they need to be the best version of themselves! (it's all about care)
- Based on the government 'Eat Well Guide'
- Also, a holistic focus on children developing a healthy relationship with food

Healthy relationship with food:

- *Not viewing foods as 'good' or 'bad'*
- *Being exposed to a variety of foods and cuisines*
- *To be curious about and openly discuss food*
- *Being able to listen to their own bodies*
- *No pressure, stress or anxiety around mealtimes. Enjoyment is key!*

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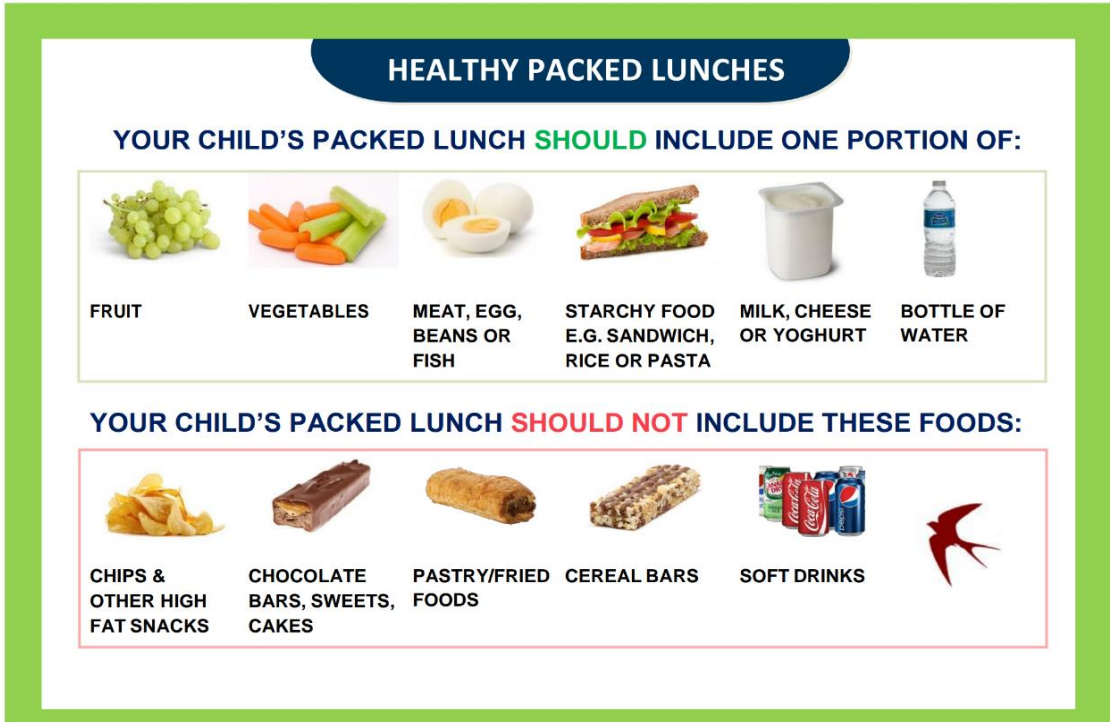
Packed Lunches

- Improving packed lunches a priority area amongst staff and parents at Herbert Morrison.

- A new school packed lunch policy to ensure packed lunches and other food brought in are nutritious, filling and similar in quality to the food served at school. *(Also 'School Food Standards' compliant)*



First Step: Engaging with and supporting parents on what a balanced (& budget friendly) packed lunch looks like!

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Understanding Why Children Reject Food

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Ultra Processed Foods

- Children love UPF's because they are consistent – taste same every time
- Fruits and veggies can be unpredictable – some blueberries are sweet and crunchy, some are squishy, some are sour
- Survival instinct – safe foods are chosen because their brains know they have eaten them before and they aren't poisonous

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FARM GATE TO SCHOOL PLATE

Everyone perceives food in a different way

Negative food experiences

Role models

How we interact with food can have a huge impact on children – both actively and passively!

Encouraging children to try new foods

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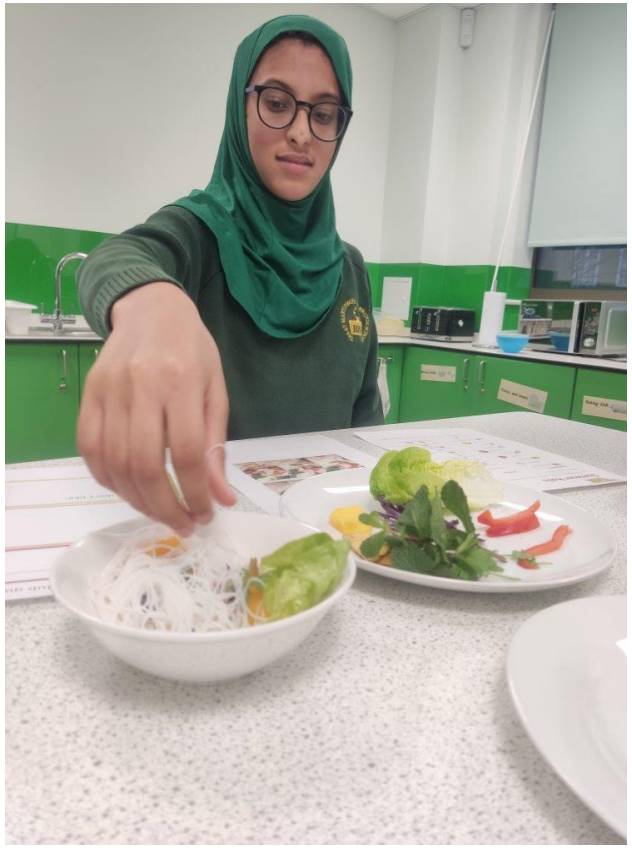
Creating a positive environment



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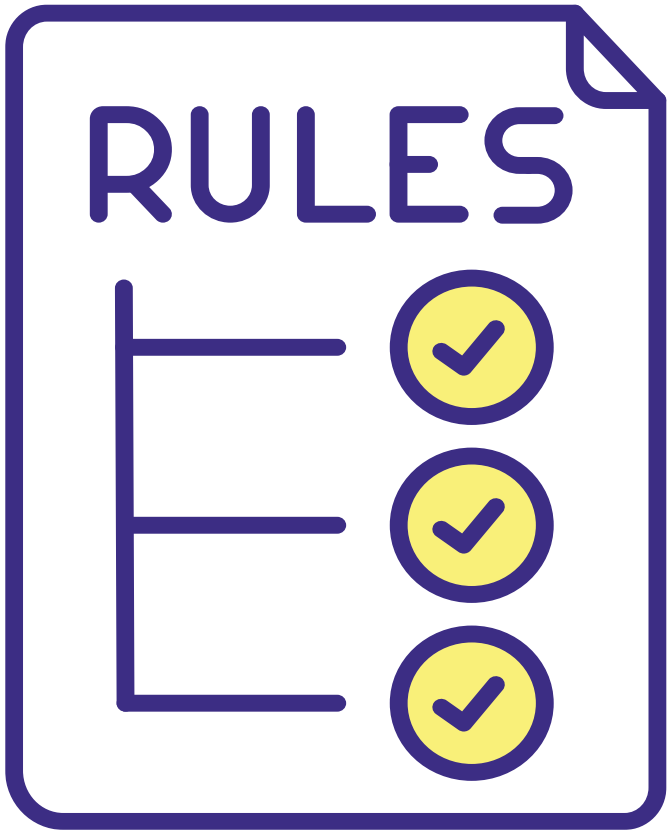
FARM GATE TO SCHOOL PLATE

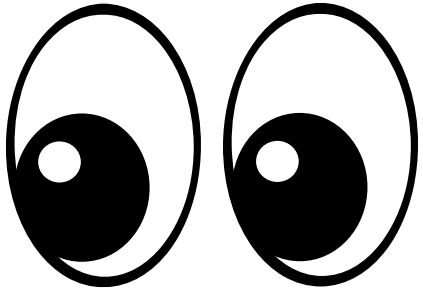
The Golden Rules!



1. No one has to try

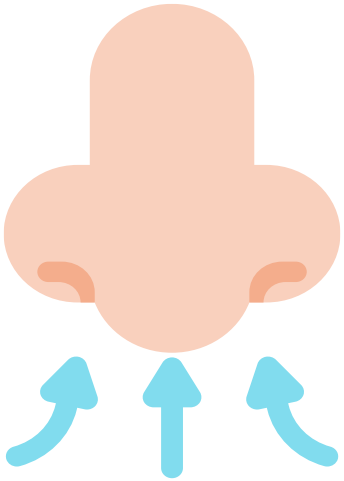
2. No one has to like

What can we do with food instead of tasting?



You can look at food

You can smell food



You can hear food

You can touch food

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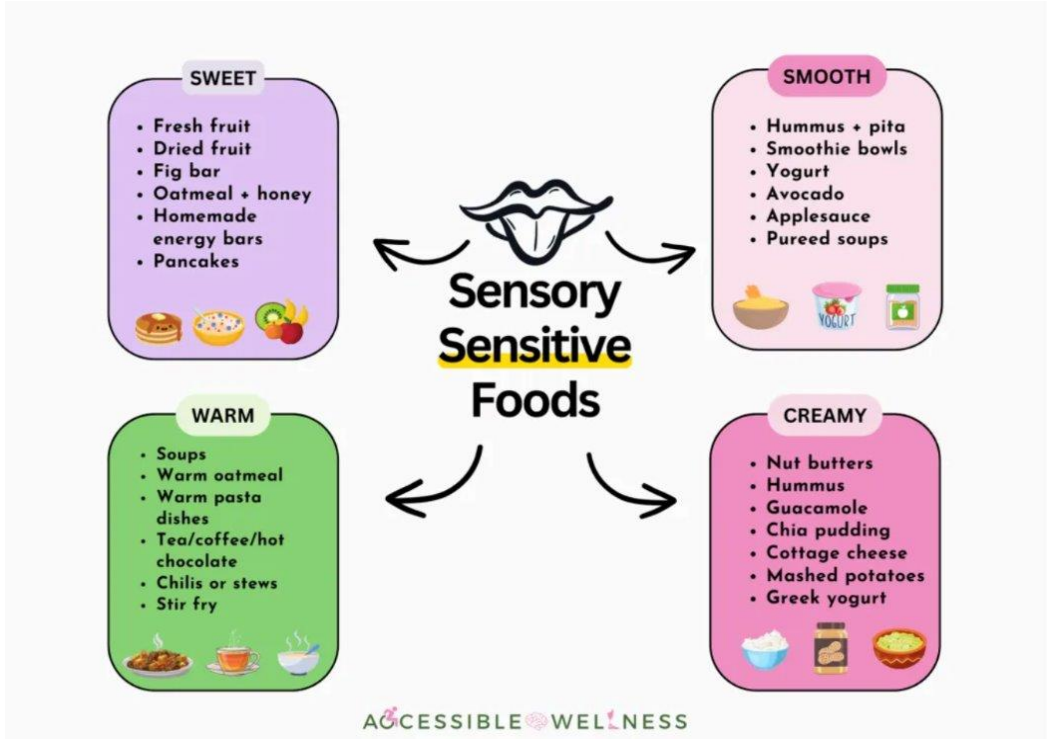
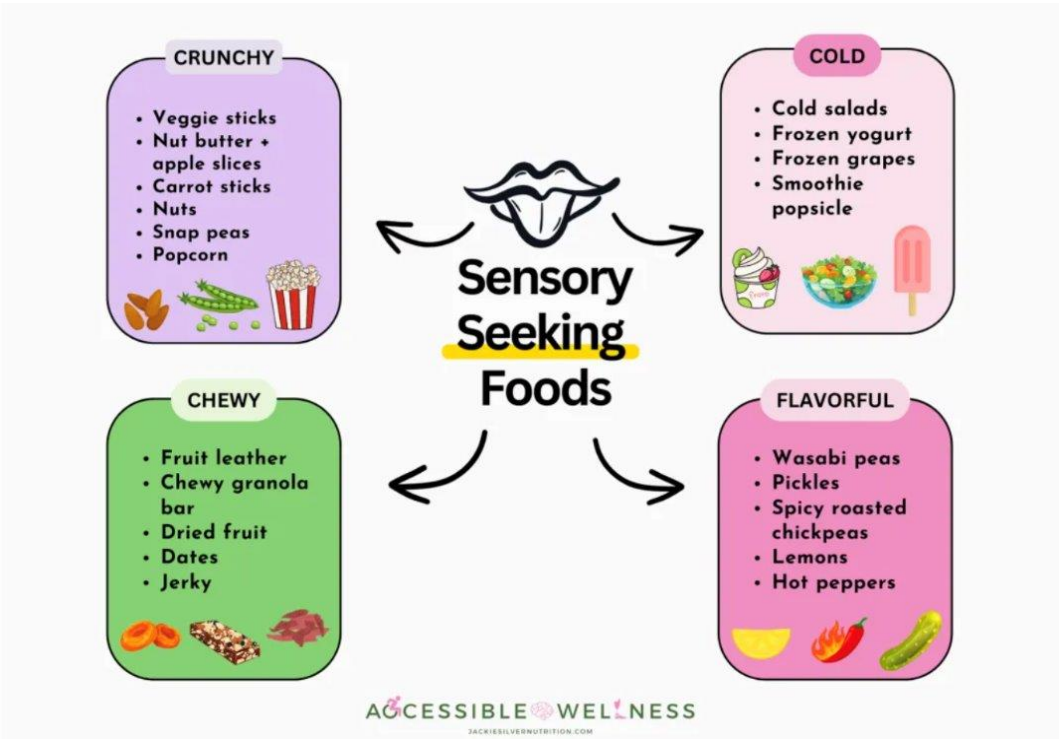
FARM
GATE TO
SCHOOL
PLATE

Your turn!

Sensory experience of food

- Some students might be fixated on certain foods because of their texture, smell, colour etc – finding other similar foods might be a gentler way to introduce new foods...





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Top tips when talking to children about food

1. Talk about the properties of food and how it can help a student's body and mind.
2. Steer clear of using food as a reward or using the dessert bargain (these treats become more appealing).
3. Ask children what they like and don't like about a food.
4. Try not to pressure a child to eat a specific food, even if your intentions are good.
5. Expose the students to a wide range of foods where possible without pressure, just leave them on the table or try a bite yourself.
6. Do not talk about diets / food avoidance / express hatred for specific foods/ school lunches using words such as 'hate', 'eww', 'disgusting', 'vile'.

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Ask a nutritionist Q&A

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