

IMPORTANT NOTE REGARDING PUPILS' FOOD SENSITIVITIES – Please can all staff leading sessions please read the following information carefully and apply the principles in their teaching.

We are developing a 'fun with food' curriculum as well as an 'Eating as Learning' curriculum here at Old Park School and this is being developed to support those children who have feeding difficulties or sensitivities around food. During training school staff raised the issue that healthy and unhealthy foods is taught within the science curriculum as well as within the PHSE curriculum.

Foods and food groups and the teaching of healthy and unhealthy food in the science curriculum has been considered and it has been agreed that we can't completely remove the idea that some foods have got a greater nutritional value than other foods, but it was recognised that all foods have a nutritional value. Also, the terms healthy and unhealthy are used widely in real life and it is not felt appropriate to completely remove these terms, but staff can be more aware of the sensitivities that some pupils – especially those with feeding disorders – can have towards those terms and negative connotations with specific foods and food groups – particularly if a child only eats one type of food item.

It is our aim to create a shift in the emphasis of the language used around teaching food, meals and food groups and the science of food. We hope to move away from food being categorised into healthy and unhealthy and look at food in a more scientific way. For example, posing questions about what the food looks like, how it feels, how it acts, what textures it has and the associated scientific language and vocabulary around such properties. This would support the science curriculum in encouraging all learners to think scientifically -pose and answer questions about food items as they explore a wide range and texture of food items – using a variety of senses. Also, as we have a high proportion of non-oral feeders in school that can only explore food items in non-oral ways including visual, tactile and olfactory ways, this would also be more inclusive for their learning opportunities. In this way, there will be a shift in emphasis away from whether food is healthy and or unhealthy towards the opinion that all foods have a nutritional value but more importantly within the science curriculum **all** foods have got a scientific value and investigative qualities.

Please can staff also be aware of sensitivities when teaching the concept of creating a balanced meal and balanced diet for a healthy lifestyle. For those pupils within our population, with paediatric food disorders and sensitivities, and who are working at a cognitive ability that enables to recognise and identify elements that make up a balanced meal, we could make the focus on identifying their current foods and working out what food group their current diet could fit into based on nutritional values. It was recognised that there would be a small number of such pupils in school.

M.Edmunds, Spring 2024