

Sylvia Young Theatre School



Healthy Eating Policy

Policy responsibility:	Maggie Melville
Updated or reviewed:	3rd September 2025 by MM and Annabel Kibble from our catering company
Reviewed by Peninsula:	14th October 2022
ISI Reference:	ISI Ref 17b
Reviewed annually:	

- Students' diet can affect both general health and the ability to learn.
- The number of overweight children has tripled in twenty years. In later life these children are at risk of heart disease, arthritis and type 2 diabetes.
- Evidence suggests that poor behaviour, concentration, attitudes and ability to learn can be improved by modifications in diet.

EVOLUTION:

If all life originated in a marine environment, where there was an abundance of omega-3 fatty acids, it should not be surprising that about two thirds of the brain is composed of fats and is particularly high in omega-3 fatty acids.

Meats (game), green leafy vegetables, and seasonal fruits and nuts are the staple hunter gatherer diet.

The diets of modern humans contain significantly lower amounts of omega-3 fats. Meat from farmed animals is very different to game. We have highly processed foods. Western diets are limited in fish, especially oily fish (an excellent source of omega-3 fats), and in fresh red and green fruits and vegetables.

Scientists believe omega-3 is the greatest known nutritional deficiency in modern day society. Suggestions are that this deficiency may have a bearing on behavioural and cognitive conditions, such as ADHD, dyslexia and dyspraxia.

Many children leave home in the morning without breakfast. Despite the fact that children who eat breakfast consume more calories, they are less likely to be overweight and show higher performance in problem solving, mathematical and creative tasks.

To offer a breakfast club is, therefore, advisable and to target non-breakfast eaters is desirable.

Good sources of iron in the diet include green leafy vegetables, lean meats (especially red meats), baked beans and lentils, dried fruits and fortified breakfast cereals. It is important to include a good source of Vitamin C with each meal in order to enhance iron absorption.

An iron-deficient student may have a significantly lower IQ.

We are advised to consume a minimum of at least five portions of fruit or vegetables a day.

Red and green fruits and vegetables are good sources of the antioxidant Vitamins A, C and E, which help protect the body against chemicals, known as "free radicals" which seriously damage body cells, including those of the brain.

Those who consume large quantities of fruits and vegetables are less likely to be overweight and suffer fewer incidences of cancer and heart disease.

The very high level of processed foods consumed in this country can contribute to problems with cognitive ability and behaviour. Chemical additions are used to colour, or flavour food, whose inferior ingredients enable them to be sold as cheap filling foods. Such products are often high in sugar and highly processed carbohydrates which are rapidly absorbed by the body and result in massive glucose “highs” and “lows” that affect the ability to concentrate.

Avoid: biscuits, sugary items, white bread, pasta and white rice.

Include: fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

The exclusion of fine additives results in significant improvement of ADHD symptoms.

They are: Tartrazine (E102)
 Sunset Yellow (E110)
 Carmoisine (E122)
 Ponceau 4R (E124)
 Sodium benzoate (E211)

They are used in sweets, cheap foods and fizzy drinks as dye.

Caffeine, found in tea, coffee and some carbonated drinks, can over-stimulate some individuals. Its exclusion can improve poor behaviour and concentration.

We are able to offer healthy eating assemblies through our caterers who provide a speaker who is an experienced nutritionist.

The nutritionist has had a look at our menus and at what is on offer in the cafeteria. Our goal is to offer healthy options.

She agreed that because our students have such a physically demanding programme on Thursdays and Fridays it is perfectly acceptable to offer certain foods, for example, croissants for breakfast and break.

Our menus have evolved over the years to reflect the students’ tastes, what they enjoy, balanced against the basic principle of offering a protein, carbohydrate, vegetables and minerals meal.

Her main message was that it’s important to eat regularly. The actual timings depend on the particular family and breakfast, even though it may be challenging for some of us, is a good way to start the day.

Nutritionists available through our caterers

Annabel Kibble is a Registered Nutritionist specialising in public health nutrition. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Nutrition.

As part of our regular training for staff and students we invite Sally Nash to run workshops.

Sally Nash is a qualified nutritional and wellbeing therapist with a foundation degree and diploma from the world-renowned Institute for Optimum Nutrition (ION) completed in 2010. Prior to that Sally's vocational experience has been based mainly in the entertainment industry, where she has been both a successful singer and actress. Sally has coached hundreds of people, including some of the UK's top executives on how to make simple changes to improve their health and energy. Sally has recently created for schools an engaging and interactive workshop that discusses the body's basic nutritional needs. The workshop aims to make the students aware of the food they eat and its effects on their minds and bodies. Her aim is to inspire a way of life that includes a balanced and nutritious diet without being judgemental of the odd indulgence.

Sally Nash - *Dip ION, FdSc, mBANT, CNHC* ‘

- Eat healthily to have lots of energy, feel well and look good
- Think of food as fuel to give you energy and to keep body and mind functioning well
- Don't focus on calories but on the good that a particular food will do you
- Eat three well-balanced meals a day including protein, fat and carbohydrates at every meal. We all need fat. It prevents skin from being dry and so on, keeps cell walls healthy. Having a balance of all three will provide the minerals we need too
- Eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day – try and find some fruit or vegetable for each letter of the alphabet and try and expand your choice of fruit and vegetables in your diet
- Fruit and vegetables belong to the carbohydrate group although there is some crossover – for example an avocado has fat in it which is very good for you
- Think of the digestive system as a long pipe starting at the mouth and ending! Carbohydrates provide the roughage which sweeps everything out, keeping everything clean and in good order
- Carbohydrates turn into glucose which in turn produces energy. Simple carbohydrates like white bread and other processed food will give a quick lift. It is much better to avoid these and eat carbohydrates that will provide a slow release of energy. Choose brown bread, brown rice and pasta made from unrefined flour
- Drink lots of water. If carbohydrates are the mop, water helps the clean-up process – a wet mop
- Milk, even low fat, is one of the best ways to repair tired muscles
- The fizz in fizzy drinks leaches calcium from bones
- Avoid sweeteners and added sugar. Choose natural sugars
- Enjoy experimenting with cooking
- Food is also something which is a part of special occasions, like birthdays and Christmas, Valentine's Day even. Food is an important part of our psychological well

being. If we're worried we might want to eat comfort foods or we might not feel like eating at all. It's important to have an understanding of this.

Lodestone House Food Philosophy

From September 2025 the name of our catering company is Lodestone House, formerly known as Chartwells Independent.

To add