



Healthy Eating Policy

Previous Review	September 2023
Current policy	August 2026
Next review	August 2028

Mission

The International School Ikast-Brande is a school committed to the happiness and sustainability of our community. Focused on excellent academics and developing individual skills and attributes we prepare students for the challenges of an ever-changing world.

Purpose

At International School Ikast-Brande (ISIB), we recognise that food and nutrition contribute to students' health, wellbeing, development, concentration and readiness to learn. We also recognise that eating is social, cultural and personal and that students' experiences of food may differ considerably.

As an international school, our community represents a wide range of cultures, traditions, religions and dietary practices. Our approach therefore aims to promote healthy and balanced choices while respecting cultural diversity, individual needs and family preferences.

The purpose of this policy is to establish a positive whole-school approach to food, nutrition, hydration and mealtimes.

The policy is informed by the Danish Official Dietary Guidelines (*De officielle Kostråd*) and relevant recommendations from the Danish food and health authorities.

Our Approach

ISIB promotes a **positive, balanced and inclusive approach to food**.

Rather than categorising individual foods as simply "good", "bad", "healthy" or "unhealthy", students are encouraged to understand that a balanced diet is based on the overall pattern and variety of foods eaten over time.

We aim to help students develop:

- an understanding of nutrition appropriate to their age;
- positive and sustainable eating habits;
- confidence in making informed food choices;
- an appreciation of different foods and food cultures;
- an understanding of the relationship between food, wellbeing and the environment;
- independence in preparing and managing their own food as they grow older; and
- a positive relationship with food and eating.

Food should not ordinarily be used as a reward, punishment or means of managing behaviour.

Dietary Guidance

Our approach reflects the principles of Denmark's Official Dietary Guidelines, which encourage people to:

- eat a varied and predominantly plant-rich diet;
- eat plenty of vegetables and fruit;
- eat less meat and include legumes and fish;
- choose wholegrain foods;
- choose vegetable oils and appropriate dairy products;
- limit foods particularly high in sugar, salt and saturated fat; and
- drink water when thirsty.

These principles provide guidance rather than a checklist for individual lunchboxes.

Food Brought to School

Students at ISIB bring food from home. Parents and carers are therefore important partners in supporting students to eat well during the school day.

We encourage lunchboxes to contain a variety of foods that provide sufficient energy and nutrition for the school day.

Depending upon the child's preferences, dietary requirements and cultural background, this might include:

- vegetables and/or fruit;
- wholegrain bread, rye bread, wraps, rice, pasta or other grain-based foods;
- legumes, hummus, eggs, fish, meat or other sources of protein;
- milk, yoghurt, cheese or suitable alternatives; and
- other culturally appropriate foods that contribute to a varied and balanced meal.

This list is illustrative rather than prescriptive. A nutritious lunch can look very different across the cultures represented within our school community.

Students should have sufficient food for the length of their school day and any after-school activities they attend.

Snacks and Foods High in Sugar, Saly or Saturated Fat

Foods such as sweets, chocolate, cakes, biscuits, crisps and similar snack foods can form part of a balanced diet, but should not make up a significant proportion of a student's food during the school day.

Parents are encouraged to provide everyday snacks which contribute positively to children's nutritional needs and provide sustained energy during the school day.

Energy and high sugar fizzy drinks are not permitted at school. Water should normally be the main drink during the school day.

The school does not routinely inspect lunchboxes; however, where food does not align with the policy, staff may remove it and will normally offer an appropriate alternative where available.

Where staff have an ongoing concern that a student regularly has insufficient food or that their food provision may be affecting their wellbeing, concentration or participation in school, this should be approached sensitively and discussed with the student and, where appropriate, their parents or carers.

The purpose of any such conversation is support rather than judgement.

Hydration

Students are encouraged to bring a reusable water bottle to school and should have reasonable access to drinking water throughout the school day.

Water is the preferred everyday drink.

Students may refill their water bottles at appropriate times without unnecessarily disrupting teaching and learning.

Mealtimes and Wellbeing

ISIB recognises that a positive mealtime involves more than the nutritional content of food.

Where practicable, students should:

- have sufficient time to eat;
- eat in an appropriate and calm environment;
- be encouraged to sit and eat with others;
- experience mealtimes as positive social occasions;
- be treated respectfully in relation to their food choices; and
- be encouraged to develop age-appropriate independence.

Staff should avoid commenting negatively on the quantity of food a student eats, a student's weight or body shape or describing a student's food in ways that may cause embarrassment. Students should similarly be taught to respect other people's food and eating choices.

International and Cultural Inclusion

Food is an important expression of culture, identity and family life.

ISIB welcomes the diversity of food represented within our international community. Students should not be made to feel that unfamiliar foods, smells, ingredients or ways of eating are strange or inappropriate simply because they differ from those of others.

The curriculum and wider school activities should provide opportunities for students to encounter and appreciate food traditions from different cultures.

Religious and cultural dietary requirements should be respected wherever reasonably possible.

Food Allergies and Medical Dietary Requirements

Food allergies can be serious and potentially life-threatening. Parents and carers must inform the school of diagnosed allergies or other medical dietary requirements and provide relevant medical information and medication where required.

The school will maintain appropriate information about students with known allergies and ensure relevant staff are aware of necessary precautions and emergency procedures.

Students must not share or exchange food where doing so could create an allergy or food-safety risk.

Through our curriculum, age-appropriate education will be provided so that students understand the importance of protecting classmates with food allergies without unnecessarily excluding or stigmatising them.

Where a student's medical needs require particular dietary arrangements, these take precedence over the general recommendations contained within this policy.

Individual and Additional Needs

The school recognises that some students may have additional needs affecting eating, including sensory preferences, developmental needs, disabilities or other circumstances which make eating a restricted range of foods necessary.

A flexible and supportive approach should be taken in these circumstances.

Where concerns arise about a student's eating, these should be referred through the school's usual pastoral procedures and discussed sensitively with parents or carers.

Food Education

Food and nutrition education forms part of our wider commitment to health and wellbeing.

Age-appropriate learning may take place through PSHE, Life Skills, Science and other areas of the curriculum and may include:

- nutrition and balanced diets;
- hydration;
- food preparation and hygiene;
- understanding food labels;
- sustainability and food waste;
- food production;
- cultural approaches to food;
- consumer awareness;
- independence and food preparation; and
- critically evaluating information about food and nutrition.

As students become older, education should increasingly focus on developing the knowledge and practical skills required to make independent choices.

Sustainability

Healthy eating and environmental responsibility are closely connected.

In accordance with the school's wider sustainability commitments, students and families are encouraged to:

- use reusable lunchboxes, bottles and containers;
- minimise unnecessary single-use packaging;
- consider plant-rich food choices;
- reduce avoidable food waste; and
- take uneaten food home where appropriate so that families can monitor consumption and minimise waste.

Students will increasingly take responsibility for these practices as they grow older.

Birthdays and Celebrations

Food can play an important part in celebrations and community life. ISIB therefore does not seek to remove treats from birthdays and special occasions. Birthday treats may be brought to school where arrangements have been agreed with the class teacher in advance.

Parents should contact the Homeroom Teacher before bringing food for a class so that allergies and dietary requirements can be considered.

Where food is shared, reasonable consideration should be given to students with allergies, medical dietary requirements, religious requirements or other significant dietary needs. Celebrations should remain occasional and proportionate.