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1. Statement of intent

At Wider Ambition, we acknowledge that what students eat and drink at school can influence their health and their lifelong attitudes to food. We aim to teach students about food and nutrition through the curriculum and reflect these principles in our cooking provisions.

We recognise the importance of students developing a healthy relationship with food, learning to listen to their own appetites and enjoy relaxed mealtimes, free from anxiety, guilt or judgement.

We acknowledge the important connection between a healthy diet and a student's ability to learn effectively and achieve their potential. We also acknowledge that we can play a key role in supporting the wider community to adopt a positive attitude to a healthy lifestyle.

Food at Wider Ambition will be prepared and provided in a safe and hygienic manner, and we will uphold the highest standards of quality, nutrition, and cleanliness.

2. About our policies

- 2.1. Our policies have been developed to comply with all relevant legislation and associated guidance. Policies will be updated periodically as necessary.
- 2.2. Our policies are inter-related and are intended to be read, understood and used collectively.
- 2.3. All staff and governors are expected to be familiar with and abide by our policies.

- 2.4. The School Administrator is responsible for ensuring volunteers and visitors are familiar with any policies which are relevant to their involvement and for taking reasonable steps to ensure compliance.
- 2.5. By accepting and maintaining a placement at a Wider Ambition setting, parents agree to support the ethos and policies. Parents are able to access these documents via the website, or by emailing the School Administrator.
- 2.6. The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring policies are implemented fairly, effectively, and consistently in each setting.
- 2.7. The Headteacher is responsible for identifying any training needs in relation to our policies. The School Administrator is responsible for arranging the required training. All staff are expected to engage in continuous learning and ongoing training appropriate to their roles.
- 2.8. The effectiveness of our policies and their implementation is monitored by the Governing Body. Unless otherwise stated, the Governing Body reviews each policy annually.
- 2.9. The Governing Bodies for Wider Ambition settings are provided by Governing for Ambition, an independent community interest company. The Governing Body uses its expertise to monitor the performance of each setting and to advise the Proprietor of any recommended actions. Responsibilities assigned to the Governing Body are limited to these advisory and accountability functions.
- 2.10. Wider Ambition Ltd is a subsidiary of Wider Plan Ltd. References to the Proprietor mean a Director of Wider Ambition or a senior representative from Wider Plan with delegated authority.
- 2.11. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) includes the Proprietor, Pastoral Lead, Headteacher(s), Deputy Head(s), Quality of Education and Professional Development Lead, Leadership Assistants and any member of staff to whom responsibility is temporarily delegated by the Proprietor or Head(s).
- 2.12. All references to parents within our policies should be interpreted to include parent carers. For older students, the extent to which parents are involved in the student's provision is decided in accordance with statutory requirements and the student's own preferences.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1. The Proprietor is responsible for:
 - 3.1.1. Providing free-to-use facilities to eat food, including accommodation, furniture, and supervision, so students can eat their food in a safe and social environment.
 - 3.1.2. Ensuring that drinking water is always available free of charge.

3.2. The Headteacher is responsible for:

- 3.2.1. Creating a whole-school ethos that supports a healthy relationship with food.
- 3.2.2. Completing the relevant risk assessments.

3.3. The School Administrator / Receptionist is responsible for:

- 3.3.1. Reviewing, updating and ensuring compliance with the Safer Food Better Business food safety management system.
- 3.3.2. Informing all staff of any changes to the Safer Food Better Business food safety management system.
- 3.3.3. Ensuring any external catering companies have an up-to-date food hygiene certificate.
- 3.3.4. Inspecting the kitchen to ensure facilities are appropriately maintained and clean.
- 3.3.5. Ensuring a cleaning schedule is maintained and reviewed on a yearly basis.

3.4. The cooking teacher is responsible for:

- 3.4.1. Conducting the appropriate checks to ensure safe food storage and handling.
- 3.4.2. Ensuring PPE provided is undamaged, free from tears, rips or burns, and that there is enough PPE for each person working in the kitchen.
- 3.4.3. Ensuring there is sufficient equipment for safe food preparation
- 3.4.4. Ensuring that there are sufficient handwashing and cleaning materials available.
- 3.4.5. Rotating stock to ensure food with a shorter shelf life is used and consumed before food with a longer shelf life.
- 3.4.6. Creating and maintaining an up-to-date list of allergens contained in the food routinely provided at the setting, displaying a copy of the list in the signing-in folder and sending the list to parents regularly.
- 3.4.7. Withdrawing stock that is about to go past its use by date or is not safe to eat, e.g., batches of food being reported as holding unsafe levels of harmful bacteria, food that is known to not have been stored correctly.

3.5. All staff are responsible for

- 3.5.1. Ensuring high standards of hygiene are always maintained around food.
- 3.5.2. Ensuring that they are not suffering from, or carrying, an illness or disease that could cause a problem with food safety when handling food.
- 3.5.3. Ensuring that they are familiar with and comply with the Safer Food Better Business food safety management system.
- 3.5.4. Monitoring the actions of students and other staff involved in food preparation and calling attention to any deviation from this policy or the processes recorded in the food safety management system.

4. Healthy Eating

- 4.1. Wider Ambition will encourage students to adopt healthy lifestyles, both through a nutritious diet and regular exercise, during social times, cooking lessons, outdoor education, and PSHE.
- 4.2. Wider Ambition will ensure students understand the core principles of healthy eating, for example: what constitutes a balanced diet, promoting fruit and vegetables, avoiding excessive consumption of sugar, salt, and fat, and understanding portion size.
- 4.3. Wider Ambition recognises that healthy eating includes having a healthy attitude to food, for example not feeling anxious about food or mealtimes, not feeling the need to eat any particular food for the purpose of pleasing someone else, being able to enjoy eating in company, and not feeling guilty about food which has been eaten or food which has been left. Wider Ambition will not use rewards, sanctions, praise or disapproval in relation to the foods that students choose to eat or avoid.
- 4.4. In some cases, it will be appropriate for Wider Ambition to prioritise creating an environment in which students are supported to develop a healthy attitude towards food, rather than prioritising the standard healthy eating messages.
- 4.5. Students who are masking or who feel the need to please others may feel under pressure to eat food which has been offered to them, which we appreciate can lead to increased anxiety and entrenched views towards certain foods. Wider Ambition aims to mitigate this risk by communicating to students that choosing to decline an offer is equally acceptable and by not responding more positively to students who take the offered food.
- 4.6. Wider Ambition recognises that parents will often have made carefully considered dietary choices with or on behalf of their children. If we have reasonable cause to believe that a student's diet is placing them at risk, we will discuss this with the parents in an appropriate manner. We aim to avoid students facing any negativity at Wider Ambition about their diet, including in relation to the content of packed lunches. We will not ban any food from packed lunches, except to the extent that the food is likely to be detrimental to the needs of other individuals (for example, due to allergies or sensitivity to strong smells).
- 4.7. At our full-time settings, a small selection of fruit, biscuits, breads, spreads and hot and cold drinks is provided and stored separately from ingredients required for teaching cooking. Students are encouraged to help themselves to these at any time without being required to ask permission. Staff will offer prompts and support to students to access snacks at break times, using these occasions as opportunities to help them develop life skills and social

skills, facilitating an increase in independence and enabling students to make a positive contribution to our community, for example by offering a drink to each other, supporting their self-esteem. Staff may occasionally prepare drinks or snacks for students, for example to support with re-regulation or to reduce demand in the moment, but our routine practice focusses on students being able to access refreshments independently. When packed lunches have been forgotten, staff offer to support students to prepare themselves some food from that provided for refreshments, e.g. a cheese sandwich. At Bramble Lodge, students are on-site for relatively short periods of time, so we provide access to drinks, but we do not generally provide snacks.

5. Food Education

- 5.1. Wider Ambition recognises that a healthy, balanced diet includes all food groups and that no one type of food is inherently good or bad. Care will be taken to ensure that students feel supported and comfortable to eat what is appropriate to their particular needs and circumstances.
- 5.2. Wider Ambition recognises that raised anxiety levels can have a negative impact on a student's appetite and the range of food they feel able to eat and that the food students eat while on site is done so in the context of a wider diet, the majority of which is not visible to Wider Ambition staff.
- 5.3. When working with students for whom food is or may become a source of anxiety, staff will adapt their approach to ensure that these anxieties are not compounded.
- 5.4. Planning will focus on simple meals and foods that students will benefit from being able to prepare quickly and easily when they move to independent living. Where students have demonstrated that they are competent to prepare a wide range of simple meals or where students are required to learn additional skills for a qualification, planning will be adapted to cover more complex dishes.
- 5.5. Staff will remain mindful of the fact that students may struggle with sensory aspects of eating and food preparation. Activities will be adapted to enable students to participate without being required to handle or taste food where appropriate.
- 5.6. Cooking sessions will be planned carefully to avoid using ingredients that will create strong cooking odours wherever possible. On the rare occasion that the preparation of foods that will produce strong odours is necessary to cover a particular skill, cooking sessions will be managed in such a way as to reduce any negative impact on students, either in the room, who may be using the room immediately afterward, or in other areas of the building.

- 5.7. Cooking sessions will be planned taking into account the preferences of participating students to a reasonable extent, e.g. offering vegetarian options, to maximise the likelihood of students feeling able to participate in cooking, gaining knowledge, and enjoying eating or sharing the food they have prepared. Where the food being prepared is not to a student's taste, they will be encouraged to take it home to share with family or friends or to share it with other members of the Wider Ambition community.
- 5.8. We will aim for cookery sessions, when considered across a reasonable period of time:
- 5.8.1. to cover both savoury and sweet recipes
 - 5.8.2. to provide a no-pressure opportunity for students to try unfamiliar foods if they wish to
 - 5.8.3. to reflect our healthy eating ethos

Where cookery lessons result in a meal being provided to students, care will be taken to ensure the meal reflects our healthy eating ethos (healthy attitude and/or healthy food, as applicable) as detailed above.

- 5.9. Wider Ambition aims for cookery sessions to provide our students with a range of life skills. Cookery sessions will be planned to involve students fully, from setting out ingredients and equipment to loading the dishwasher and wiping down surfaces, and staff will encourage students to complete each stage as independently as they are able.
- 5.10. Recipes for cooking sessions will be identified and adapted as necessary in line with the Wider Ambition planning cycle and copies will be sent to parents/student at the end of the half-term prior to delivery. Students in the same year group or teaching group will generally all follow the same recipes, adapted where necessary, e.g. to allow for a food intolerance.
- 5.11. Where it is necessary to avoid certain ingredients due to a severe intolerance or allergy, planning will focus on recipes that are naturally free of those ingredients. This will enable all students in the group to follow the same recipe and avoids the use of a substitute ingredient resulting in a change to the taste or texture of familiar dishes.

6. Purchasing Food

- 6.1. Wider Ambition will use reputable suppliers to source produce.
- 6.2. All food products and ingredients purchased by Wider Ambition are checked for acceptability, i.e., genetically modified organism labelling and allergen ingredients.
- 6.3. All meat purchased will be sourced from suppliers who maintain high standards of animal welfare and sustainability, opting for free-range wherever possible.

- 6.4. Any fish products used will be sourced from suppliers who promote sustainable fishing.
- 6.5. Where possible own brand labels will be selected so that students are not introduced to more expensive versions of foods provided at home and put pressure on parents to change what is provided for the family.
- 6.6. Quantities purchased will be sufficient for use in any sessions planned in that half-term. Food will not be bought and stored in case it is needed in the future.

7. Storage

- 7.1. At least once each school day, the following checks will be conducted:
 - 7.1.1. All fridges and freezers are working properly, and fridges are running below 5°C, and freezers at -18°C.
 - 7.1.2. There are plenty of handwashing and cleaning materials available.
- 7.2. At the end of each school day, the following checks will be conducted:
 - 7.2.1. No food has been left out.
 - 7.2.2. Meat, fish, and dairy products that will be past their 'use by' date by the next school day have been thrown away.
- 7.3. The accuracy of thermometers is checked termly using a boiling water test.
- 7.4. All food is stored in line with manufacturers' instructions.
- 7.5. Where food packaging has been opened and will not all be used in the session, it will be resealed or the food will be stored in resealable containers and they will be labelled with the date of opening.
- 7.6. Food in fridges is stored in line with site-specific refrigeration guides.
- 7.7. Any food stored in the fridge will be sealed or covered to prevent cross-contamination.
- 7.8. Food which requires refrigeration will be left out of the fridge for the shortest time possible and not long enough to reach room temperature.
- 7.9. Cooked food that requires refrigeration will be split into small portions where possible and cooled in covered containers until it has reached room temperature, at which point it will be moved to a refrigerator. Students will be supported to ensure that food they have cooked is stored at a safe temperature while they remain onsite.

- 7.10. Instructions for storing and reheating food prepared in cooking sessions will be included in the email used to inform parents/students of planned cooking activities.
- 7.11. Frozen food will be defrosted in the fridge wherever possible and kept on a metal baking tray to maximise heat transfer and catch run-off. Food that is defrosted outside the fridge and would usually require refrigeration will be monitored sufficiently to ensure that it does not exceed 4°C.
- 7.12. Frozen food which has defrosted will not be refrozen.
- 7.13. In the event of a supplier recalling produce due to reports of harmful levels of bacteria in stock, staff will remove all traces of the product and ensure the Headteacher is notified. The Headteacher will notify parents of the recall if there is a risk that students have consumed the food item concerned.
- 7.14. Individual risk assessments are carried out for the storage of food for students with severe allergies.
- 7.15. Where appropriate, outer packaging is removed when food arrives, and surfaces sanitised immediately afterwards.
- 7.16. All food storage will be kept tidy and arranged logically so that students are able to select the ingredients they need easily.
- 7.17. In order to minimise the quantity of food stored onsite, surplus food not required again during that half term will be disposed of appropriately at the end of each week.

8. Food Handling and Preparation

- 8.1. Staff will not smoke, drink, eat or chew gum while handling food.
- 8.2. Any cuts or sores on hands will be covered with a blue waterproof plaster.
- 8.3. Fabric aprons will be worn by staff and students when preparing food – these will be clean and free from tears, burns or holes. Aprons will be machine washed after each use.
- 8.4. Disposable aprons are available for use if preferred.
- 8.5. When handling food, staff and students will have high standards of personal hygiene, including washing hands in the following circumstances:
 - 8.5.1. Before and immediately after handling raw meat
 - 8.5.2. Before and after preparing and cooking other food products

8.5.3. After touching objects that are likely to cause cross contamination, e.g. door handles, light switches, or phones.

8.5.4. After coughing or sneezing.

8.6. Food will be handled with utensils, rather than hands wherever possible and reasonable.

8.7. Staff and students will tie back long hair when handling food.

8.8. Coats will be removed and kept outside the kitchen by anyone preparing food.

8.9. Food preparation will not be carried out while wearing clothing that is dirty.

8.10. Students who are preparing food will be supervised by a member of staff who will demonstrate how to use equipment safely and hygienically.

8.11. Clean tea cloths and silicone oven mitts will be available for students who are handling hot food, drinks, or equipment. These are washed after each use.

8.12. Food is cooked until its core temperature has reached at least 75°C and remains above that temperature for two minutes to minimise the risk of harmful bacteria being present in food.

8.13. Colour-coded chopping boards will be used for food preparation. Wider Ambition uses the following system:

| Colour of Chopping Board | Food Group |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Red | Raw meat and fish |
| Green | Salads, vegetables and fruit |
| Grey | Cooked meat |
| White | Dairy and bread |

8.14. Utensils, crockery, and cutlery are cleaned in a dishwasher after use and stored in clean cupboards and drawers.

8.15. Food to be provided to anyone with a food allergy or intolerance will be prepared first where this is necessary to avoid cross contamination.

8.16. Individual risk assessments will be created for the handling of food for and teaching cooking to students with severe allergies/intolerances, e.g. coeliac disease. This will be informed by the mitigation measures taken in the family home of the students involved.

8.17. If someone becomes unwell while handling food, any food they have handled and may be contaminated will be thrown away.

- 8.18. Students are welcome to bring cold packed lunches, ready meals, or food from home for safe re-heating at the setting. Where food which has been brought in from home needs re-heating, staff will offer help or otherwise facilitate the food being made available at a suitable time.

9. Food Consumption

- 9.1. Students will be reminded not to run when they are eating.
- 9.2. Drinking water is available from clearly labelled taps which students can access at any time and other drinks will be available to students at appropriate times.
- 9.3. Hot drinks will be served in suitable containers.
- 9.4. Lunch times at Wider Ambition form part of the social and life skills curriculum and learning is supported by a small cohort of staff eating their lunch alongside students.

10. Cleaning

- 10.1. It is the responsibility of all staff to maintain a clean and tidy kitchen. Daily kitchen cleaning is the responsibility of the cleaner.
- 10.2. Cloth types are used for specific tasks:

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| White reusable cloths | Washing up |
| Tea towels | Holding hot items |
| Paper towels | Drying hands Drying food Wiping dishes before serving Wiping surfaces Mopping up spillages on surfaces Wiping and mopping up spillages on floors |
| Blue microfibre cloths | Wiping surfaces Mopping up spillages on surfaces |
| Red microfibre cloths | Wiping and mopping up spillages on floors |

- 10.3. Cloths are placed in the laundry hamper or washing machine after use to prevent them being used again accidentally.
- 10.4. The kitchen sink and work surfaces will be cleaned with hot soapy water, rinsed, and sanitised before, during, and after food preparation.

- 10.5. Water used for wiping down surfaces will be drained away immediately after use.
- 10.6. All items used for food storage, preparation and serving that are dishwasher safe will be washed in the dishwasher after each use. After washing, any items that are wet will be allowed to dry on the kitchen drainer or dried with clean paper towels.
- 10.7. Any items that cannot be cleaned in the dishwasher will be washed by hand in clean, hot, soapy water and the water drained away immediately after use.
- 10.8. Hand washed items will be allowed to dry on the kitchen drainer or dried with clean paper towels.
- 10.9. A cleaning schedule will be maintained and stored on Office 365.
- 10.10. Cleaning cloths, dish cloths, aprons and tea towels are washed at the end of the day on which they have been used, at 60°C using the steam setting, and stored in clean drawers.

11. Training

- 11.1. Staff will receive food hygiene training as part of their induction and undertake regular refresher courses.
- 11.2. Wider Ambition recognises the importance of food hygiene and will accommodate any member of staff who wishes to complete an official food hygiene certificate as part of their CPD, where appropriate.