



ELAN Catering Operations: In-house Catering Policy

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1.0	July 2026	Estates Manager (Lead)	New Catering Operations: In-house Catering Policy. Catering Policy separated into two catering operations policies; 'In-house Catering Policy' and 'Food Allergen Management Policy' to align with new legislative requirements effective from 1 Sept 2026.

Contents

1.0	Introduction	4
2.0	Purpose	4
3.0	Scope	4
4.0	Principles	5
5.0	Organisation and Responsibilities	5
5.1	Board of Trustees	5
5.2	Chief Executive Officer	5
5.3	Trust Estates Manager	5
5.4	Catering Operations Manager	5
5.6	Headteachers	6
5.7	Chef Managers	6
5.8	Catering staff	6
6.0	Free school meals	6
7.0	Meal Pricing and Service Sustainability	6
8.0	Healthy Eating and Food Standards	7
9.0	Menus	7
10.0	Water Provision	7
11.0	Packed Lunches	7
12.0	Service Delivery	8
13.0	Procurement and Sustainability	8
14.0	Food Safety Management	8
15.0	Training and Competence	8
16.0	First Aid	9
17.0	Fire Safety	9
18.0	Kitchen Premises and Compliance	9
19.0	Monitoring and Quality Assurance	10
20.0	Policy Review	10
21.0	Related or Associated Policies	10

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Extend Learning Academies Network (ELAN) is committed to providing a high-quality, sustainable, nutritious and safe in-house catering service for pupils, staff and visitors.
- 1.2 The catering service is managed directly by ELAN Estates Services and supports the Trust's vision of promoting pupil wellbeing, educational achievement and positive dining experiences through the provision of healthy and balanced meals.
- 1.3 The Trust recognises that access to nutritious food contributes to health, learning, concentration, behaviour and overall educational outcomes. The in-house model enables ELAN to maintain direct oversight of food quality, service standards, operational efficiency, sustainability and value for money.
- 1.4 The Trust will ensure that all catering operations comply with relevant food safety legislation, School Food Standards and health and safety requirements.

2.0 Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to:
 - define the arrangements for the delivery of ELAN's in-house catering service
 - establish clear responsibilities for all individuals involved in catering operations
 - ensure the provision of safe, nutritious and high-quality meals
 - promote healthy eating and positive food choices
 - ensure compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements
 - support efficient and financially sustainable catering operations.
 - promote continuous improvement in food quality and customer satisfaction.

3.0 Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to:
 - All ELAN schools
 - All catering staff employed by ELAN
 - Headteachers and school leaders
 - Visitors and contractors working within catering facilities
 - Any individual authorised to use ELAN kitchen facilities
- 3.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with:
 - ELAN Catering Operations - Food Allergen Management
 - ELAN Health and Safety Policy

- ELAN Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs and First Aid Policy.
- ELAN Food Safety Management Procedures.

4.0 Principles

4.1 ELAN is committed to ensuring that:

- food provided is nutritious, balanced and appealing
- menus comply with School Food Standards
- food is prepared, stored and served safely
- catering facilities remain safe and compliant.
- Environmental sustainability is considered in procurement and service delivery.
- The dining experience is inclusive, welcoming and enjoyable.
- Catering operations represent value for money and support long-term financial sustainability.

5.0 Organisation and Responsibilities

5.1 Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- approving this policy
- maintaining strategic oversight of catering provision
- receiving assurance that the Trust's catering service operates safely and effectively.

5.2 Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for:

- ensuring systems and resources are available to implement this policy
- ensuring sufficient staffing and facilities exist to deliver the service
- ensuring recommendations arising from audits, inspections and legislative changes are acted upon

5.3 Estates Manager (Lead)

The Estates Manager (Lead) is responsible for:

- strategic oversight of catering services
- policy development and review
- ensuring appropriate resources are available
- supporting service improvement and compliance activities.

5.4 Catering Operations Manager

The Catering Operations Manager is responsible for:

- operational leadership of the catering service
- management of catering employees
- menu development and nutritional compliance
- Food safety management systems
- supplier approval and procurement standards

- staff training and development
- quality assurance and service improvement
- liaison with schools and external agencies.

5.6 **Headteachers**

Headteachers are responsible for:

- supporting the successful delivery of catering services within their school
- providing suitable dining facilities
- ensuring adequate lunchtime supervision
- supporting initiatives to increase meal uptake
- promoting healthy eating.

Maintaining arrangements for packed lunches and food provision outside the catering service.

5.7 **Chef Managers**

Chef Managers are responsible for:

- day-to-day management of kitchen operations
- maintaining food safety standards
- supervising catering staff
- record keeping and compliance monitoring
- managing food production and service delivery

5.8 **Catering staff**

Catering staff are responsible for:

- following all catering procedures and instructions maintaining personal hygiene standards
- completing required training
- producing and serving food safely
- reporting defects, hazards or concerns
- supporting a positive dining experience for pupils.

6.0 **Free school meals**

6.1 ELAN schools will provide free school meals in accordance with statutory eligibility criteria.

6.2 All pupils entitled to Universal Infant Free School Meals shall be offered access to a balanced school lunch each day.

6.3 The Trust will encourage uptake of free school meal entitlement to maximise support for eligible pupils and families.

7.0 **Meal Pricing and Service Sustainability**

7.1 Meal prices shall be reviewed annually.

7.2 The Trust aims to ensure that pricing remains affordable while supporting a financially sustainable service.

7.3 Schools and catering teams will work collaboratively to promote school meal uptake and maintain viable catering operations.

8.0 Healthy Eating and Food Standards

8.1 ELAN supports healthy lifestyles through the promotion of balanced nutrition.

8.2 Catering provision shall:

- comply with School Food Standards
- provide healthy and varied menu choices
- offer fruit and vegetables daily
- encourage healthy eating habits
- consider cultural and dietary preferences where reasonably practicable.

8.3 The Trust will provide hot meals wherever possible to ensure pupils have access to a nutritious meal during the school day.

9.0 Menus

9.1 Menus shall:

- be developed by the Catering Operations Manager
- meet Government nutritional requirements
- provide balanced and varied meal choices
- take account of pupil feedback
- reflect local preferences where possible.

10.0 Water Provision

10.1 All ELAN schools will ensure pupils have access to clean drinking water throughout the school day.

10.2 The Trust supports a 'water-only' approach to drinks brought into school unless medical requirements necessitate alternatives.

10.3 Schools shall establish local procedures for managing water bottle use.

11.0 Packed Lunches

11.1 Schools shall provide suitable facilities and supervision for pupils consuming packed lunches.

11.2 Parents and carers will be encouraged to provide healthy, balanced lunches which support children's health and wellbeing.

- 11.3 Schools may issue guidance to families regarding healthy packed lunch expectations.

12.0 Service Delivery

- 12.1 Schools shall provide suitable dining environments which enable the safe and efficient service of meals.
- 12.2 Food shall be transported and served in accordance with food safety requirements, including temperature control procedures.
- 12.3 The Trust will seek to provide an enjoyable and efficient dining experience for all pupils.

13.0 Procurement and Sustainability

- 13.1 ELAN aims to purchase food and services responsibly.

Where reasonably practicable:

- locally sourced products will be used
- seasonal produce will be promoted
- ethical sourcing will be encouraged
- environmentally sustainable suppliers will be favoured
- single-use plastics will be reduced
- products containing undesirable additives or artificial trans fats will be avoided.

- 13.1 The Trust will continually review purchasing arrangements to support sustainability objectives.

14.0 Food Safety Management

- 14.1 ELAN operates a comprehensive Food Safety Management System based upon the principles of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP).

- 14.2 The system includes:

- HACCP procedures
- daily operational records.
- cleaning schedules.
- temperature monitoring.
- staff training programmes.
- food safety audits.
- monitoring and inspection arrangements.

- 14.3 The Trust shall comply with all relevant food safety legislation and guidance.

15.0 Training and Competence

- 15.1 All catering staff shall receive training appropriate to their role.

15.2 Mandatory training may include:

- Food Hygiene HACCP
- Health and Safety
- COSHH
- Manual Handling
- E. coli Control Measures
- Safe Systems of Work.

15.3 Training records shall be maintained and monitored by the Catering Operations Manager.

16.0 First Aid

16.1 Appropriate first aid arrangements shall be available within catering operations.

16.2 Accidents and incidents must be reported and recorded in accordance with Trust procedures.

16.3 First aid provision shall be reviewed periodically to ensure adequacy

17.0 Fire Safety

17.1 All catering staff shall comply with site-specific fire safety procedures.

17.2 Schools shall ensure catering staff are:

- included in fire evacuation planning informed of emergency routes and procedures.
- included in relevant fire safety training and drills
- kitchen shut-down arrangements shall be documented and communicated.

18.0 Kitchen Premises and Compliance

18.1 The Trust will maintain catering facilities to appropriate legal and operational standards.

18.2 This includes:

- Gas safety inspections
- Electrical testing and inspections
- Ventilation system maintenance
- Equipment servicing
- Pest management arrangements.

18.3 Compliance records shall be retained and monitored through Trust systems.

19.0 Monitoring and Quality Assurance

19.1 The Catering Operations Manager will undertake regular monitoring through:

- kitchen inspections food safety audits.
- review of operational records.
- customer feedback
- service performance reviews
- external inspection outcomes

19.2 Findings will be used to drive continuous improvement across the catering service.

20.0 Policy Review

20.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner where:

- legislation changes
- regulatory guidance changes
- significant operational changes occur
- monitoring identifies the need for revision

20.2 The Catering Operations Manager is responsible for coordinating review and consultation activities.

21.0 Related or Associated Policies

Signpost	Document Title	Responsibility
Policy	ELAN Health & Safety Statement and Policy	Estates Manager
	ELAN Catering Operations - Food Allergen Management	Estates Manager
	ELAN Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs and First Aid Policy	Estates Manager/Headteachers
Supporting documents / procedures	Food Safety Management Procedures	Catering Operations Manager
	School Food Standards Guidance	DfE
	School Packed Lunch Guidance	School Food Matters