

Healthy Packed Lunch Policy



Healthy Packed Lunch Policy *Draft for Consultation*

1. Introduction

What children eat at school is important and school lunches have to meet strict standards to provide 1/3 of a child's nutrient requirements. Research from the Food Standards Agency (School Lunchbox Survey, 2004) and later research by the School Food Trust has shown that the majority of lunchboxes surveyed were high in fat, sugar and salt. Our school has packed lunches for every child whether brought from home or provided by an external agency and so this is an important element of our overall healthy eating teaching and learning throughout the school.

2. Aim

This policy has been drawn up in consultation with parents, pupils and staff with the following aims:

- To improve the nutritional quality of packed lunches and other foods taken into schools.
- To ensure that all packed lunches brought from home and consumed in school (or on school trips) provide the child with healthy food that is similar in its nutritional value to food served in schools.
- To make a positive contribution to children's health by encouraging healthy eating habits in childhood setting a trend for lifelong changes.
- To contribute to the self-evaluation for review by Ofsted.

This policy applies to all pupils and parents providing packed lunches and other foods to be consumed within school or on school trips during normal school hours. This packed lunch policy fits within a wider context of promoting a whole school approach to food and healthy eating.

3. The policy

- The school will work with the pupils to provide attractive and appropriate dining room arrangements.
- The school will work with parents to ensure that packed lunches abide by the standards listed below.
- The school will ensure that free, fresh drinking water is readily available at all times.
- Glass bottles and tins are not permitted due to safety issues that could arise.
- All uneaten food and waste will be kept in the lunchbox and returned home with the child so that parents are able to monitor their child's food consumption

Healthy Packed Lunch Policy

4. Food contained in a packed lunch

Packed lunches should include the following every day:

- **Fruit and Vegetables** - at least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables or salad.
- **Non-dairy source of protein** - meat, fish, egg, beans or pulses such as lentils, kidney beans, chickpeas, hummus and falafel.
- **A starchy food** like bread, pasta, rice, couscous, noodles, potatoes or other type of cereals.
- **Dairy foods** such as milk, cheese, yoghurt, fromage frais
- **Drinks** - the school provides water but there could be provided healthier drinks, such as water, 100% pure fruit juice, semi-skimmed or skimmed milk, yoghurt or milk drinks and smoothies.

To keep packed lunches in line with the food based standards for school meals, packed lunches should try **not to** include:

- High fat, high salt, high sugar snacks such as crisps, sweet popcorn, other high fat / salt packet savoury snacks such as crisps.
- Confectionery such as chocolate bars, chocolate-coated biscuits, sweets and chewing gum.
- Chocolate spread, honey, jam or marmalade as a sandwich filling.
- Fizzy / sugary drinks or fruit flavoured squash. This includes diet drinks and energy drinks which can contain high levels of caffeine and other additives and are not suitable for children.

Occasionally, the following may be included:

- Meat products such as sausage rolls, individual pies, corned meat and sausages / chipolatas should be included only occasionally due to their high fat and salt content.
- Cakes, crisps and plain biscuits are allowed but children should be encouraged to eat these only as part of a balanced meal.

Special diets and allergies

The school also recognises that some pupils may require special diets that do not allow for the standards to be met exactly. In this case parents are urged to be responsible in ensuring that packed lunches are as healthy as possible.

We occasionally ask parents to exclude certain foods containing key allergens from their children's lunchboxes. This is due to the fact that there are children with potentially severe nut / peanut allergies. For this reason we also encourage children not to share food, and also encourage simple precautions such as throwing rubbish in a bin, washing hands before and after eating and keeping tables free of debris.

Healthy Packed Lunch Policy

5. Health and safety

It is the responsibility of the parents / carers to provide an appropriate packed lunch container where food items can be stored securely and appropriately until the lunchtime period. Parents are advised to include an ice pack. Food products prepared and stored in ambient temperatures after a period of time can have increased levels of bacteria in them.

Storage of Packed Lunches

The school will provide storage area / facilities for packed lunch bags, in the most convenient and appropriate place possible. However the school cannot provide cooled storage areas and therefore cannot take legal responsibility for foods prepared at home and then brought into school.

6. Assessment, evaluation and reviewing:

- Packed lunches will be regularly reviewed by teaching staff and midday meal supervisors.
- Parents and pupils who do not adhere to the Packed Lunch Policy will be informed if particularly unhealthy items are confiscated, that they will be returned to the child at the end of the day with a note to the parent.
- Pupils with special diet or food allergies will be given due consideration.

7. Dissemination of the policy

- The policy will be available at the school and will be incorporated into the school website and handbooks.
- The school will use opportunities such as parents evenings to promote this policy as part of the whole school approach to healthier eating.
- All school staff, including teaching and catering staff as well as the school nurse will be informed of this policy and will support its implementation.

8. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed as part of the schools agreed policy review process. In addition any major legislative or governmental changes regarding school food may lead to this policy being amended.

May 2009