

Healthy packed lunch policy.

Current situation:

Packed lunches can make up almost a third of a child's weekly food intake.

The content of some children's lunchboxes in our school is extremely unhealthy. Many packed lunches contain foods with high levels of fat, sugar and salt, and very few fruit and vegetables. Many of the lunchboxes do contain healthy items, but there are still too many that contain foods which are high in fat and salt content, especially processed type snacks and chocolate coated products such as cakes and biscuits.

Aim:

To ensure that all packed lunches brought from home and consumed in school (or on school trips) provide the pupil with healthy and nutritious food that is of a similar standard to food served in schools, which is regulated by national standards.

Objectives:

- To promote consistency between packed lunches and food provided by school, which must adhere to national standards set by the government. Please visit <http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/> for more information.
- To positively promote the health and well-being of our pupils. Work around healthy eating is a high priority of our school and is incorporated across the curriculum.
- To encourage healthy eating habits from an early age and improve the overall nutrition of pupils
- To help parents and children to understand that the short term effects of unhealthy packed lunches and food intake can include poor growth, tooth decay, obesity, anaemia, constipation, poor concentration and behavioural problems which may have an impact on a child's learning. Also, that the longer term effects of a poor diet in childhood can be an increased risk of stroke, cancer, heart disease and diabetes in adulthood.
- To reinforce our Rights Respecting work. The UNCRC Article 6 states that 'Governments should ensure that children develop healthily' and also Article 24 'Children have the right to clean water and nutritious food'

Advice:

The School Food Trust (SFT) provides regulations for healthy school meals and packed lunches and this recommends that foods from the high fat and /or sugar group on the Eatwell Plate (eg. crisps and chocolates) should not be included in a packed lunch. This advice is based on the 'School food in England' (January 2015) document which provides the links to the legislation. The following website also provides useful advice.

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/childhealth6-15/Pages/Lighterlunchboxes.aspx>

Foods to include:

- at least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables every day.
- meat, fish or other source of non-dairy protein (e.g. lentils, kidney beans, chickpeas, hummus)
- oily fish, such as salmon or tuna, at least once every three weeks.
- a starchy food such as any type of bread, pasta, rice, couscous, noodles, potatoes or other type of cereals every day.
- dairy food such as milk, cheese, yoghurt, fromage frais or custard everyday
- plain water, fruit juice, semi-skimmed or skimmed milk, yoghurt or milk drinks and smoothies.

Foods to limit or preferably avoid:

Meat products such as sausage rolls, individual pies, corned meat and sausages. These items should be included in packed lunches no more than twice per week.

Packed lunches should not include:

- snacks such as crisps. Instead, include seeds, vegetables and fruit (with no added salt, sugar or fat). Savoury crackers or breadsticks served with fruit, vegetables or dairy food are also a good choice. If you must include crisps low fat is better.
- confectionery such as chocolate bars, chocolate-coated biscuits and sweets. Cakes and biscuits are allowed but encourage your child to eat these only as part of a balanced meal.
- fizzy drinks

We understand that for many children it will be a big step for them to stop eating the foods in the **should not include** section. We hope that by working with you, and by us educating the children, that they will learn to appreciate other foods.

Special diets and allergies

The school 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. For these reasons pupils are also not permitted to swap food items.

Advice for parents

A healthier lunchbox should:

- be based on [starchy carbohydrates](#) (bread, potatoes, rice, pasta)
- include fresh fruit and vegetables/salad
- include a source of protein such as [beans and pulses](#), eggs, fish, meat, cheese (or dairy alternative)
- include a side dish such as a low-fat and lower-sugar yoghurt (or dairy alternative), tea cake, fruit bread, plain rice/corn cakes, homemade plain popcorn, sugar-free jelly
- include a drink such as water, skimmed or semi-skimmed milk, sugar-free or no-added-sugar drinks

The [Eatwell Guide](#) shows you how to have a healthy balanced diet and can help you decide what to put in your child's lunchbox.

Find healthy lunchbox ideas at [Change4Life](#).

It may take a while for your child to get used to a healthier lunchbox but keep trying. These tips may help:

- Get your children involved in preparing and choosing what goes in their lunchbox. They're more likely to eat it if they helped prepare it.
- Get ideas on [how to introduce more fruit and veg into your family's diet](#).
- Read supermarket [food labels](#) to help you buy healthier foods for your child's lunch and family mealtimes.

Equal Opportunities

All pupils shall be given equal opportunities irrespective of race, religion or belief, culture, gender, academic ability, disability, family circumstances or socioeconomic background, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity or class. Where appropriate, the curriculum will be modified to ensure equal access for all pupils. Please read the Equal Opportunities policy for more information.

Involvement of parents/carers

Parents have been invited, from time to time, to help to write this policy.

Parents of pupils wishing to have packed lunches are expected to provide their children with packed lunches which conform to the packed lunch policy. Parents always have the right to take children home for lunch.