



Discovery Federation

Packed Lunch Policy

Updated: September 2021

Introduction

To grow and stay healthy children need to eat a nutritionally well-balanced diet. Schools are an influential setting and can contribute significantly to improving the health and well-being of pupils.

Good nutrition in childhood can help to prevent a variety of health problems, both in the short term and later in life. There is increasing concern that many children are consuming too much fat, sugar and salt and too little fibre, fruit and vegetables.

Packed lunches can contribute to almost a third of a child's weekly food intake and therefore need to be balanced and nutritious.

Aim

To make sure that children who bring a lunch from home to eat in school (or on school trips) reflect the standards for school meals introduced in 2006 and therefore include food which is just as healthy and nutritious as the food served in school.

Rationale

- Schools are required to positively promote the health and well-being of its pupils. Work around healthy eating is a high priority of the Every Child Matters agenda.
- The content of lunchboxes needs to reflect the requirement of schools to meet minimum food and nutrition standards for school meals.
- The contents of lunchboxes in some schools can be extremely unhealthy, recent audits of lunchboxes have shown that in the main they contain foods with high levels of fat, sugar and salt, and very few fruit and vegetables.
- To encourage healthy eating habits from an early age and improve the overall nutrition of pupils
- 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.
- The longer-term effects of a poor diet in childhood can be an increased risk of stroke, cancer, heart disease and diabetes in adulthood.

Objectives of the policy:

- To improve the nutritional quality of packed lunches in schools and the eating habits of children at lunchtimes
- To develop an awareness in pupils, parents, staff and the wider community that the school takes a pro-active approach to promoting healthy eating.
- To encourage healthy eating habits in childhood that can influence health and well-being in later life.
- To ensure that food brought into school (packed lunches) reflects and meets food standards for School Food (2006).

Why do we need a policy?

The government has placed a duty on schools to ensure that every child is healthy and has invested hugely in improved school meals, free fruit for schools and The School Food Trust which encourages healthy eating. The trust recommends we have a policy and this one is based on their model. Eating healthily is important because it will help children to:

- Be fitter and healthier now and later in life.
- Learn quicker and behave better.

Implementation & Guidance

This packed lunch policy fits within a wider context of promoting a whole school approach to food and healthy eating. Children's packed lunches should be based on the 'Eatwell Guide' model which shows items the 5 main food groups; (Food Standards Agency).

- **Bread, Rice, Potatoes, Pasta**
These starchy foods are a healthy source of energy. Packed lunches should include 2 or more portions.

- **Fruit and Vegetables**

These foods provide vitamins, minerals and fibre. Lunches should include at least 1 portion of fruit and 1 portion of vegetables / salad, or more.

- **Milk and Dairy foods**

These foods provide calcium for healthy bones and teeth. Include 1 portion at lunch

- **Meat, Fish, Eggs, Beans**

These foods provide protein for growth. Packed lunches should include 1 portion of these foods

- **Foods and drinks high in fat and / or sugar**

It is important not to fill up on too many foods that are high in fat and / or sugar at the expense of other more nutritious foods. Limiting high fat and sugar foods will help protect young people from becoming overweight as well as helping prevent tooth decay, heart disease, stroke, and diabetes. To ensure consistency and to keep packed lunches in line with food standards for school meals, packed lunches **should not** contain the following:

- Fizzy / sugary drinks in cartons, bottles or cans
- Chocolate-coated products / sweets / confectionary
- Cereal bars, fruit bars
- Chocolate spread as a filling for sandwiches
- Chewing gum
- Sugared / toffee and salted popcorn
- Crisps or any packet savoury snacks high in salt and fat. One packet of baked crisps are allowed.
- **NO nut-based products** should be included in your child's packed lunch as we have children in school with severe nut allergies. This includes nuts, popcorn, chocolate spread and any other product specifically containing nuts.

- **Drinks** – any drinks provided in lunch boxes **should only** include either plain water, milk (semi-skimmed), unsweetened fresh fruit juice, diluted fresh fruit juice, fruit or dairy based smoothies.

There is no reason why a packed lunch cannot provide the same nutrition as a cooked meal. Additional information is available with ideas and examples of foods that can be included in packed lunches at [Healthy packed lunches - British Nutrition Foundation - Page #1](#).

Limited foods which may be included

As part of creating a healthy ethos within the school and promoting the idea of a balanced diet and a healthy lunch box, **please limit the items below to just ONE per day.**

1. A small plain cake

OR

2. A pastry item, e.g. a brioche or a sausage roll

Following consultation with the School Council, a small chocolate-based item may be included in packed lunches on a **Friday ONLY**.

Special diets

The school also recognises that some pupils may have verified medical conditions which will need to be brought to the attention of the Headteacher. They may require special diets that do not allow for the standards to be met exactly. Pupils on special diets following verified medical advice will be given due consideration.

Birthdays

Children may bring in a fun-size treat, sweet or cake for the children to give out.

Waste and Disposal

The school will, within reason, send any uneaten packed lunch food items back home. The rationale for this is that parents can also monitor what their child has consumed during the day and then raise any concerns over their child's food intake with the school.

Promotion of Healthy Packed Lunches

There will be ongoing promotion of the need to provide healthy packed lunches though:

- Pupil, parent / carers newsletters
- School brochure
- Whole School / Packed Lunch Policy
- Health weeks / healthy eating activities
- Curriculum content
- Parents evenings / parent consultations
- Discussion through School Nutrition Action Group (SNAG)
- School website
- Reward schemes
- School involvement in National Healthy Schools Programme

Packed Lunch Containers

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 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.

Dining Facilities for Pupils Bringing Packed Lunch

The school will provide an appropriate area where pupils who choose to bring packed lunches can eat.

Assessment, evaluation and reviewing:

Packed lunches are reviewed by lunchtime staff as part of their supervision of the children. Children eating healthy lunches will be rewarded with stickers. Children with foods not to be included will have the items removed by a member of the lunchtime staff and will be given an alternative item of fruit. Pupils/parents who are not following the guidance will be given a polite written reminder of school policy and may be asked to come in for a consultation with the Head teacher.

OfSTED are required to report on how the school promotes the personal development and wellbeing of all pupils – this may include food provision including packed lunches brought into school.

The Local Authority will work with the school to review packed lunch provision and will provide advice and support to members of the school community.

National Healthy School Programme (NHSP):

In order to achieve National Healthy Schools Status, schools are required to:

- “ensure healthier food and drink options are available and promoted in breakfast clubs, at break and at lunchtimes – as outlined by Food in Schools guidance”
- “monitors pupils’ menus and food choices to inform policy development and provision”

Schools that have achieved National Healthy School Status (NHSS) may be monitored as part of a national and local quality assurance process.

Policy Review:

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

Publication of the policy:

The Federation will write to all new and existing parents/carers to inform them of the policy via the school newsletter. The policy will be available on the school’s website and will be incorporated into the school prospectus. All Federation staff, including teaching and catering staff, will be informed of this policy and will support its implementation.