

Packed Lunch and Food Policy

Purpose of this policy

To ensure that all food brought from home and consumed in school (or on school trips) provides pupils with healthy and nutritious food that is similar to food served in schools, which is regulated by national standards.

This policy aims to give clear guidance to parents/carers and pupils on food that is allowed in school.

We believe that healthy packed lunches and snacks can contribute to the health of children and young people and needs to be consistent with the nutritional standards provided by school meals.

Why was this policy formulated?

- To make a positive contribution to children’s health and Healthy School Status.
- To promote consistency between food provided by parents/carers and food provided by schools, which must adhere to national standards set by the government.

Packed lunches and snacks should include:

Foods that should be included in every packed lunch:	
✓ A starchy food	Such as bread, pasta, rice, couscous, noodles, potatoes or chapattis. Choose wholegrain varieties where possible.
✓ Fruit	At least one portion of fruit every day.
✓ Vegetables	At least one portion of vegetables every day.
✓ Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins	Choose lean options where possible and avoid processed items such as sausage rolls and ‘Pepperami’. Include oily fish such as salmon, mackerel, kippers, and sardines at least once every three weeks .
✓ Dairy foods and alternatives	Such as milk, cheese, yoghurt, and unsweetened non-dairy products (e.g. soya/coconut milk or yoghurt). Opt for cheeses which are lower in fat and not highly processed and choose plain, low fat natural or Greek yoghurts instead of flavoured if possible. (This does not include Dairylea Lunchables or similar products)
✓ A drink	Water is always the best choice of drink for children. Pure fruit juice, semi-skimmed or skimmed milk, smoothies, and low-fat, low-sugar yoghurt or milk drinks can be included also.
✓ Pudding	If a pudding is included we ask that it is in line with the fruit-based pudding that children with school meals receive. Examples are fruit salad, tinned fruit with yoghurt or custard, fruity rice pudding, or fruit-based crumbles. We also allow Pretzels, crackers and cheese, and vegetable or bread sticks with a dip
✓ Cereal bars	We ask that parents and carers vigilantly check the ingredients and ensure it is a nut-free bar

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Packed lunches and snacks should not include:

- Drinks that are high in sugar such as squash or fizzy drinks (including Ribena, Capri Sun and Fruit Shoot).
- Confectionery such as chocolate bars; chocolate-coated biscuits, wafers or rice cakes; sweets and chewing gum.
- Jam or chocolate spread as a sandwich filling.
- All types of crisps or other salted/baked snacks (This includes mini-cheddar snacks)
- Meat/vegetable products that are high in fat and salt, such as sausage rolls, corned beef, individual pies, samosas or sausages/chipolatas.
- Nut or nut-based products e.g. pesto (although they can be very healthy) because of the danger to other children with allergies.

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 and carers are urged to be responsible in ensuring that packed lunches and snacks are as healthy as possible. For these reasons, pupils are also not permitted to swap food items.

For children with allergies who eat school lunches, a strict process will be followed every lunchtime to ensure that the child is safely receiving the correct meal from their individual menu. This will include:

- Children with allergies will be given an 'Allergy' lanyard and red tray on arrival to the hall, to make it easy for the catering team (currently Caterlink) to identify them at the point of service.
- Where possible, the children with allergies will go up to collect their meals first.
- In addition to the lanyard and the tray, the Emmanuel member of staff working at the point of service will alert the catering team to the children with allergies arriving.
- The catering team, specifically the chef, is then responsible for identifying the child and their allergy and giving them the correct, pre-prepared meal from their individual menu.
- It is then the joint responsibility of the catering team and the school to ensure that the child only takes and eats that meal.

Packed Lunch Containers

- Pupils and parents/carers are responsible for providing a packed lunch container where food items can be stored securely and appropriately until the lunchtime period.
- Pupils and parents/carers are encouraged to bring packed lunches in reusable plastic containers, rather than disposable plastic bags and bottles.
- Foods are at risk of bad bacteria if they are prepared and stored in warm temperatures, so it is advised that an ice pack is included in the food container.
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Monitoring packed lunches and snacks

To promote healthy eating, we will regularly monitor the content of packed lunches and snacks and involve pupils and staff. We will talk to parents and carers where necessary and offer advice and guidance on bringing healthy packed lunches and snacks to school. If children consistently bring packed lunches and snacks that do not adhere to these guidelines, a letter will be sent home with a copy of this policy.

Birthdays and cake sales

Some of our parents and carers like to celebrate a child's birthday with the rest of their class, and whilst we wish to support this, we encourage for this to be done in line with our healthy school approach, such as:

- Sharing fruit kebabs or a healthy snack as per the above guidance
- Give out non-food related treats from the child e.g. pencils, stickers or stamps
- Give something special for the day e.g. a birthday badge or hat

For cake/bake sales after class assemblies, we encourage parents and carers to include healthy options as well as cakes and biscuits.

Policy reviewed Summer 2025

Agreed review schedule 3 years

Next review due Summer 2028