



Healthy Snacks & Packed Lunch Guidance

Updated: September 2024

Agreed by Headteacher

Aims of this guidance

- To ensure children have healthy and nutritious food in school, whether they bring food from home, or eat school lunches.
- To achieve our vision of 'Growing together in mind, body and spirit' with the 'body' element of our motto concerned with healthy eating and living.

Why do we need to share this guidance?

It is essential that children eat healthily, and we are keen to educate children and parents about how this can be achieved and why it is important. We don't want to dictate too heavily to parents what is acceptable. This policy applies to all pupils and parents providing packed lunches and snacks to be eaten within school or on school trips during normal school hours. Eating healthily is important because it will help children to:

- Be fitter and healthier now and later in life.
- Learn more quickly and behave better. School meals conform to government nutritional guidelines with less sugar, fat and salt and more fresh fruit and vegetables. School lunches also provide a good balance of "complex carbohydrates" such as pasta, rice, bread or potatoes with dairy and other protein foods. There is no reason why a packed lunch cannot provide the same nutrition as a cooked meal.

Free school meals

Please remember all children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 (2023 – Year 3 also) qualify for a Free School Meal. We recommend parents take this up, as it can increase academic achievement and promote healthy development. You don't need to do anything - they automatically receive it. If your child is a 'fussy eater' this a great chance to develop their diet - without the fuss of doing it at home! If you qualify for benefits then please click here and apply for a Free School Meal for your child - saving you money and providing the school with additional income to support your child. General policy No single food contains all the essential nutrients the body needs to be healthy and function efficiently so it is important that the content of a packed lunch is varied. Below we have produced a clear guide of:

1. Food that you can put in a packed lunch or send in for a snack at break time;
2. Food that is not allowed.
3. Suggestions of food that should only be used occasionally.

The food on this list is not allowed at break times for a snack.

Suggested healthy items for packed lunch or a snack

A good meal contains the below.

- At least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetable or salad every day.
 - A portion of fruit could be a piece of fresh fruit; berries or grapes; slices of melon or pineapple. Dried fruit, tinned fruit or 100% fruit juice can make up only one of your child's '5 A Day' but where possible fresh fruit is best.
 - A portion of vegetables could be fresh vegetables such as carrot sticks, a salad or a vegetable soup or vegetable dish.
- Meat, fish or another source of non-dairy protein should be included every day.
 - Non-dairy sources of protein include lentils, kidney beans, chickpeas, hummus, nut butters and falafel.
- An oily fish, such as salmon, should be included at least once every three weeks.
 - Great for the brain!
- A starchy food, such as bread or pasta, rice, couscous, noodles, potatoes or other cereals, should be included every day.
 - These foods are good for children to fill up on. Whole wheat and whole grain varieties contain extra nutrients and fibres.
- A dairy food, such as semi-skimmed or skimmed milk, cheese, yoghurt, or fromage frais should be included every day. Please check the sugar content first, as some dairy products can have a lot of added sugar.
- Include only water or milk as a drink. What about snacks such as crisps, cakes, pastries and sweets? These foods should only be given very occasionally. We don't think that these should be included as part of a packed lunch at all due to the high salt/sugar content.
- If these foods are included regularly in packed lunches children will get the wrong impression of a healthy and balanced diet.
- They might also eat these first and not have the appetite to eat the other foods that will provide them with the important nutrients they need to grow and develop, be healthy and active.

Not allowed at all:

- Nuts
- Confectionery such as chocolate bars.
- Sweets

- Fizzy drinks as these are mostly very unhealthy. Instead, include nuts, 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. However, we believe that parents have the right to make an informed choice. There might even be days when it is not possible to send in a 100% healthy lunch. So we have the following suggestions:

Suggestions for food to include less often in a healthy packed lunch

The following food should not be included regularly. If we notice these being given daily, we will send a message home informing you that they are no longer allowed to be sent into school. The food on this list is not allowed at break times for a snack.

- Snacks such as crisps
- Cereal bars
- Chocolate coated biscuits or wafers
- Cakes
- Meat and pastry products such as sausage rolls or pies.

Special diets

The school also recognizes that some pupils may have verified medical conditions requiring 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.

Allergies – parents who are preparing healthy snacks or packed lunches for their children, are fully responsible for ensuring that these meet the needs of their children.