

Runnymede St Edward's Catholic Primary School

Packed Lunch Policy and Procedures



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Date Agreed by Governors:

Date to review: September 2026

Packed Lunch Policy

1. 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 wellbeing 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.

2. Aim

To ensure that packed lunches (brought in from home) reflect the new standards for school meals introduced in January 2015.

***Those children who have an Individual Healthcare Plan for dietary reasons may be Exempt from this policy*.**

Rationale:

- Schools are required to positively promote the health and well-being of its pupils. Work around healthy eating is a high priority.
- 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.

3. Objectives

- 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.

4. Implementation

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 from the 5 main food groups; (Food Standards Agency).

5. Bread, Rice, Potatoes, Pasta

These starchy foods are a healthy source of energy. Packed lunches should include 2 or more portions.

6. 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

7. Meat, Fish, Eggs, Beans

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

8. 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. This is why sweets, chocolate, crisps, cereal bars, fruit bars, toffee/salted popcorn, squash and fizzy drinks are no longer available in most schools. Please support your school by not including these items in a packed lunch. **(see box overleaf)**

Drinks – any drinks provided in lunch boxes should only include either plain water,, unsweetened fresh fruit juice, diluted fresh fruit juice, fruit or dairy based smoothies.

To ensure consistency and to keep packed lunches in line with food standards for school meals, packed lunches **must not contain** the following:

- Fizzy / sugary drinks in cartons, bottles or cans
- Chocolate-coated products / sweets / confectionery
- Chewing gum
- toffee coated popcorn

Please reduce the frequency of placing cereal and fruit bars, crisps and savoury snacks in your child's lunch box. They are often very high in sugar, salt and fat.

We are a nut free school. We insist that no items containing nuts are consumed on the premises. Several pupils in school have allergies to nuts, we insist that any type of

nut for example peanut butter, Nutella and cereal bars containing nuts is not included in a lunch box. Your child may sit next to a child allergic to nuts and this contact could trigger an anaphylactic shock.

Additional information is available with ideas and examples of foods that can be included in packed lunches via the **School Food Trust** www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk

9. 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.

10. Promotion of Healthy Packed Lunches

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

- Pupil, parent / carers newsletters
- 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
- Workshops for parents
- Lunch guide to healthy packed lunches

11. 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. **All lunch containers/bags must be clearly labelled with your child's name and class.**

Parents are advised that glass bottles or glass thermos flasks are not permitted in school for the safety of children at lunch times. Children can bring in a Thermos flask but hot drinks or soup are not permitted.

12. Storage of Packed Lunches

The school will provide storage area / facilities for packed lunch bags. The school cannot provide cooled storage areas and therefore cannot take legal responsibility for foods prepared at home and then brought into school.

13. Special Dietary Requirements

The school recognises 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 and carers are urged to be responsible in ensuring that packed lunches are as healthy as possible. Please discuss any special dietary requirements with our pastoral team.

14. Dining Facilities for Pupils Bringing Packed Lunch

Due to significant pupil numbers, children bringing a packed lunch may be required to sit together in a classroom. However, our aim is to try and accommodate all children to sit and eat together in the Dining Hall. Weather permitting, they can eat “Al fresco” outside.

15. Monitoring and Evaluation

The school will carry out monitoring of packed lunch provision - where there may be concerns over a child’s food / nutrition intake and / or content of packed lunches, this will be dealt with timely and sensitively.

16. 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.

Notice Periods

Please note that if you opt for your child to take a hot dinner and want to change to a packed lunch we need a minimum of 4 weeks notice in writing.

Alternatively, if you wish to change from a packed lunch to a hot dinner we need a minimum of 1 weeks notice in writing.



The eatwell plate



Use the eatwell plate to help you get the balance right. It shows how much of what you eat should come from each food group.



The school food standards



Fruit and vegetables

- One or more portions of vegetables or salad as an accompaniment every day.
- One or more portions of fruit every day.
- A dessert containing at least 50% fruit two or more times each week.
- At least three different fruits and three different vegetables each week.



Starchy food

- One or more wholegrain varieties of starchy food each week.
- One or more portions of food from this group every day.
- Three or more different starchy foods each week.
- Starchy food cooked in fat or oil no more than two days each week.*
- Bread - with no added fat or oil - must be available every day.



Milk and dairy

- A portion of food from this group every day.
- Lower fat milk must be available for drinking at least once a day during school hours.



Foods high in fat, sugar and salt

- No more than two portions of food that has been deep-fried, batter-coated, or breadcrumb-coated, each week.*
- No more than two portions of food which include pastry each week.*
- No snacks, except nuts, seeds, vegetables and fruit with no added salt, sugar or fat.*
- Savoury crackers or breadsticks can be served at lunch with fruit or vegetables or dairy food.
- No confectionery, chocolate or chocolate-coated products.*
- Desserts, cakes and biscuits are allowed only at lunchtime.
- They must not contain any confectionery.
- Salt must not be available to add to food after it has been cooked.*
- Any condiments must be limited to sachets or portions of no more than 10g or one teaspoonful.*



Meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein

- A portion of food from this group every day.
- A portion of meat or poultry on three or more days each week.
- Only fish once or more every three weeks.
- For vegetarians, a portion of non-dairy protein on three or more days each week.
- A meat or poultry product no more than once each week in primary schools and twice each week in secondary schools*.



Healthier drinks

- Free, fresh drinking water at all times. The only drinks permitted are:
 - Plain water.
 - Lower fat milk or lactose reduced milk.
 - Fruit or vegetable juice.
 - Plain soya, rice or oat drinks enriched with calcium; plain fermented milk drinks.
 - Combinations of fruit or vegetable juice with plain water.
 - Combinations of fruit juice and lower fat milk or plain yoghurt, plain soya, rice or oat drinks enriched with calcium; cocoa and lower fat milk; flavoured lower fat milk, all with less than 5% added sugars or honey.
 - Tea, coffee, hot chocolate.

Combination drinks are limited to a portion size of 330ml.

Food provided outside lunch

- Fruit and/or vegetables available in all school food outlets.
- No savoury crackers and breadsticks.
- No cakes, biscuits, pastries or desserts.

* This Standard applies across the whole school day, including breakfasts, morning breaks, tuck shops, and after school clubs.

Information from 'The School Food Plan' website.