

Packed Lunch Policy

(including those brought in from home)

Aspire Learning



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Contents

1. Scope
2. Introduction
3. Aims
4. Rationale
5. Objective
6. Implementations

1. Scope

This policy guidance has been developed for parents, carers, and catering staff for reducing childhood obesity, promoting the health and well-being of young people and the provision of catering services in schools.

Additional guidance and advice on providing healthy packed lunches is available from several sources including the School Food Trust [School meals - food standards - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

As part of the Government's approach to reducing childhood obesity *A Cross Government Strategy for England, Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives* was launched in January 2008. This strategy outlines an expectation on all schools.

To promote a culture of healthy eating the government now expects all schools - in consultation with parents, pupils, and staff to adopt whole school food policies. Schools will be expected to:

- develop healthy packed lunch policies.

2. 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.

3. Aim

To ensure that packed lunches (including those brought in from home) reflect the new standards for school meals.

4. Rationale

- Schools are required to positively promote the health and wellbeing of its pupils and 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.

5. Implementations

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 include items from the 5 main food groups:

Bread, Rice, Potatoes, Pasta

These starchy foods are a healthy source of energy. Packed lunches should include 2 or more portions e.g., pasta salad, sandwich.

Fruit and Vegetables

These foods provide vitamins, minerals, and fibre. Lunches should include at least 1 portion of fruit and/or 1 portion of vegetables / salad, or more e.g. carrot/cucumber sticks, cherry tomatoes, a piece of fruit.

Milk and Dairy foods

These foods provide calcium for healthy bones and teeth. Include 1 portion at lunch e.g. yoghurt, fromage frais, milk.

Meat, Fish, Eggs, Beans

These foods provide protein for growth. Packed lunches should include 1 portion of these foods e.g. boiled egg as filling in sandwich, tuna as a sandwich filling, mixed bean salad, sliced chicken as a sandwich filling, to name but a few.

Drinks

Any drinks provided in lunch boxes should only include plain water, milk (semi-skimmed), unsweetened fresh fruit juice, diluted fresh fruit juice, No Added Sugar Squash drink.

Banned items

- Fizzy / sugary drinks in cartons, bottles, or cans
- Chocolate nut spread as a filling for sandwiches
- Sweets
- Chewing gum
- Crisps or any packet savoury snacks high in salt and fat
- Nuts
- Energy drinks
- Caffeine drinks

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 through:

- Pupil, parent / carers newsletters
- Whole School Packed Lunch Policy
- Health weeks / healthy eating activities
- Curriculum content

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/carers are advised to include an ice pack in hot weather. 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 for packed lunch boxes/bags. However, the school cannot provide cooled storage areas and therefore cannot take legal responsibility for foods prepared at home and then brought into school that require chilled facilities.

Dining Facilities for Pupils Bringing Packed Lunch

The school will provide an appropriate area where pupils can eat.

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 can be dealt with timely and sensitively.

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.