

Seaham Harbour Nursery School



Packed Lunch Policy



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School Food – Policy for Packed Lunches (brought in from home)

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 ensure that packed lunches (brought in from home) reflect the new standards for school meals introduced in September 2006.

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

- 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)

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 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.

Examples of these could be –

- Sandwiches made with sliced bread, pitta bread, wraps, chapattis or bread rolls
- A scone or currant bun
- A bagel
- Pasta, couscous or rice

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.

Examples of these could be –

- Carrot batons, cucumber sticks, celery, sliced peppers etc
- A piece of fruit – apple, melon, orange, banana, pear, kiwi, etc
- Dried fruit – raisins, apricots etc
- Fruit salad
- Grapes, cherry tomatoes, strawberries, berries, cherries **must be cut length ways and then cut again (quarters) to reduce the risk of choking**

Milk and Dairy foods

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

Examples of these could be –

- A pot of yoghurt, custard or rice pudding
- A piece of cheese (match box size)
- 2 triangles of spreadable cheese (this could be in the sandwich)

Meat, Fish, Eggs, Beans

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

Examples of these could be – (these could be in the sandwich)

- Slices of cooked meat – ham, chicken, pork, turkey
- Hard boiled egg
- Tuna, salmon, mackerel or sardines
- Hummus

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.

Crisps and crackers

Children are able to bring a small bag of crisps or crackers; preferably **baked** rather than fried as they are the healthier option. Please check on the packaging as it will tell you if they are baked.

Drinks – as a Nursery School we are part of a project to promote healthy teeth and dental hygiene. As a result, we will provide the children with water or milk at lunchtime.

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
 Sweets / confectionary /chewing gum
 Cereal bars, fruit bars
 Chocolate spread as a filling for sandwiches
 Sugared / toffee and salted popcorn
 Split pot yoghurts containing sweets such as smarties, chocolate balls etc
 Sausage rolls, pasties or pies

ANY NUT PRODUCT

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

If you have any worries or concerns around what your child will eat or would like some advice, please speak to a member of staff.

Please consider the amount of food your child would usually eat at lunchtime when preparing their packed lunch.

Allergies and Special Diets

We ask that no food is brought into school that contains nuts.

We recognise that some children may require a special diet. In this case parents are responsible in ensuring that packed lunches are as healthy as possible.

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. If the bag is left at school, these items will be disposed of due to hygiene reasons.

Promotion of Healthy Packed Lunches

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

- Pupil, parent / carers newsletters
- School prospectus / brochure
- Whole School / Packed Lunch Policy
- Healthy eating activities
- Curriculum content
- Parents evenings / parent consultations
- School website
- 'Pack A Punch In Your Lunch' guide to healthy packed lunches

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. **Please label all food containers and bags with your child's name. Your child's bag may have a coloured band or tag added to it. Please leave this on the bag/box as it relates to the group and table on which they sit.**

Storage of Packed Lunches

The school will provide storage area / facilities 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.

Hot Food

We are unable to heat/reheat food at school. Children are able to bring hot food in a suitable thermos flask or container.

Dining Facilities for Pupils Bringing Packed Lunch

The school will provide an appropriate area where pupils who choose to bring packed lunches can eat. Staff will support children across the lunchtime period. This will include helping children to think about the order in which they eat their lunch, for example choosing their sandwiches first.

Children will be encouraged to be independent and to try and open their boxes, bags and packaging and putting empty packaging into the bin.

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.

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.

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.

Endorsement

The School Governing Body, Pupils, Parent / Carer Representative and Staff endorse this policy for implementation.

Ratified by Governing Body on (date) Summer 2025.....

Signed.....(Headteacher or School
representative)

Signed.....Governor

Review date Summer 2026

