

Overall aim of the policy

To ensure that all packed lunches brought from home and consumed in school (or on school trips) provide pupils with healthy and nutritious food that is similar in quality to food served in schools, which is required to meet national standards.

Where, when and to whom the policy applies

The policy applies to all pupils and parents providing packed lunches to be eaten within school or on school trips during normal school hours.

Food and drink in packed lunches

- The school will provide appropriate and attractive facilities for pupils eating packed lunches and ensure that free, fresh drinking water is available at all times.
- The school will work with parents to encourage packed lunches to meet the standards listed below.
- As fridge space is not available, pupils are advised to bring packed lunches in insulated bags with freezer blocks where possible.

Packed lunches should include:

Portion of starchy food

White or wholegrain bread, rolls, pitta bread or wraps, plain naan bread, bagels, cooked pasta, rice, noodles, couscous or potato as a salad.

A portion of meat, fish, eggs, beans or other non-dairy sources of protein

Sliced meat, chicken, fish, sliced egg in sandwiches, rolls or wraps, meat alternatives such as tofu or pulses like kidney beans and chickpeas in salads.

At least one portion of fruit and/or vegetable

These can come from fresh, frozen, canned or dried sources, as these can all count towards 5-a-day.

Vegetables: carrot, cucumber, pepper or celery sticks, tomatoes, grated carrot in sandwiches or wraps, sweetcorn, peas or pulses in salad.

Fruits: sliced apple or melon, plums, grapes, strawberries, kiwi, satsumas, chunks of pineapple, or dried fruit. Please remove any stones or pips and cut fruit ready to eat.

A portion of milk or dairy foods

Yoghurt or fromage-frais, cheese in sandwiches or wraps, whole milk (for children aged one to two) or semi-skimmed (for children aged two and over)

A drink to help with hydration and concentration.

Water – is the best choice.

Milk – use whole milk (for children aged one to two) or semi-skimmed (for children aged two and over).

Diluted fruit juice (half juice, half water).

Avoid squash, fizzy drinks, and flavoured water even if labelled 'sugar free', 'no added sugar' or 'reduced sugar'. These can contribute to tooth decay and have little nutritional value.

Packed lunches should NOT include

- Nuts of any sort including Peanut Butter
- Confectionery such as chocolate bars, chocolate-coated biscuits, chocolate spreads (they all contain nuts) cereal bars, processed fruit bars and sweets.
- Sugary soft drinks, such as squash and fizzy drinks (even if labelled as 'sugar-free', these drinks can contribute to tooth decay and provide little nutritional value).
- Salty snacks such as crisps - instead vegetables and fruit with no added salt, sugar or fat.

These foods should only be eaten occasionally and are best eaten at home where you can monitor consumption more effectively.

Practical tips for healthy, safe and tasty packed lunches

Communicate with the school about your child's packed lunch.

- Inform the school of food allergies or intolerances.
- Store food by using a cool bag and a frozen bottle of water or reusable ice pack.

Choosing foods

- Vary lunchbox contents for a good balance of nutrients.
- Seasonal fruits and vegetables add colour, texture and are often cheaper and tastier.
- Read food labels. Look out for the colour coded nutrition information on the front of packets. Remember the more green(s) on the label, the healthier the choice.

Preparing the packed lunch

- Include your child when shopping, choosing and preparing what goes in their lunchbox, giving them choices within the food groups.
- Wash fruit and vegetables, and remove any stones.
- Keep it fresh. Rinsing slices of apple in dilute lemon juice, for example, will stop the slices from turning brown.
- Think sustainably. Use containers and cutlery that can be washed and used again.
- Label your child's packed lunch with their name.

Special diets and allergies

The school is aware some children will experience food allergies, and has a procedure in place to manage allergies and other special dietary requirements within school. Parents are issued with a Confidential Information form which asks parents to list any food allergies. This information is circulated within the school so staff, first aiders etc. are fully aware of which children have what allergies. The school produce a Medical Booklet listing the children with a photograph, lists their allergies. This is regularly updated.

Assessment, evaluation and reviewing

Packed lunches will be regularly reviewed by Lunchtime Supervisors.

Where healthy lunch choices have been made these may be rewarded with congratulatory stickers.

Where packed lunches that aren't in line with the packed lunch policy are brought into school, leaflets may be included in the packed lunch to go home. Similarly, if a child is not eating, notification will be sent home. If a child regularly brings a packed lunch that does not conform to the policy, then the school will contact the parents to discuss this.

Please contact the school if you would like further advice or support in making your child's packed lunches healthier.

Involvement of parents/carers

We encourage all children to eat school lunches. However, parents of pupils wishing to have packed lunches for a particular reason are expected to provide their children with packed lunches which are in line with our packed lunch policy.

Sharing the policy

The school will ensure that all parents/carers are aware of the policy e.g. by sharing information via the school newsletter, website, prospectus, in assemblies etc.

The school will use opportunities such as parents' evenings and healthy living weeks to promote this policy as part of a whole school approach to healthier eating.

The policy will be shared with all school staff, including teaching and catering staff.

Snack time

Children are only permitted to bring fruit or vegetables for snack time. No sugary snacks will be permitted.

National guidance

The policy was drawn up in line with other schools in the Reading Local Authority and schools within the Anthem Schools Trust and using a range of national documents including the Children's Food Trust.