



Easington C of E Primary School

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

Written September 2023
To be reviewed September 2024

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 all packed lunches brought from home and consumed in school (or on school visits) provide the pupil with healthy and nutritious food that is similar to food served in schools, which is now regulated by national standards.

- Following the introduction of School Food Standards from the Government, our SNAG group, in conjunction with Chartwells our meals provider, has developed this policy in consultation with parents, pupils and governors. As part of the School Food Plan, a new set of standards for all food served in schools was launched by the Department for Education. They become **mandatory** in all maintained schools, and new academies and free schools from January 2015.
- We have a packed lunch policy to make a positive contribution to children's health and to promote consistency between packed lunches and food provided by schools which must adhere to the School Food Plan national school food standards.
- The policy was drawn up using a range of national documents including a toolkit and a draft policy from the Children's Food Trust and Food policy in schools – a strategic policy framework for governing bodies (National Governors' Council, (NGC) 2005) and the School Food Plan.
- This policy applies to all pupils and parents providing packed lunches to be eaten within school or on school visits during normal school hours.

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.

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

Meat, Fish, Eggs, Beans

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

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 schools. Please support your school by not including these items in a packed lunch.*****(see box below)**

Drinks – any drinks provided in lunch boxes **should only** include either plain water, milk (semi-skimmed), unsweetened fresh fruit juice, diluted fresh fruit juice, fruit or dairy based smoothies.

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

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

- snacks such as crisps that are high in fat. (Instead, include baked crisps, seeds, vegetables and fruit - with no added salt, sugar or fat - savoury crackers or breadsticks served with fruit, vegetables or dairy food)
- confectionery such as chocolate bars, chocolate-coated biscuits and sweets. (Cakes and biscuits are allowed but encourage your child to eat these only as part of a balanced meal.)
- highly processed foods such as DairyLea dunkers, Cheese Strings, Fruit Winders
- pastry products such as sausage rolls, individual pies and pasties
- nuts

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
- School prospectus / brochure
- 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

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.

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.

Dining Facilities for Pupils Bringing Packed Lunch

The school will provide an appropriate area where pupils who choose to bring packed lunches 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.

The Trust will work with the school to review packed lunch provision and will provide advice and support to members of the school community.

National Healthy School Programme (NHSP):

In order to achieve National Healthy Schools Status, schools are required to:

- “ensure healthier food and drink options are available and promoted in breakfast clubs, at break and at lunchtimes – as outlined by Food in Schools guidance”
- “monitors pupils’ menus and food choices to inform policy development and provision”

Schools that have achieved National Healthy School Status (NHSS) may be monitored as part of a national and local quality assurance process.

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) _____

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

Signed.....Governor

Signed.....Pupil Representative

Signed.....Parent /Carer Representative

Review date _____