

Everyone Welcomed. Everyone Included. Everyone Belongs.



Packed Lunch Policy

Policy Reviewed and Adopted by Local Advisor Board:	Autumn Term 2025
Date of Next Review:	Autumn Term 2026
Responsible Officer:	Head Teacher

St. Mark's C of E Primary School Packed Lunch Policy

Vision

'Everyone Welcomed. Everyone included. Everyone belongs.'

"But I came to give life - life in all its fullness" (John 10:10)

At St Mark's CE Primary School, we strive to bring all together as one loving family. Through strong relationships, we offer a sense of belonging by nurturing all to flourish as unique and responsible children of God.

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. We are also keen to reinforce our Rights Respecting work and would refer readers to the UNCRC Article 6 'Governments should ensure that children develop healthily' and also Article 24 'Children have the right to clean water and nutritious food'.

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. Packed lunches also need to contain an amount of food which is 'reasonable for the age of the child'.

Aim

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

- 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 proactive 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 Plate' model which shows items from the 5 main food groups; (Food Standards Agency 2007).

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 one 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, toffee/salted popcorn, fizzy drinks are only available as a treat in schools. Please do not include these items in a packed lunch.

Drinks

The children are able to bring in a transparent water bottle with water in or a small bottle of low sugar juice. If parents don't wish to send in a water bottle, the school will provide children with their own water bottle. School provide fresh drinking water for all children throughout the school day as well as lunch time.

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
- Parents evenings / parent consultations
- Discussion through School Nutrition Action Group (SNAG)
- School website
- Professional development for school staff
- Workshops for parents
- School involvement in National Healthy Schools Programme

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

- Drinks – high sugar and fizzy drinks
- Sweets / confectionary
- Fully coated chocolate bar i.e. Double Decker, Mars Bar, Twix etc.

- Chewing gum
- Nuts

If items from the above list are found in packed lunches, a member of staff will deal with timely and sensitively.

There may be individual instances where the packed lunch policy may need deviation i.e. intolerances and individual pupils needs. When this is the case, parents and carers should let the school know as soon as possible.

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 Local Authority 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.