

PACKED LUNCH POLICY GUIDANCE

Introduction

Welcome to this resource to help create a packed lunch policy. This guidance has been written to complement the introduction of national school food and nutrient standards that all schools must follow. The aim of the packed lunch policy guidance is to encourage all our schools to achieve the same standards for packed lunch choices for all their children and young people.

Packed lunch policy development is an integral part of your continuing journey on the Public Health Schools Programme.

Schools have a key role in making sure the whole school has a healthy eating culture. The guidance identifies key areas for schools to be aware of, and offers a range of guiding principles to think about when developing a policy.

When developing your policy this guidance should be used as your starting point and be amended to meet your needs. This should be done after full consultation/conducting surveys/with all relevant partners in your school.

Guiding principles

Consultation and participation

The whole school community and local partnerships should be involved and engaged with developing a packed lunch policy.

Monitoring

Each school should be responsible for monitoring packed lunches in a way that complements your schools food ethos.

Gradual changes

Schools should introduce changes slowly and in agreement with whole school community, with a final goal of developing a school policy which fits in with national standards. Alternatively, schools can introduce changes in stages, such as promoting water only, changes to confectionery items etc as is appropriate.

School clusters

Extended school clusters may wish to agree a policy in partnership so that all schools and pupils within the cluster are treated the same.

Impact assessment

Schools should assess the impact of their policy during the early planning stages to help manage risk and identify solutions, such as seating arrangements, reviewing offsite policy, or lunchtime staff provision.

Whole school food policy

Schools should review their current whole school food policies at the same time as developing the new policy. This will avoid confusing messages and encourages whole-school food ethos.

Celebration days and events

Food standards restrictions do not apply to food served on celebration days and for special events. Schools should try to include appropriate healthy foods where possible to avoid giving out confusing messages.

Marketing and communication

Schools can look to promote their packed lunch policy through the prospectus, website, parent evenings and transition days. This will help to make sure parents, carers and pupils are aware of the policy. An ideal time to launch new policies is at the start of term, advising families before the end of the previous term so that they are prepared for the change.

Evaluation

Collecting data and monitoring the impact of your policy will allow you to see and make improvements. This could be done gradually; it also provides evidence of impact assessment and evaluation for your healthy schools assessment criteria.

Curriculum links

Developing a policy can support cooking and nutrition elements on the curriculum with pupils being taught how to cook and apply the principles of healthy eating through key stages 1-3. Visit <https://www.gov.uk/cookingandnutrition> for more information.

Project planning

Schools should include the packed lunch project work in their school improvement plan and consider appointing someone to lead on it to make sure the progress is successful.

Cultural diversity

Schools should make sure they include foods that meet the cultural needs of all their children and young people.

Affordability

Schools should look at providing support for families who choose packed lunches as the affordable option, perhaps in the form of information leaflets/packed lunch menus.

Special diets

The standards do not apply to children with clinically diagnosed special dietary requirements. Parents are responsible for making the school aware of any such diet. There is a set procedure for requesting a medical diet for a school meal. More information is available at www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/schoolmeals

Food safety and hygiene

Consider food safety, storage and high-risk foods (especially during the warmer months). Cooler bags and boxes could be used if a refrigerator is not available for storage.

Governors

Governors have a role to play in school food. Governing bodies of maintained schools, and academies set up before 2010, should ensure that all food provided by the school meets nutritional standards. All food provided through the corporate school meals contract in Brighton & Hove meet these standards. For more information, please refer to the national governor's association: food policy in schools document, available at www.nga.org.uk

School Food Plan

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. Visit www.schoolfoodplan.com for more information.

Ofsted

Ofsted's new Common Inspection Framework includes a judgment on personal development, behaviour and welfare. As part of reaching this judgment, inspectors will look at the extent to which schools are successfully supporting pupils to gain "knowledge of how to keep themselves healthy" and "make informed choices about healthy eating, [and] fitness"

throughout their entire inspection. The School Food Plan has produced practical guidance to help school leaders and governing bodies adopt a whole school approach to food. It is designed to be used alongside other School Food Plan resources including the Headteacher Checklist and What Works Well Website. Visit www.schoolfoodplan.com/ofsted for more information

National guidance

The policy should be in line with national guidance on healthy eating and nutrition. The Eatwell plate should provide a guide to promote a balanced packed lunch.



For more information on the Eatwell plate and national guidance, see www.food.gov.uk

Additional resources

Ideas about implementing healthier packed lunch policies:

<http://ashtonvaleprimary.weebly.com/healthy-lunchboxes.html>

<http://whatworkswell.schoolfoodplan.com/search?q=packed+lunches>

Guidance on healthier snacks and packed lunches:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Change4Life/Pages/healthy-lunchbox-ideas.aspx>

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/childhealth6-15/Pages/Lighterlunchboxes.aspx>

Example: How your policy could look

This guidance may help you develop a packed lunch policy for your school. You can use this as a template and personalise it with information relevant to your school context.

Healthy packed lunch policy

[Enter school name and your own logo]

Aim of policy:

Our aim is 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 to food served in schools, which is now regulated by national standards.

Our School:

[Enter school name] recognises that our children come from diverse home backgrounds, cultures, ethnic and faith groups. Our school aims to meet the needs of all children and ensure equality of provision whilst taking account of this diversity and difference. We will provide a safe, healthy and appealing eating environment for pupils eating snacks and packed lunches, and ensure fresh drinking water is available at all times. We will encourage all pupils to eat and drink as much of their morning snack or lunch as possible. As fridge space is not available in school parents are advised to send in packed lunches in a cooler bag or food that does not require refrigeration.

Water:

It has been recognised that children's concentration and behaviour improves when children drink water throughout the day. Dehydration can give children headaches and make them tired. Therefore, we encourage all pupils to bring a plastic bottle of water to school each day. These can be kept at school and will be filled and emptied each day. This will allow children to have access to fresh drinking water throughout each day.

Packed Lunches may include:

	Fruits and Vegetables	Include everyday	✓
	Meat, cheese, egg, beans or Oily Fish	Make a different choice each day	✓
	Starchy Food – bread, roll, pitta, wrap, crackers, pasta, rice	Include every day	✓
	Milk and Dairy Food- yoghurt, fromage frais, custard	Include every day	✓
	Water or a healthier drink	Perfect drink for your lunch box	✓

Packed lunches should not include:

	Fatty snacks such as crisps	High in salt and fat	
	Confectionary	High in fat / sugar	
	Pastry/Meat Products	High in fat	
	Drinks	High in sugar	

[You can personalise this and include or exclude particular items]

Allergies

[Refer to the school policy on nuts or visit www.allergyuk.org for more information].

Example: Nuts and nut products (e.g. peanut butter) should never be sent to school because of allergy concerns. Neither are children allowed to share food items for this same reason.

Monitoring

[Tell parents how your school will monitor compliance with the policy]

Example: On a daily basis the staff in school see what children have in their lunchboxes whilst supervising in the dining hall. This is an opportunity for them to talk with the children about their lunchboxes and to encourage healthy eating and drinking. However, we may send parents a reminder of this policy if lunchbox contents regularly fall short of the expectations in this policy. It is not our intention to tell parents what and how they should be feeding their children and we will not do so, but we want to work with parents to educate our children about healthy dietary choices so that they can make their own informed choices independently when they are older. If your child has not eaten enough of their lunch, we will wrap it up and send it home in their lunch box in order for you to see.

Exceptions

[Tell parents if there are any exceptions to the policy, or how this policy relates to other school policies]

Example: Celebrations

Treats that are sent into school to celebrate birthdays are allowed. Where possible these will be distributed at home time so parents are able to monitor this.