



# Packed Lunch Policy

## Ellington Primary School



**Written in conjunction with The School Council and the Eco Council**

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

**\*Those children who have an Individual Healthcare Plan for dietary reasons may be Exempt from this policy\*.**

#### **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 wellbeing 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 reflect standards for school meals.

#### **Rationale:**

- Schools are required to positively promote the health and wellbeing of its pupils. Work around healthy eating is a high priority.
- 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 wellbeing in later life.
- To ensure that food brought into school (packed lunches) reflects and meets food standards for School Food.

## 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.

**Drinks** – any drinks provided in lunch boxes **should only** include either water, unflavoured milk, unsweetened fresh fruit juice or diluted fresh fruit juice.

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
- Chocolate Bars
- Nuts

We appreciate that packed lunches can often be difficult to make as there can be little variety for children. At Ellington, we are NOT adopting the stance that many other schools have and banning anything considered unhealthy. However, we would ask that you please reduce the frequency of placing cereal and fruit bars, crisps, sweet and savoury snacks in your child's lunch box. They are often very high in sugar, salt and fat.

One packet of crisps and one sweet snack (for example a biscuit or a small cake) is acceptable alongside other healthy elements of a lunch.

**Several pupils in school have allergies to nuts. No nuts of any kind should be brought into school. This includes peanut butter and Nutella (including either being used as a sandwich filling). Children with any products that contain nuts will not be allowed to consume these in school, they will be removed and handed to parents at home time.**

**Your child may sit next to a child allergic to nuts and this contact could trigger an anaphylactic shock. Anaphylaxis can be life threatening.**

#### Useful Websites for Packed Lunch Ideas

- [BBC Goodfood](#)
- [Strong for Life](#)
- [Tesco](#)
- [British Nutrition Foundation](#)

#### Waste and Disposal

We have a fantastic Eco-Council in school who want to make a difference to Ellington and the Wider World. Therefore, we are changing the way we dispose of rubbish from packed lunches.

All items brought into school for packed lunches will be returned home. There are two main reasons for this. The first being parents/carers can monitor what their child has consumed during the day. Secondly, we are conscious that the waste from dinners is a mixture of food and rubbish, some of which could be recycled. Our Eco council want to encourage and promote recycling. We hope that many items returned home can then be recycled.

#### 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 in warm weather conditions. 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 facilities for packed lunch bags/boxes, in the most convenient and appropriate place possible. 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**

Pupils will eat their packed lunches in the main school hall with those on School Meals.

**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 will be dealt with timely and sensitively.