

St STEPHENS C OF E JUNIOR SCHOOL

# Whole School Food Policy

Learning to **Change** the World

'Do **justly**, love **mercy** and walk **humbly** with your God'

Micah 6:8



# Whole School Food Policy

STEPHEN'S COFE JUNIOR SCHOOL SOUNDWELL

Review Details:

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1.0	FGB	September 2018	First Issue
1.2	FGB	May 2023	
1.3	ACC	January 2026	No changes

## Background

Prior to producing this policy information was obtained from a number of sources. Parents and carers completed an electronic survey requesting their views on both packed lunches and cooked school dinners. Children were surveyed about their lunches (both packed lunches and cooked school dinners). A packed lunch audit was also carried out on all children who had brought in a packed lunch on a particular day. A photo audit of children's packed lunches was also carried out. In addition, information was obtained using a range of national documents.

## Survey Results

Of parents/carers surveyed:

- 16% would like some ideas and suggestions for healthy packed food.
- 33% would like some recipes/menus for foods/snacks which could be included.
- 58% agree some foods should be discouraged or not allowed.
- Most agree that fizzy drinks and sweets should not be allowed.
- Additional comments suggest that most believe large or solid chocolate bars or big bags of crisps should not be allowed
- Most agree that a small chocolate bar/cake/biscuit and crisps should be allowed in moderation (e.g. 1 item)

Of children surveyed:

- 53% said they choose to have a packed lunch from home because they didn't like the school cooked option or because they preferred their own choices.
- When asked what their favourite foods were (to have in their lunch box), 60% chose something from the fruit and vegetable category, 13% chose something meat or dairy based, 16% chose foods based around starchy carbohydrates and 9% chose either chocolate, crisps or cake.

Results from the lunch box audit (out of 181 children who had packed lunch that day):

- 44 children had no vegetables.
- 111 did not have a drink of water (41 had no drink at all although this may have been in their classroom). Other drinks included fruit shoots, juice, squash, chocolate milk and milkshakes.

- 6 had chocolate spread as a sandwich filling.
- 15 children had more than one sugary item (cakes, biscuits, donuts, chocolate bars).
- Most children had fruit.
- 5 children had salads which included vegetables and rice or pasta.

## National Documents

Producing the policy also involved considering a range of national documents including this template policy from the Children's Food Trust.

- In a study conducted in 2016, researchers in the School of Food Science and Nutrition at Leeds University found just 1.6% of packed lunches for primary school children met the tough nutritional standards set for their classmates eating school cooked meals. Furthermore, researchers found that only 1 in 5 lunchboxes contained any vegetables or salad, while 52%-60% contained too many sweet and savoury snacks, or sugary drinks (42%), leading to high levels of saturated fat, sugar and salt and not enough minerals and vitamins. The report recommended that primary schools introduce a policy restricting sweetened drinks and encouraging water, salad and fruit. It also suggested parents pack smaller portions of the unhealthy snacks, such as packets of crisps that are around 15g rather than 26g and chocolate cakes and biscuits of 20g. More choices of snacks low in saturated fats and sugars and higher in fibre were needed, it said. The children's lunches that met the standard all contained sandwiches with a protein filling and some salad.
- A 2016 poll of 5,000 adults for BBC Good Food found that some 36% of UK parents are unaware of NHS guidelines on what constitutes a healthy lunchbox. The guidance says a child's lunchbox should be based on starchy carbohydrates such as bread, potatoes, rice or pasta as well as including fresh fruit and vegetables, a source of protein, a sugar-free drink and a side dish such as a low-fat, lower-sugar yogurt. More than half of parents who are aware of the guidelines (54%) admit to only following them occasionally, with almost 10% admitting to packing leftovers - including last night's takeaway - for their children's lunch.
- A University of Leeds study, carried out in 2010, found that; 14 out of 1294 (1.1%) of packed lunches met the basic dietary standards for school meals in England. 85% of children were provided with a sandwich, 19% with vegetables, 54% with fruit, 17% with cheese, 44% with a milk based dessert, 82% with restricted snacks (crisps or confectionery) and 61% with a sweetened drink. The nutrient standards most likely to be met were protein and vitamin C. The nutrient standards least likely to be met were non milk extrinsic sugars (NMES) and sodium. Girls were provided with, and consumed more, fruit, vegetables and milk based desserts. Children at schools with higher percentage free school meals eligibility (% FSME) were provided with, and consumed more, vegetables.

- Since September 2006, all school meal services in local authority schools in England have had to meet the interim food based standards and contain a portion of the following five food types; protein rich food, low fat starchy food, vegetables, fruit and dairy food. In addition, certain foods are restricted and lunches prepared at school cannot contain confectionery, savoury snacks or drinks other than water, pure fruit juice or milk.

## Objectives

Following on from the research detailed above, it was decided that a whole-school approach for healthy eating should be developed in order 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 consistent in quality to food served in schools, which is required to meet national standards.
- Decrease the amount of poorly rated lunches and snacks. Contents are currently too high in salt and sugar (e.g. excessive amounts of chocolate and crisps) and not high enough in good nutrition. Drinks are also too high in sugar
- Make a positive contribution to children's health by encouraging and providing nutritious food options.
- Provide high quality education about nutrition and exercise and the impact on physical health and wellbeing, equipping children with the skills and knowledge required to make healthier life choices.
- Encourage a happier and calmer population of children and young people.
- Ensure that all staff encourage and celebrate the consumption of healthy and nutritious food whilst setting an example by doing the same.
- Meet Ofsted requirements. Under the new Ofsted inspection framework released in September 2015, schools will now be asked what they are doing to support pupils to lead healthy lifestyles. A packed lunch policy – within a whole-school food policy – can be used as evidence to show inspectors that our school is committed to equipping pupils with the skills and knowledge to make healthy lifestyle choices

## Scope

This policy applies to all pupils and parents/carers providing packed lunches and other foods to be consumed within school - or on school trips - during normal school hours. This policy promotes a whole-school approach to food and healthy eating. As a way of measuring nutritional value, the government approved Eatwell Plate will be used to assess contents.



<https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/the-eatwell-guide.aspx>

- The policy also applies to all staff in school including catering and support staff.

## The policy

- We will encourage all children to eat school lunches. However, parents of pupils wishing to have packed lunches for a particular reason will be expected to provide their children with packed lunches which are in line with this whole-school healthy eating policy. In turn, the school will keep the parents and the school nutrition action group informed as outlined below.
- The school will work with parents and carers to ensure that packed lunches meet the standards set by the government.
- Packed lunches will be regularly reviewed by teaching and support staff, catering staff, School Meal Supervision Assistants (SMSAs) and the pupil-based School Nutrition Action Group (SNAG).
- **Healthy lunches will be awarded 10 house points in celebration assembly.**
- Where packed lunches that aren't in line with the packed lunch guidelines are brought into school, SMSAs will make a note. If a child regularly brings a packed lunch that does not conform to the policy, then the school will contact the parents/carers to discuss this.
- The school will work with the pupils to provide positive and calm dining room arrangements.

- The school will ensure that free, fresh drinking water is readily available at all times.
- Glass bottles and tins will not be permitted due to safety issues that could arise.
- Wherever possible, the school will ensure that packed lunch pupils and school dinner pupils will be able to sit and eat together.
- All uneaten food and waste will be kept in the lunchbox and returned home with the child so that parents are able to monitor their child's food consumption.
- All staff to be aware of specific nutritional needs for children with allergies and intolerances (e.g. celiac) as well as an awareness of any special dietary requests for children with cultural, religious or other requirements.
- The school is aware of food allergies, has a procedure in place to manage food allergies and other special dietary requirements within school. All staff will receive annual training for the use of Epi Pens in the case of anaphylactic shock

## Guidelines for Packed lunches

A healthy lunch every day will give your child the energy and nutrients they need to grow, develop and learn.

The following is a **guideline** for what **should** be included, based on the Eatwell plate.

### Include foods from the following four food groups:

1. A portion of starchy food such as white or wholegrain bread, rolls, pitta, wrap or bagel. Salads based around potatoes, potato or sweet potato wedges, rice, pasta, cous-cous, plain breadsticks, high-fibre crackers (oatcakes) noodles or any whole grain cereal (e.g. oats) – these foods provide carbohydrates to give your child energy for the afternoon.
2. At least one portion of fruit or vegetables – these foods provide vitamins and minerals to help protect against illness. Fresh, frozen, canned or dried, these can all count towards 5-A-DAY.
  - **Vegetables:** carrot, cucumber, mange tout, pepper or celery sticks, tomatoes, grated carrot in sandwiches or wraps, sweetcorn, peas or pulses in salad.
  - **Fruits:** sliced apple or melon, plums, bananas, grapes, strawberries, blueberries, kiwi, satsumas, chunks of pineapple or dried fruit.
3. A portion of meat, fish, eggs, beans or other non-dairy sources of protein – these foods provide protein, iron and zinc to help your child grow. Sliced meat, chicken, fish, sliced egg in sandwiches, rolls or wraps, meat alternatives such as tofu, falafels or pulses like kidney beans, lentils or chickpeas in salads. Many of the children at St Stephen's love hummus which is made from blended chickpeas.
4. A portion of milk or dairy foods – these foods are a good source of calcium, for strong bones and teeth. Yoghurt or fromage-frais, cheese in sandwiches or wraps or semi-skimmed milk.

### Plus:

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\*\*A drink of water (unlimited), squash/flavoured water (only with lunch), smoothies (maximum portion 150 mls), semi-skimmed, 1% fat or skimmed milk or yogurt drink.

The following items should be only included **occasionally** and be eaten alongside foods from the above food groups:

- Processed meat products such as sausage rolls, individual pies, corned meat, Pepperami and sausages.
- One portion of the following items: Cakes/sweet pastries, biscuits/chocolate coated biscuits/small cookies and cereal bars – when eaten alongside a balanced and nutritious packed lunch and not to be consumed at break time.
- Avoid salty snacks such as crisps which are high in saturated fat and salt - instead include plain breadsticks, high-fibre crackers (such as oatcakes) vegetables and fruit with no added salt, sugar or fat. If choosing crisps or popcorn, please limit to 30g packets.
- Chocolate spread and jam as a sandwich filler.
- Fruit juices (such as orange or apple) as these are concentrated and therefore have a very high sugar content.

The following items are **not permitted** at any time:

- Confectionery such as 'adult-sized' solid chocolate bars and sweets (smaller bars such as Club, Rocky, Mini Rolls etc. are permitted).
- Fizzy drinks (even if labelled as 'sugar-free', 'no-added sugar' or 'reduced sugar') are not permitted as these drinks can contribute to tooth decay and provide little nutritional value.
- **Any foods containing nuts** due to nut allergies within the school.

## Other Practical tips for healthy, safe and tasty packed lunches

- Inform the school about any food allergies or intolerances.
- In warmer months, use insulated cool bags, frozen drinks or a reusable ice pack to keep food cool and stop it going off.
- Vary lunchbox contents for a good balance of nutrients.
- Label your child's packed lunch clearly with their name and class.
- Examples of packed lunch box recipes and snack ideas can be found here: <https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/school-packed-lunch-inspiration>

The SNAG team will also be producing some example menus and recipes.

## Snacks (at break time)

The following items are permitted for break-time snacks:

- Toast and fruit provided by the kitchen.

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- Fresh or dried fruit.
- Vegetable sticks.
- Babybel cheese.
- Water (squash is only permitted with food at lunch time – **squash will not be allowed in classrooms or at break**).

## School Cooked lunches

Cooked lunches at St Stephen's Junior School are provided by our inhouse catering team

Each term a new menu is agreed. Menus are adapted to the children's tastes whilst keeping in line with national nutritional guidelines.

<https://www.gov.uk/school-meals-healthy-eating-standards>

## Food at other times

At St. Stephen's, we believed in a balanced nutritious diet. With that in mind, we understand that moderation is the key to balance and therefore, sometimes, foods higher in fat or sugar may be consumed. As part of our wider curriculum, we explore food and nutrition through our clubs, skills days and enquiries. There may be times where we try foods which fall into the smallest section of the Eatwell plate. However, we will always do so alongside conversations about balance and moderation.

- Rewards – All staff at St. Stephen's may choose other methods of reward outside of sweets. For example, fruit or stationary.
- Chocolottery – This is connected to our Easter celebrations. The format we use ensures that children will not 'win' excessive amounts of chocolate. We believe this is in moderation and therefore, is acceptable.
- Shining stars – As part of the reward, Shining Stars have cake and squash with the Headteacher. Again, this is in moderation and therefore, is acceptable.

## Sharing the policy

- The school will ensure that all parents/carers are aware of the policy by sharing information via the school newsletter, website and the school Facebook page.
- 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.

## References

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/sep/06/kids-school-lunchboxes-junk-food-research-england>

<http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/79612/2/greenwood16.pdf>

<http://northealingprimary.org/welcome%20pack/Packed%20Lunch%20Policy%20Toolkit.pdf>