

Lunch Box Policy

Reviewed: **May 2022**



Lunch Box Policy

Introduction

To grow, stay healthy and concentrate at school, children need to eat a nutritionally well-balanced diet. Eating a range of healthy foods 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 sugar, fat 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.

Our Aims

Our Aims 1. To ensure that packed lunches (brought in from home) reflect the standards for school meals. 2. To ensure that packed lunches provide children with the energy and fuel to concentrate and flourish at school. 3. To help children develop an understanding of healthy eating.

Rationale

All food provided at school is governed by law, through the School Food Standards. These government standards are intended to help children develop healthy eating habits and ensure the energy and nutrition they need across the day. The standards apply to all food and drinks provided at school such as breakfast clubs, school dinners and afterschool clubs. It is therefore important to have comparable policy guidance for packed lunches brought in from home. Based on the government's School Food Standards, packed lunches brought in from home should follow the policy guidance. By introducing our lunch box policy, this is the school's way of taking responsibility for improving children's health, such as increasing the number of children of a healthy weight and decreasing the number of children with tooth decay. The positive consequences from introducing this policy should also ensure high attendance levels for all pupils, through good health.

Responsibilities

The school, governors, parents and carers have a responsibility to ensure children are provided with an enjoyable, filling and healthy lunch.

Our school will:

- Educate all children on what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and why this is important.
- Provide suitable storage for packed lunch boxes.

- Provide a dining environment that is appropriate, hygienic and attractive with adequate seating and space to eat.
- Provide fresh drinking water at all times.
- Ensure staff supervising pupils eating food from home are aware of school policy and hygiene procedures.
- Regularly communicate with parents/carers and staff the expectations on the school lunch box policy.

Parents/Carers are asked to:

- Follow the schools lunch box policy, please see below
- Notify the school of any allergies or special diets

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Things that are recommended for a healthy lunch box:

- Base a packed lunch around a starchy food – such as a sandwich, pasta, a roll, wrap, pitta or bagel.
- Include at least one portion of vegetables or salad. A child's portion is between 40-60 grams. For example, cucumber or carrot sticks or 2 ½ cups of salad (remember to aim for 5 portions of fruit and vegetables throughout the day)
- Include at least one portion of fruit. For example, an apple, banana, 10-15 grapes (ideally cut in half) or strawberries or one tablespoon of raisins.
- Include a dairy food such as cheese, yoghurt, or fromage frais
- Include a source of protein such as meat, fish, chicken or non-dairy vegetarian sources such as eggs, beans, lentils or quorn, products

Helpful tip: a portion is the amount of food that fits into the palm of your child's hand.

Suitable Drinks:

- Plain water (still)
- Pure fruit or vegetable juice
- No added sugar squash (at least 45% fruit recommended)

At Ryhill Junior Infant and Nursery School, we would like our pupils to have healthy, balanced lunch boxes so we ask that you **avoid**:

- Chocolate coated biscuits apart from as a Friday treat: instead swap to sugar free jelly, plain popcorn, malt loaf or fruit cake on other days of the week.
- Items such as cooked sausages, sausage rolls, chipolatas, corned meat, individual meat pies as these are high in fats and salts.
- Crisps apart from as a Friday treat: swap crisps for savoury crackers, breadsticks, and seeds on other days on the week.
- Cold fast food e.g. burgers, chicken nuggets, chips etc

Packed lunches should **not** include:

- Leftovers from the previous day's take-away/hot food (due to health and safety guidelines).
- Fizzy drinks, drinks with added sugar or sweeteners.
- Confectionary (sweets or bars of chocolate) (this is in line with the School Food Standards)
- No nuts, or food that contains nuts (this is to protect children with nut allergies).

Special diets and allergies

The foods and drinks included in the policy guidance will be suitable for most therapeutic diets. However any pupils following a specific diet devised by a health professional must adhere to it. For these reasons pupils are also not permitted to swap food items. If any issues arise staff will consult parent/carers or relevant health professionals for advice.

Fussy eating is common in young children. Sometimes it might be certain types of food; other times it might seem like they hardly want to eat at all. This can feel like a real challenge, but most children given the right conditions and support, will get through it in the end. The school will not force any children to eat, instead we will try to create an environment where the child feels comfortable with what they are eating before encouraging them to try different foods/eat more. Please contact school if you would like to discuss your child's fussy eating.

Communication

We want to work with parents/carers to help educate our children about healthy dietary choices so that they can make their own informed choices independently when they are older. We have the best interests of the children at heart. There will be ongoing promotion of the need to provide healthy packed lunches through:

- Pupil, parent / carers newsletters
- School prospectus and website/Dojo
- Curriculum content
- Health weeks / healthy eating activities
- Reward schemes
- Workshops for parents
- School Council

Monitoring

At no time will a child be made to feel ashamed of their lunchbox contents. However, we may send parents a reminder of this policy if lunchbox contents regularly fall short of the expectations in this policy. School will conduct random checks on lunch boxes to ensure the guidance is being followed. A school dinner will be given to children if the school believes the lunch box is inappropriate.

Children will not be challenged over lunch boxes containing such items. Instead, children who do observe this guidance will be praised and rewarded. Healthy Eating Stickers will be issued to children as a reward.

Universal Free School Meal

All infant age pupils (Reception/Years 1 and 2) are entitled to receive a free school meal. Your infant children will automatically receive a free school meal, unless you notify us otherwise. Your child, regardless of age will qualify for free school meals if they're in full-time education and you receive one of the following benefits:

- income support
- income based job seekers allowance
- income related employment and support allowance
- guarantee element of state pension credit
- child tax credit with no working tax credit and have an income as assessed by the Inland Revenue that does not exceed £16,190 (subject to change annually)
- support under Part 1V of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you receive)

For more information please see the Government website.

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>