



Saint Jérôme Church of England Bilingual School

Packed Lunch Policy

Policy created:	Not recorded in the previous version
Policy reviewed and updated:	September 2026
Date of next review:	September 2027
Review cycle:	Annually. The previous version had no stated review date at all.
Linked policies:	Allergy Safety Policy, Supporting Children with Medical Needs Policy, Charging and Remissions Policy, Equality Scheme and Accessibility Plan.

Version history

Date	Version	Summary of changes
Undated	V1	Original policy. No review date, version history or named contact. Scoped, oddly, to 'all Year 3 pupils' only, rather than the whole school, a drafting error or a leftover from before universal infant free school meals existed. Required a blanket ban on 'nuts and nut products', which directly conflicts with the current DfE statutory guidance on allergy safety, which specifically discourages 'nut-free' rules in favour of a general allergy-aware environment. Did not reflect that, since 2026-27, every primary pupil in London is entitled to a free hot school lunch, making packed lunches the exception rather than the default. Made no reference to the kitchen's ability to cater for medical, religious or cultural dietary needs.
September 2026	V2	Reframed to reflect that, from September 2026, every Reception to Year 6 pupil is entitled to a free hot school lunch: Key Stage 1 under the national Universal Infant Free School Meals offer, and Key Stage 2 under the Mayor of London's Universal Free School Meals scheme, funded for the 2026-27 academic year (Mayoral Decision MD3509, approved 18 March 2026). Packed lunches are now positioned as the exception, available where a family chooses or needs one, rather than the default option. Removed the blanket nut ban and replaced it with the same allergy-aware approach set out in our Allergy Safety Policy, since the school's current guidance discourages 'nut-free' rules as they create a false sense of security. Added that the kitchen caters for a wide range of medical, religious and cultural dietary needs, and that families are encouraged to speak to our catering team, led by Chef Lisa Boyle, before defaulting to a packed lunch, so that a child's needs can be met through a hot meal wherever possible. Removed the 'Year 3 only' scoping, which no longer has any clear basis. Added a light safeguarding note in line with KCSIE. Removed the universal signed reply slip, previously required from every family regardless of whether they used a packed lunch; this is now shared directly with families who tell the office their child will be having one, rather than collected in advance from the whole school. Added a full cover page and version history, since none previously existed.

Headteacher:

Kate Schutte

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(Kate Schutte)

Co-Chairs of Governors: Approved by Governors on 17th September 2026

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(Vas Lappas and Edward Stowell)

1. Free School Meals for Every Pupil

New section for September 2026, reflecting the current funding position.

Since the introduction of Universal Infant Free School Meals in 2014, every pupil in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 has been entitled to a free hot school lunch. From the 2023-24 academic year, the Mayor of London has funded the extension of this offer to Key Stage 2, so that every pupil in Reception to Year 6 at Saint Jérôme is entitled to a free, hot, nutritious lunch, cooked on site. This funding has been confirmed for the 2026-27 academic year (Mayoral Decision MD3509, approved 18 March 2026).

Our kitchen, led by Chef Lisa Boyle, caters for a wide range of medical, religious and cultural dietary needs, including common allergies, coeliac disease, halal and vegetarian requirements. Where a child has a specific dietary need, we encourage parents and carers to speak to Chef Lisa Boyle or the school office in the first instance, so that a hot meal can be provided wherever possible, rather than assuming a packed lunch is necessary. See also our Allergy Safety Policy and Supporting Children with Medical Needs Policy for how specific dietary and medical needs are recorded and managed.

Given this, packed lunches are discouraged as a routine choice, and we would always rather work with a family to meet a child's needs through our kitchen. However, we recognise that some families will still prefer, or need, to provide a packed lunch, for example for personal preference, a specific dietary or medical need our kitchen cannot yet accommodate, or a particular occasion such as a school trip. This policy sets out our expectations where a packed lunch is provided.

2. Who This Policy Applies To

Corrected for September 2026: the previous version was scoped only to Year 3 pupils, with no clear basis for that restriction.

- All pupils, in any year group, whose parents or carers choose or need to provide a packed lunch, to be eaten in school or on a school trip during normal school hours
- All pupils eating snacks before or after school on school grounds
- All staff eating a packed lunch in school, or on a school trip, in the presence of pupils.

3. Aims

To ensure we give consistent messages about food and health, this policy aims to:

- Contribute to pupils' health and wellbeing
- Educate pupils about healthy choices
- Promote consistency between packed lunches and our school-cooked meals, which meet the Requirements for School Food Regulations 2014 (the School Food Standards)
- Improve the environment in respect of litter
- Support the school in maintaining Healthy Schools status.

4. Our School Will

- Ensure fresh drinking water is available at lunchtime
- Provide appropriate dining facilities for all pupils, whether having a hot school lunch or a packed lunch
- Work with parents to ensure packed lunches meet the standards below.

5. What a Packed Lunch Should Include

Every day, a packed lunch should include:

- At least one portion of vegetables, such as carrot sticks, cucumber sticks, a small tomato, or lettuce
- At least one portion of fruit, such as a small apple, small banana, kiwi, or grapes
- Meat, fish or another source of protein, such as lentils, chickpeas, hummus or falafel
- A starchy item, such as bread, pasta, rice, couscous, noodles or potatoes

- A dairy food, such as cheese, yoghurt, fromage frais or custard
- A drink, such as water, semi-skimmed milk or a yoghurt drink.

6. What a Packed Lunch Should Not Include

Updated for September 2026: the previous version specifically banned nuts and nut products. Our Allergy Safety Policy, in line with current DfE statutory guidance, does not operate a 'nut-free' rule, since this creates a false sense of security when any of the 14 major food allergens can cause a serious reaction, and 'may contain' labelling makes such rules difficult to enforce consistently. Instead, we ask all parents and carers to be allergy-aware, and the school maintains its own safeguards around known allergens, set out in our Allergy Safety Policy.

- Confectionery, such as chocolate bars and sweets
- Snacks such as crisps, which should only be included occasionally
- Meat products such as sausage rolls, pasties, individual pies or sausages, which should only be included occasionally
- Fizzy drinks or drinks with a high sugar content.

Cakes and biscuits are allowed, but we encourage your child to eat these only as part of a balanced meal.

Parents and carers are asked not to include any of our pupils' known allergens in shared or classroom food, and to check current guidance sent home about individual pupils' allergies where relevant. Where any food is pre-packed for direct sale or handed out more widely, our own staff follow the labelling requirements of Natasha's Law; parents providing a packed lunch for their own child are asked to check ingredient labels carefully, particularly for the 14 major allergens.

7. Special Diets

We understand that some pupils may require special diets for medical, religious or cultural reasons that mean the standards above cannot be met exactly. Parents providing a packed lunch in these circumstances are asked to make it as healthy as possible within those constraints, and are encouraged to speak to Chef Lisa Boyle about whether our kitchen could instead meet the need through a hot school meal.

8. What Parents and Carers Need to Know

- The school cannot provide refrigeration for packed lunches
- The school cannot reheat food
- Pupils must be able to independently open all items in their packed lunch, for example yoghurt pots
- Children must not share, swap or exchange the contents of their packed lunch with another child, under any circumstances
- Packed lunches must be provided in a suitable lunch box, clearly labelled with the child's name
- All food waste and wrapping is sent home, so parents can see what their child has eaten
- Parents should not provide a takeaway meal.

9. A Note on Wellbeing

New for September 2026, reflecting KCSIE's emphasis on staff noticing patterns that may indicate a child's needs are not being met.

Staff who notice a pattern of a pupil regularly having an empty, very limited, or persistently inappropriate packed lunch are encouraged to gently check in with the family, in the first instance mentioning that a free, hot school lunch is available every day, since some families may simply be unaware of this or find a packed lunch easier to organise. Where a pattern raises wider concerns about a child's welfare, staff should follow our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

10. Working with Parents and Carers

Working with parents and carers is a vital part of our school's ethos around food education, and a necessary part of achieving Healthy Schools and Rights Respecting Schools recognition. We believe our partnership with parents and carers enables us to plan the best possible food education and provision for our pupils.

Removed for September 2026: the previous version required every family in the school to sign and return a reply slip acknowledging this policy, regardless of whether their child had a packed lunch or a free hot school meal. Now that a hot lunch is the default for every pupil, and a packed lunch is the exception, asking every family to sign a universal slip is disproportionate, and is not something any other policy at the school currently asks for. Instead, where a family tells the office their child will be having a packed lunch, the office will share this policy with them directly at that point, rather than in advance from the whole school.