

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School



Packed Lunch Policy

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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 well-being 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.

Rationale:

- Schools are required to positively promote the health and well-being of its pupils.
- 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

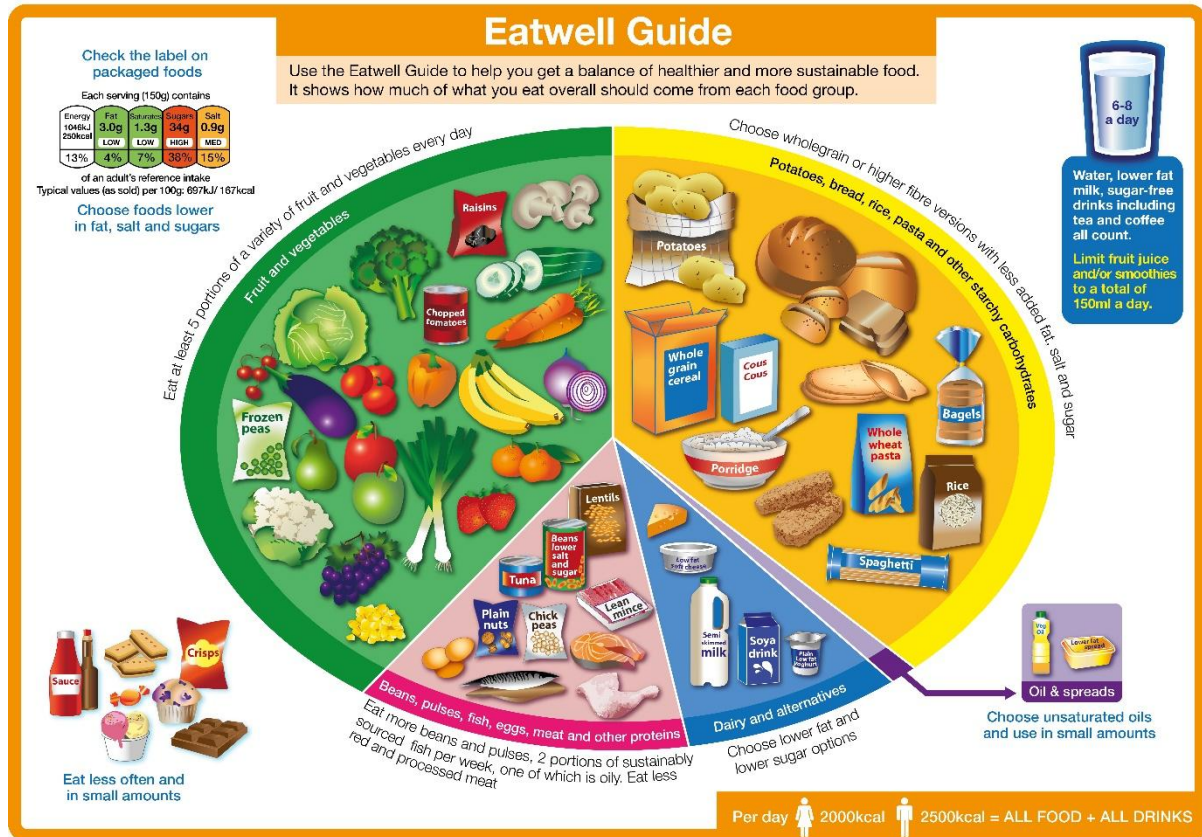
- To improve the nutritional quality of packed lunches in schools and the eating habits of children at lunchtimes.
- To develop an awareness in pupils, parents, staff and the wider community that the school takes a pro-active approach to promoting healthy eating.
- To encourage healthy eating habits in childhood that can influence health and well-being in later life.

Implementation

This packed lunch policy fits within a wider context of promoting a whole school approach to food and healthy eating.

Things to include in a Packed Lunch

Try to base the contents around the main food groups detailed in the Eatwell Guide displayed below:



Make sure your Packed Lunch contains:

- 1) A portion of bread (or similar), rice, potatoes or pasta:**
These starchy foods are a healthy source of energy. Good choices include rolls, bread, wraps, chapatti, pitta bread, rice or pasta salad. Wholemeal varieties are good options as they contain more fibre than white varieties.
- 2) Plenty of fruit and vegetables:**
Fruit and vegetable provide vitamins, minerals and fibre. Eating these foods keep children healthy and reduces the risk of disease in later life. Lunches should include at least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables.
- 3) A portion of dairy or calcium rich alternative:**
These foods provide calcium for healthy bones and teeth. Include one portion at lunch, for example an individual cheese portion or pot of plain or low sugar yoghurt, or dairy free alternative.

4) Some protein in the form of beans, pulses, fish, egg, meat:

These foods provide protein for growth. Packed lunches should include one of these foods each day. Suggestions include boiled egg, ham, chicken, soya, Quorn, tuna, mackerel, salmon, hummus, chickpeas, lentils or beans.

5) A healthy drink:

It is important to stay hydrated. The best drink is plain water. Water will readily be available in school.

Things to avoid in a Packed Lunch

You should try to avoid food and drinks that are high in fat, sugar and/or salt, as these are bad for our health.

Please support school by not including the items below:



Confectionery, such as chocolate bars & sweets

Meat and pastry products, such as sausage rolls or pies



Savoury snacks, such as crisps or processed meat snacks (e.g. *Pepperami*)



Chocolate coated biscuits or wafers



Cakes, bakes, buns or slices

Fizzy drinks or any other sugar sweetened drinks including milkshakes



Nut or nut products are not allowed in school, because of the danger they present to children with allergies

Portion Size

Carefully consider the portion sizes that you include in your child's packed lunch. They should have the amount they can finish comfortably, with little or no waste. Too much food and too much choice can be overwhelming and unappetising.

Waste and Disposal

The school will, within reason, send any uneaten packed lunch food items back home. The reason for this is so parents can monitor what their child has eaten during the day.

Packed Lunch Containers

It is the responsibility of the parents / carers to provide an appropriate packed lunch container where food items can be stored until lunchtime. Parents are advised to include an ice pack.

Storage of Packed Lunches

The school will provide storage area / facilities for packed lunches. However, the school cannot provide cooled storage areas and therefore cannot take legal responsibility for foods prepared at home and then brought into school.

Monitoring

If we have any concerns about packed lunches, school will contact parents to offer support.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually.