

St. Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy

School Lunchbox Policy

1. Introduction

What children eat at school is important and school lunches have to meet strict standards to provide 1/3 of a child's nutrient requirements. Research from the Food Standards Agency (School Lunchbox Survey, 2004) and later research by the School Food Trust has shown that the majority of lunchboxes surveyed were high in fat, sugar and salt.

The policy should form part of the overall food in school policy.

2. Aim

This policy has been drawn up in consultation with parents, pupils and staff with the following aims:

- To improve the nutritional quality of packed lunches and other foods taken into schools.
- To ensure that all packed lunches brought from home and consumed in school (or on school trips) provide the child with healthy food that is similar in its nutritional value to food served in schools.
- To make a positive contribution to children's health by encouraging healthy eating habits in childhood setting a trend for lifelong changes.
- To contribute to the self-evaluation for review by Ofsted

This policy applies to all pupils and parents providing packed lunches and other foods to be consumed within school or on school trips during normal school hours. This packed lunch policy fits within a wider context of promoting a whole school approach to food and healthy eating.

3. The policy ensures that:

- The school will work with the pupils to provide attractive and appropriate dining room arrangements.
- The school will work with parents to ensure that packed lunches abide by the standards listed below. A checklist will be provided to every child who stays packed lunch, which will outline what a healthy, well balanced lunch should contain.
- The school will ensure that free, fresh drinking water is readily available at all times and jugs of water and beakers are placed on each table during the lunchtime.
- Pupils are advised to bring packed lunches in insulated bags with freezer blocks where possible to stop the food going off.
- Glass bottles and tins are not 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 around a table to develop social skills and good table manners.
- Children eating packed lunch will be given a plate to eat their lunch off.
- 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.

4. Food contained in a packed lunch – please amend this section to meet the needs of your school

Packed lunches should be based on the Eat Well plate model and should include the following every day:

- **Fruit and Vegetables** - at least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables or salad.
- **Non-dairy source of protein** - meat, fish, egg, beans or pulses such as lentils, kidney beans, chickpeas, hummus and falafel.
- **A starchy food** like bread, pasta, rice, couscous, noodles, potatoes or other type of cereals.
- **Dairy foods** such as milk, cheese, yoghurt, fromage frais, 100% fruit smoothies, yoghurt drinks e.g Actimel (no Yazhoo, sweetened milk drinks or milkshakes).
- **Drinks** - the school provides water but a healthier drink, such as semi-skimmed or skimmed milk is acceptable (no flavoured water).

To keep packed lunches in line with the food based standards for school meals, packed lunches should **not** include:

- High fat, high salt, high sugar snacks such as crisps, sweet popcorn, other high fat / salt packet savoury snacks such as crisps. Pepperoni, sausage rolls, lunchables or dunkers are not permitted.
- Confectionery such as chocolate bars, chocolate-coated biscuits, sweets and chewing gum.
- Chocolate spread, honey, jam, peanut butter or marmalade as a sandwich filling.
- Cereal bars and fruit bars.
- Fizzy / sugary drinks or fruit flavoured squash/water. This includes diet drinks and energy drinks which can contain high levels of caffeine and other additives and are not suitable for children.

Occasionally, the following may be included:

- Meat products such as individual pies, corned meat and sausages / chipolatas should be included only occasionally due to their high fat and salt content.
- Cakes and plain biscuits are allowed but children should be encouraged to eat these only as part of a balanced meal.
- **ON A FRIDAY CHILDREN ARE ALLOWED TO BRING IN EITHER A CHOCOLATE BAR OR A PACKET OF CRISPS IF THEY WISH TO.**

Special diets and allergies

The school also recognises that some pupils may require special diets that do not allow for the standards to be met exactly. In this case parents are urged to be responsible in ensuring that packed lunches are as healthy as possible and to inform the child's class teacher so that a health care plan can be drawn up. For these reasons pupils are also not permitted to swap food items.

5. Health and safety

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. 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 area / facilities for packed lunch bags, in the most convenient and appropriate place possible. However the school cannot provide cooled storage areas and therefore cannot take legal responsibility for foods prepared at home and then brought into school.

Lunchbox storage is provided for each class outside of their classroom. Children are responsible for collecting their own lunchbox from their designated area before lunch and returning it afterwards. Any late lunchboxes must be delivered to the office by parents before the lunch period. School staff cannot be responsible for chasing up lost or forgotten lunchboxes.

6. Assessment, evaluation and reviewing:

- Packed lunches will be regularly reviewed and random spot checks will be carried out, by teaching staff, catering staff, midday meal supervisors or pre-identified pupil packed lunch helpers.
- Healthy lunches will be rewarded by stickers and acknowledged by congratulatory letters home.
- Parents and pupils who do not adhere to the Packed Lunch Policy will receive a letter in their lunchbox. This will explain that they have an item/items that do not adhere to the schools policy and a leaflet informing them of the recommendations, along with a checklist of what to include in a healthy balanced lunch. If a child regularly brings a packed lunch that does not conform to the policy then the school will contact the parents to discuss this.
- Pupils with special diet or food allergies will be given due consideration. However staff must be notified about this before-hand and in the case of allergies or intolerances a supporting letter of diagnosis must be submitted to school and a care plan drawn up with the schools SENCO.

7. Dissemination of the policy

- The school will write to all new and existing parents / carers to inform them of the policy.
- The policy will be available on the school's website and will be incorporated into the school prospectus.
- The school will use opportunities such as parent's evenings to promote this policy as part of the whole school approach to healthier eating.
- All school staff, including teaching and catering staff as well as the school nurse will be informed of this policy and will support its implementation

8. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed as part of the schools agreed policy review process. In addition any major legislative or governmental changes regarding school food may lead to this policy being amended.

Date of Policy - June 2014

Review date for the policy - June 2017