

Athelstan Primary School Packed Lunch Policy

The aim of our policy is:

To ensure that all packed lunches and morning snacks brought from home provide children with healthy and nutritious food. Our healthy packed lunch policy is applicable to all children and staff in the school and is based on the national Eatwell Guide (See Appendix) which reflects the government mandatory School Food Standards (Appendix II) both of which promote healthy choices and restrict foods high in fat, sugar and salt.

Why and how we have created a packed lunch policy

Eating a healthy diet and exercising regularly can help children and young people to stay a healthy weight as reflected in the Change 4 Life message 'Eat Well, Move More, Live longer'. This means eating a healthy packed lunch or school meal is important to help you stay healthy, feel good and improve the ability to learn.

Our packed lunch policy has been developed in response to our school's pupil and parent/carer research, discussions and observations into the content of packed lunches. We found that too many contained unhealthy foods and sugary drinks; this finding is similar to that of other schools in England. Furthermore, in some cases, pupils were bringing packed lunches containing an excessive number of food items, compared to the sandwich option of school meals, which contains four (sandwich, fruit or vegetable, cheese or yoghurt and biscuit or tray bake).

Ofsted are required to report on how the school promotes the personal development and wellbeing of all pupils assessing the extent which school supports pupils to make healthier choices and quality of all food consumed – this may include snacks and packed lunches brought into school.

Our Policy

Our Packed Lunch Policy Framework was created by our Task Group, using the results of consultation and research. This group consisted of pupils, parents/carers, governors, staff, Taylor Shaw staff and a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Suggestions based on the Eatwell Guide and the School Food Standards are:

- **Fruit and Vegetables** - At least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables every day.
- **Proteins** - Meat, fish, eggs, or a non-dairy protein (e.g. lentils, kidney beans, chickpeas, houmous, falafel), every day, try to include oily fish, such as salmon, mackerel.
- **Carbohydrates** - A starchy food such as any type of bread (white or whole grain rolls, pitta bread or wraps), pasta, rice, couscous, noodles, potatoes or another cereal food every day.
- **Dairy or alternative** - A dairy food such as milk, cheese, yoghurt or fromage frais, every day.

Occasionally, the following may be included:

- **Other** - Meat products such as sausage rolls, sausages/chipolatas and ham should be included only occasionally due to their high fat and salt content.
- **Desserts** - Cakes and biscuits are ok, but should be eaten as part of lunchtime to be kind to teeth.
- **Crisps** – Standard size packets are ok occasionally but larger grab bags are not encouraged.

Foods and drinks not allowed:

- **Confectionary** – Sugary snacks such as chocolate bars and any form of sweets are not permitted.
- **Drinks** - Sugary soft drinks, such as fruit juice, squash and fizzy drinks (even if labelled as 'sugar-free', 'no-added sugar' or 'reduced sugar' as these drinks can contribute to tooth decay and provide little nutritional value) are not permitted. Flavoured milks, smoothies and milkshakes are also not permitted.
- **Unhealthy cold leftovers** – Such as pizza, chips, fish fingers, etc.

Drinks

It has been recognised that children's concentration and behaviour improves when children drink water throughout the day. Dehydration can give children headaches and make them tired.

- We encourage all pupils to bring a plastic bottle of water to school. These may be kept at school and can be filled and emptied each day. This will allow children to have access to fresh drinking water throughout each day. We will ensure that free, fresh drinking water is readily available at all times, therefore, it is not essential to include a drink in packed lunches as water is provided.
- The only drinks allowed in school at any time are water and plain milk.
- No hot drinks are allowed.

Morning Snacks

All pupils in KS2 are encouraged to bring in a healthy snack to eat during morning playtime. This could be a piece of fruit or a cereal bar. Snacks containing/covered in chocolate are not considered a healthy snack.

In KS2, there is a tuck shop during playtime, run by the School Council, selling healthy snacks to pupils.

Pupils in FS and KS1 are provided with fruit, free of charge.

Special diets and allergies

The school is aware of food allergies and has a procedure in place to manage food allergies and other special dietary requirements within school in partnership with our school meal provider Taylor Shaw. In this case, parents/carers are urged to be responsible in ensuring that packed lunches are as healthy as possible.

- As we have children and staff with nut allergies, nuts and nut products (e.g. peanut butter) should not be sent to school because of allergy concerns. **Please note that chocolate spread is made from nuts and is therefore not permitted.** For reasons relating to allergies, pupils are also not permitted to swap food.

Our school commitment - Food and Drink in Packed Lunches

Athelstan Primary School recognises that our children come from diverse home backgrounds, cultures, ethnic and faith groups. Our school aims to meet the needs of all children and ensure equality of provision whilst taking account of this diversity and difference.

We will encourage all children to eat a school meal, especially those entitled to a free school meal. However, parents/carers of pupils wishing to have packed lunches for a particular reason are expected to provide their children with packed lunches which are in line with our packed lunch policy.

If pupils have non-permitted items, such as sweets or chocolate bars, staff will ask pupils not to consume them and to take them home at the end of the day, together with a note. If the pupil's entire packed lunch is unsuitable, staff will ensure that the child is offered a school meal and the parent/carer will be asked to pay the cost of this. In this instance, a phone call will be made to the child's parent/carer.

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 encouraged 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.

Hot Food

The school cannot heat food due to food safety and operational reasons. However, if you wish to send hot food,

please use a child-safe insulated food flask that can keep it warm until lunch. Please ensure the food is cooked thoroughly at home and immediately placed in the flask. Hot drinks are not permitted due to the risk of spillage and scalds.

Storage of Packed Lunches

The school will provide storage trolleys for packed lunch bags, in the most convenient 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.

Our commitment

In return we will provide a safe, healthy and appealing eating environment for pupils eating hot and cold school meals and packed lunches and encourage all pupils to eat and drink as much of their lunch as possible.

In addition we will:

- Where possible, any uneaten food will be sent home to communicate with parents/carers.
- We will work with the pupils to provide attractive and appropriate dining room arrangements.
- We will work with parents/carers to ensure that packed lunches meet the standards listed in this policy.
- We will ensure we listen to parents'/carers' views and ensure that this policy meets the needs of children, young people and their families.
- As fridge space is not available in school, pupils are advised to bring food that does not require refrigeration, or packed lunches in insulated bags (cooler bag) or use freezer blocks where possible.
- Teaching and school staff will be aware of the policy, they will lead by example and follow the packed lunch policy.

Assessment, evaluation, rewards and review

On a daily basis, the midday supervisors see what children have in their lunchboxes whilst working in the dining hall. It is not our intention to tell parents/carers what and how they should be feeding their children and we will not do so, but we want to work with parents/carers to educate our children about healthy dietary choices so that they can make their own informed choices independently when they are older.

- We will engage a team of pupils responsible to help monitor and support pupils; it is also a positive opportunity to talk with children about their lunchboxes to encourage healthy eating and drinking.
- We will make contact with parents/carers if lunchbox contents fall short of the expectations in this policy.
- If your child has not eaten enough of their lunch, we will send it home in their lunch box in order for you to see.
- Packed lunches will be regularly reviewed by staff, and pupils and will not be singled out.

Lunchtime staff will keep an eye on the contents of packed lunches and will award stickers to children who eat healthy packed lunches and a healthy school meal.

We will try to support families to bring in packed lunches that follow our guidance and may send home gentle reminders and healthy suggestions from time to time.

How we share the policy

- The policy is shared with all school staff, including teaching and catering staff.
- All new and existing parents/carers are informed of the policy. It is available on the school's website and mentioned in Early Years at transition.
- We promote the policy through assemblies, newsletters, and learning in the classroom.
- All parents/carers receive information to summarise the key points of our policy endorsed by our pupils.

Policy Review

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

Date of implementation: July 2020

Date of review: January 2026

Next review: January 2028