



**Packed Lunch Policy**  
**Darrington CE Primary School**

## **Shine, Share, Flourish.**

We **shine** our light for each other.

We **share** peace, respect and friendship.

We **flourish** and grow together

‘Your word is a lamp to my feet, a light to my path.’ Psalm 119

### **Introduction**

This policy has been drawn up in consultation with pupils, staff and governors to ensure that all packed lunches brought from home and consumed in school (or on visits) provide the pupil with healthy and nutritious food that is similar to food served in schools, which is strictly regulated by national standards.

### **National Guidance**

This policy was drawn up using a range of national documents including information and a draft policy from the School Food Trust, the Food in school’s toolkit (Department of Health) and Food policy in schools – a strategic policy framework for governing bodies (National Governors’ Council, (NGC)

School meals conform to government nutritional guidelines with less sugar, fat and salt and more fresh fruit and vegetables. School lunches also provide a good balance of “complex carbohydrates” such as pasta, rice, bread or potatoes with dairy and other protein foods. There is no reason why a packed lunch cannot provide the same nutrition as a cooked meal.

### **Aims**

- To make a positive contribution to children’s health and well-being by encouraging healthy eating habits in childhood, setting a trend for lifelong changes.
- To encourage happier and calmer children and young people.
- To promote consistency between packed lunches and food provided by schools.

This policy applies to all pupils and parents/carers providing packed lunches and other foods to be consumed within school or on visits. This also fits within a wider context of promoting a whole school approach to food, healthy eating and well-being.

### **Why are we concerned about the content of children’s packed lunches?**

Nationally, about half of all school children take a packed lunch to school rather than eating food prepared at school. Recent reports, however, have shown that the food typically eaten in lunchboxes provides too much fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt - and not enough fruits and vegetables and essential nutrients. At Darrington school we have observed packed lunches containing items such as large family sized chocolate bars, large bags of crisps, cakes and high fat and sugar snacks on a daily basis. We have also seen a change in behaviour and concentration levels after lunch time which subsequently cuts into learning time.

Nationally, about 70% of children’s lunchboxes contain crisps, cheese products, chocolate bars, fruit strings and biscuits and only half of all lunchboxes contain a fruit or vegetable - with very few containing both. In almost a fifth of lunchboxes there is no starchy food such as sandwiches, pasta, rice or an equivalent and therefore lacking healthy starchy foods. Many packed lunches contain soft drinks, increasing the sugar content of the packed lunch.

The packed lunch represents approximately a third of the child’s daily food intake and therefore it is important that it offers a meal in line with the **Eatwell food profile** to ensure that all the nutrients needed are provided. The **Eatwell Guide** shows how much of what we eat overall should come from each food group to achieve a healthy, balanced diet. It is worth noting that you do not need to achieve this balance with every meal, but try to get the balance right over a day or even a week.

## What's in a healthy packed lunch?

A child at school should have about a third of their daily nutrient requirements at lunchtime. This means they need foods that are going to provide them with enough energy, protein, fibre, vitamins and minerals, which are all beneficial to concentration levels in the afternoon.

A healthy packed lunch should contain a mix of foods, and the EatWell Plate shows how much should be eaten from each of the 5 food groups.



A good packed lunch contains:

- A starchy food, such as bread, rolls, pitta bread, naan bread, potatoes, rice, noodles. These foods are good for children to fill up on.
- A good source of protein, iron and zinc such as meat, fish, beans or eggs.
- A good source of calcium such as milk, cheese, yoghurt or fromage frais.
- One portion of fruit and one portion of vegetable or salad to provide all the other vitamins and minerals. A piece of fruit could be a piece of fresh fruit, dried fruit or tinned fruit in fruit juice. A piece of vegetable could be a fresh vegetable such as carrot stick, salad or a vegetable dish.

No single food contains all the essential nutrients the body needs to be healthy and function efficiently so it is important that the content of the packed lunch is varied.

## What about snacks such as crisps, cakes, pastries and sweets?

These foods should only be given occasionally, as children will then appreciate them more. If these foods are included in packed lunches they might eat these first and not have the appetite to eat the other foods that will provide them with the important nutrients they need to grow and develop, and be healthy and active.

## Food and drink in school

- The school will provide facilities for pupils bringing in packed lunches and ensure that free, fresh drinking water is readily available at all times in the dinner hall and therefore drinks do not need to be sent in lunch boxes.
- Water is the only acceptable drink for lunch and throughout the school day.
- The school will work with parents to ensure that packed lunches abide by the standards listed in the policy.
- On school visits you will be advised about food and drink as required.
- Pupils are advised to bring packed lunches in insulated bags with freezer blocks where possible to keep food fresh. We do not have the facility to store packed lunch bags in fridges.
- Children must only eat their own food and **not** other children's.

- Nut or nut products are not permitted as we are a **NUT FREE** school.
- 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.
- Glass bottles and tins are not permitted due to safety issues that could arise.
- Hot food in lunch boxes/thermal flasks is not permitted on health and safety grounds. This is because we cannot monitor the temperature of this food.
- Your child's lunchbox should be clearly labelled with their name.

### Packed lunch items

Packed lunches should be based on the Eat Well plate model and **SHOULD** include:

- **Fruit and Vegetables** - at least one portion of fruit **and** one portion of vegetables or salad – Grapes should be cut in half lengthways
- **Non-dairy source of protein** - meat, fish, egg, beans or pulses (lentils, kidney beans, hummus and falafel).
- **A starchy food** like bread, pasta, rice, couscous, noodles or potatoes
- **Dairy foods** such as milk, cheese, yoghurt, fromage frais
- **Oily Fish**, such as salmon, should be included at least once every three weeks

Packed Lunches could occasionally include:

- **Meat products** such as sausage rolls, individual pies should be included only occasionally due to their high fat and salt content.
- **Savoury high fat/salt snacks** such as crisps
- **Plain biscuits/cakes** are allowed occasionally but children should be encouraged to eat these only as part of a balanced meal.
- **Chocolate spread, honey, jam or marmalade** as a sandwich filling.
- **Cereal bars and fruit bars** (try and make sure these could be part of your 5-a-day and do NOT contain nuts)

To keep packed lunches in line with the food-based standards for school meals, packed lunches **SHOULD NOT** include:

- **Confectionery** such as chocolate bars, sweets, chewing gum
- **Fizzy / sugary drinks or fruit flavoured squash**. This includes diet drinks and energy drinks which can contain high levels of caffeine and other additives and are not suitable for children.
- **Any nut-based products** such as peanut butter sandwiches, other spreads containing nuts such as Nutella and snacks/bars containing nuts.
- Glass bottles or containers.
- **Hot food** in thermal flasks/lunchboxes

### Snacks

Children are permitted to bring in a piece of **fruit or vegetable** to be eaten at the directed time. All children are encouraged to bring in **water** daily in a clear, plastic, labelled water bottle that can be accessed throughout the school day.

### Special Diets /Allergies

The school recognises that some pupils may have diagnosed medical conditions requiring special diets or cultural/religious beliefs which may impact on diet. These may not allow for the standards to be met exactly. In this case parents/carers are urged to be responsible in ensuring that packed lunches are as healthy as possible. We are a nut free school and ask all our parents to ensure that packed lunches do not contain nuts.

### 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. Packed lunches in insulated bags with freezer blocks where possible to keep food fresh are advisable.

### Assessment, Evaluation and Reviewing

Packed lunches will be monitored by lunchtime staff as part of their supervision of the children. If a child brings a packed lunch that does not reflect this policy then the school will place a slip in their lunchbox. If this happens regularly, we will contact the parents to discuss this and offer further support and guidance.

<b>Policy title</b>	Packed Lunch Policy
<b>Monitoring and review</b>	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.
<b>Links</b>	<a href="http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk">www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk</a>
<b>Staff responsible</b>	SLT
<b>Committee responsible</b>	Pupils and Standards Committee
<b>Date approved</b>	July 2021
<b>Review date</b>	