



WELLSPRING
Catering Team

Healthy Packed Lunches for Children Information for Parents

Eating well is important. A healthy, enjoyable lunch gives children the energy they need to learn and play at school. By committing to a regular school meal you can be sure your child is eating well at lunchtime.

Our menus are designed to give children energy and nutrients to grow and develop, be healthy and active. Children who eat a balanced, healthy diet are more likely to be alert in class and have more energy to enjoy an active lifestyle.

If you wish on occasion to pack a lunch for your child, this document provides information on healthier packed lunch options for your child.

What is a healthy packed lunch?

A healthy packed lunch is a balanced meal providing a variety of nutrients, found in four food groups:

STARCHY FOODS

Base each meal on a starchy food, as starchy foods give energy, fibre, vitamins and minerals. Such as:

Bread, potato, rice, pasta

Whole grain varieties are best for fibre, which is vital for a healthy digestive system.

Try different types of bread, such as pitta bread, wraps, chapattis, bread rolls, baguette or crackers.



MEAT & ALTERNATIVES

Protein foods build muscles and provide minerals, for example;

Meat, fish, eggs, beans, pulses

Use butter, margarine, mayonnaise or salad dressings sparingly, because these can be high in fat, or use lower fat alternatives.

LEAN MEATS
Such as chicken or turkey

EGG
Such as boiled, quiche or omelette

MEAT ALTERNATIVES
Such as Quorn or tofu

PULSES
Pulses / beans or cooked meals such as dahl, stew or bean salad.



We Bake A Difference

MILK & DAIRY FOODS

Include a dairy product or dairy alternative, such as;

Yogurt, custard, semi-skimmed or skimmed milk



These foods provide calcium necessary for strong bones and teeth, as well as providing protein and vitamins. Lower fat varieties are healthier.

FRUIT & VEGETABLES

Fruit and vegetables are full of vitamins, minerals and fibre necessary for the body to function properly and to keep you strong and healthy.

You can use fresh, frozen, tinned or dried. All packed lunches should contain at least one piece of fruit, vegetable or salad.

Use fresh fruit and vegetables, which are in season to help the environment and enjoy variety!



IDEAS TO ADD TO LUNCH BOXES:

Tomato, lettuce, cucumber or grated carrot to a sandwich.

A vegetable dish, such as salad or roast vegetables.

Fresh fruit, such as apple, banana, pear or melon pieces.

Dried fruit, such as raisins, apricots or figs.

Fruit salad (fresh or tinned in juice) or vegetable salad.

Finger foods, such as cherry tomatoes, cucumber sticks or celery. Good with a dip, such as raita or salsa.

SNACKS & CONFECTIONERY

Foods high in fat can cause excessive weight and may lead to heart disease. High sugar foods are high in calories and bad for teeth. High salt foods may increase blood pressure, which can lead to heart disease and some cancers. For this reason, packed lunches should not contain chocolate, sweets, fizzy drinks or sugary drinks.

For a healthier snacks try these:

Replace sweets and chocolate with plain biscuits, dried fruit, a small bunch of grapes or fruit salad.

Replace cakes and pastries with fruit bread or malt loaf.

Replace salted savoury snacks with rice cakes, breadsticks, plain popcorn or cheese and crackers.

SPECIAL DIETS & ALLERGIES

We recommend you visit the <https://www.allergyuk.org/living-with-an-allergy/at-school/for-parents/> website for accurate, reliable information on managing allergies in schools.

We recognise that some pupils may require special diets that do not allow for the above guidelines to be met exactly. In this case parents are urged to ensure that packed lunches are as healthy as possible.

DRINKS

Drinks, especially water, help children to concentrate and feel well. Water is freely available in school.