

HEALTHY PACKED LUNCHES AT ST BARNABAS

Following on from our consultation with pupils at the end of last term, we would like to present a new set of guidelines for packed lunches at St Barnabas and an opportunity for parents and governors to put forward their views about healthy eating at school.

The aim of this new policy will be to ensure that all packed lunches brought from home and consumed in school (or on school trips) provide pupils with healthy and nutritious food that is similar in quality to food served in schools, which is required to meet national standards. Furthermore the new policy will help to make a positive contribution to children's health as well as encouraging a happier and calmer population of children and young people.

The suggested guidelines are that packed lunches should include:

- at least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables every day.
- meat, fish, eggs, or a non-dairy protein (e.g. lentils, kidney beans, chickpeas, hummus, peanut butter, falafel) every day.
- oily fish, such as salmon, at least once every three weeks.
- a starchy food such as any type of bread (white or wholegrain rolls, pitta bread or wraps), pasta, rice, couscous, noodles, potatoes or another cereal every day.
- There are lots of ways to avoid sandwiches. Use pasta with pesto, tuna and sweet corn, mozzarella and tomato pasta, or chicken.
- Rice with assorted vegetables, peppers or cold meats.
- A dairy food such as milk, cheese, yoghurt, fromage frais or custard every day.

Packed lunches can occasionally include:

- Meat products such as sausage rolls, individual pies, corned meat and sausages.
- Cakes and biscuits, but encourage your child to eat these as part of a meal.

Packed lunches should not include:

- salty snacks such as crisps - instead include nuts, seeds, vegetables and fruit with no added salt, sugar or fat.
- confectionery such as chocolate bars, chocolate-coated biscuits, cereal bars, processed fruit bars and sweets.
- sugary soft drinks, such as 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).

We would welcome your comments and suggestions regarding this new policy

Keep them fuller for longer

Base the lunchbox on foods like bread, rice, pasta and potatoes. Choose wholegrain where you can.

Mix your slices

If your child doesn't like wholegrain, try making a sandwich from one slice of white bread and one slice of wholemeal/brown bread.

DIY lunches

Wraps and pots of fillings can be more exciting for kids when they get to put them together. Dipping foods are also fun and make a change from a sandwich each day.

Less spread

Cut down on the spread used and try to avoid using mayonnaise in sandwiches.

Cut back on fat

Pick lower fat sandwich fillings, such as lean meats (including chicken or turkey), fish (such as tuna or salmon), reduced-fat cream cheese, and reduced-fat hard cheese.

Ever green

Always add salad to sandwiches – it all counts towards your child's 5 A DAY.

Always add veg

Cherry tomatoes, or sticks of carrot, cucumber, celery and peppers all count towards their 5 A DAY. Adding a small pot of reduced-fat hummus or other dips may help with getting kids to eat vegetables.

Cut down on crisps

If your child really likes their crisps try reducing the number of times you include them in their lunchbox and swap for homemade plain popcorn or plain rice cakes instead.

Add bite-size fruit

Try chopped apple, peeled satsuma segments, strawberries, blueberries, halved grapes or melon slices to make it easier for them to eat. Add a squeeze of lemon juice to stop it from going brown.

Tinned fruit counts

A small pot of tinned fruit in juice – not syrup – is perfect for their lunchbox and is easily stored in the cupboard.

Swap the fruit bars

Dried fruit such as raisins, sultanas and dried apricots are not only cheaper than processed fruit bars and snacks but can be healthier too. Remember to keep dried fruit to mealtimes as it can be bad for your child's teeth.

Swap the sweets

Swap cakes, chocolate, cereal bars and biscuits for malt loaf, fruited teacakes, fruit breads or fruit (fresh, dried or tinned – in juice not syrup).

Go low fat and lower sugar

Go for low-fat and lower sugar yoghurt or fromage frais and add your own fruit.

Check your cheese

Cheese can be high in fat and salt so choose stronger-tasting ones – and use less of it – or try reduced-fat varieties of cheese.

Get them involved

Get your kids involved in preparing and choosing what goes in their lunchbox. They are more likely to eat it if they helped make it.



Make an exciting vegetarian salad wrap with crunchy veg for texture and a good hit of cheddar cheese.

There are lots of ways to try new things in lunch boxes. You could use onion bhajis, chapitis, spring rolls, pokhra, sliced pitta bread.

Variety is the spice of lunchboxes!

Be adventurous and get creative to mix up what goes in their lunchbox.