St Thomas Becket Catholic Primary School

Packed Lunch Policy

INTRODUCTION

As a school it is important for us to ensure that we help our children to lead healthy lifestyles. To grow and stay healthy, children need to eat a nutritionally well balanced diet. Schools can contribute significantly to improving the health and well-being of pupils.

Good nutrition in childhood can help to prevent a variety of health problems, both in the short term and later in life. There is increasing concern that many children are consuming too much fat, sugar and salt and too little fibre, fruit and vegetables.

Packed lunches can contribute to almost a third of a child's weekly food intake and therefore need to be balanced and nutritious.

The aim of our packed lunch policy is: To ensure that all packed lunches brought from home and consumed in school (or on school trips) provide children with healthy and nutritious food.

To promote consistency between packed lunches and school dinners which must adhere to national food standards set by the government. Please visit www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/nutrientstandards for more information.

Why are healthy packed lunches important? Schools are required to positively promote the health and well-being of its pupils. Work around healthy eating is central to this.

The content of lunchboxes should reflect the requirement of schools to meet the food based standards for school meals.

The contents of some lunchboxes can be extremely unhealthy if they contain foods with high levels of fat, sugar and salt, and very little fruit and vegetables.

We encourage healthy eating habits from an early age and seek to improve the overall nutrition of our pupils.

The short term effects of unhealthy packed lunches and food intake can include poor growth, tooth decay, obesity, anaemia, constipation, poor concentration and behavioural problems which may have an impact on a child's learning.

The longer term effects of a poor diet in childhood can be an increased risk of stroke, cancer, heart disease and diabetes in adulthood.

How we will support the policy: We will ensure that free, fresh drinking water is readily available at all times and we strongly encourage a water only policy. **It is not essential to include a drink in packed lunches as water is provided.**

Children's packed lunches should be based on the 5 main food groups; (Food Standards Agency):

Bread, Rice, Potatoes, Pasta These starchy foods are a healthy source of energy. Packed lunches should include 2 or more portions (e.g. bread, pasta, rice, couscous, noodles, potatoes)

Fruit and Vegetables These foods provide vitamins, minerals and fibre. Lunches should include at least 1 portion of fruit or vegetables / salad.

Dairy Foods These foods provide calcium for healthy bones and teeth. Ideally, one portion should be included in a packed lunch (e.g. cheese, yoghurt, fromage frais or custard)

Meat, Fish, Eggs, Beans These foods provide protein for growth. Ideally, packed lunches should include one portion of these foods.

FOODS AND DRINKS HIGH IN FAT AND / OR SUGAR

It is important for all of us, and particularly children, not to fill up on too many foods that are high in fat and / or sugar at the expense of other more nutritious foods. Limiting high fat and sugar foods will help protect young people from becoming overweight as well as helping prevent tooth decay, heart disease, stroke, and diabetes. This is why sweets, chocolate, crisps, fruit bars, toffee, salted popcorn, squash and fizzy drinks are not permitted in packed lunches. Parents are asked to support our school by not including these items in a packed lunch**.**

Occasional cakes and biscuits are allowed but encourage your child to eat these only as part of a balanced meal.

Drinks – The only drink permitted in packed lunches is plain tap water or still mineral water.

Waste and Disposal

Children will take any uneaten packed lunch food items home. One reason for this is so that parents can check what their child has eaten during the day.

Packed lunches <u>should not</u> include:

To ensure consistency and to keep packed lunches in line with food standards for school meals, parents are informed that packed lunches **should not** contain the following:

- Chocolate-coated products
- Chocolate spread as a filling for sandwiches
- Sweets
- Chewing gum
- Sugared / toffee and salted popcorn
- Crisps or any packet savoury snacks high in salt and fat
- cereal bars
- cake bars
- fruit winders or any other processed fruit bars.
- Sugary drinks such as fizzy drinks, sugar -sweetened juice drinks (e.g.
- Ribena, Caprisun, fruit shoots), fruit squash or juice drinks.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Please note that lunches containing nut derivatives are not permitted due to the fact that some children have potentially serious nut allergies.

PLEASE REMEMBER NOT TO GIVE YOUR CHILD WHOLE GRAPES OR TOMATOES - THEY CAN BE A CHOKING HAZARD! If you provide grapes, please cut them in half lengthways, as whole grapes are a choking risk for small children

Evaluation and reviewing: Packed lunches will be regularly reviewed by teaching staff and midday meal supervisors.

Parents and pupils who do not adhere to the Packed Lunch Policy will receive a letter informing them of the Policy. 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.

Please note: pupils with special diets will be given due consideration.

How we will share the policy: All new and existing parents will be informed of the guidance. It will be available on the school's website and in the school prospectus. We will promote the guidance through assemblies, newsletters and learning in the classroom.

For more ideas on nutritional packed lunches visit www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk