MEADOWFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL PACKED LUNCH POLICY

1. Introduction

At Meadowfield Primary we are committed to promoting the health and wellbeing of all our pupils. As part of this commitment, we recognise the important role that a healthy, balanced diet plays in supporting children's growth, development, and learning. This school food and drink policy has been developed to ensure that the food brought into school by pupils reflects our values around nutrition and health, complements our approach to healthy school meals, and supports consistency across the school day.

This policy sets out clear guidelines and expectations for the contents of packed lunches brought from home. It is designed to help parents and carers provide nutritious meals that meet children's dietary needs, support positive eating habits, and align with national guidance and standards.

We aim to work in partnership with families to create a supportive food culture that encourages lifelong healthy eating habits and contributes to a healthier school environment for everyone.

2. Aim

The aims of this whole school food and drink policy are to:

1. Promote healthy eating habits
   Encourage children to eat a balanced, nutritious lunch that supports their physical health, mental wellbeing, and ability to concentrate and learn effectively.

2. Support consistency across the school day
   Ensure that the food brought from home complements the standards of the food provided by the school and reinforces consistent messages about healthy eating.

3. Educate pupils and families

Provide guidance to pupils, parents, and carers on making informed, healthy food choices, in line with national dietary recommendations.

4. Foster a positive food culture

Create a school environment where healthy food is valued and celebrated, and where children are encouraged to try a variety of nutritious foods.

5. Reduce the risk of diet-related health issues

Help prevent childhood obesity, tooth decay, and other health problems by supporting better food choices at lunchtime.

6. Support inclusion and safety

Ensure packed lunches respect the dietary needs of all pupils, including

allergies, intolerances, religious or cultural requirements, and medical conditions.

7. Minimise waste and promote sustainability

Encourage the use of reusable containers and reduction of single-use packaging in packed lunches to support environmental responsibility.

3. The policy

- The school will work with parents to ensure that packed lunches abide by the standards.
- The school will ensure that free, fresh drinking water is readily available at all times.
- Glass bottles and tins are not permitted due to safety issues that could arise.
- 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.
- We state that no items containing nuts are consumed during lunch times due to allergies.
- Due to choking hazards, grapes and cherry tomatoes **must be cut into quarters**.

Food contained in a packed lunch

Packed lunches must be based on the Eat Well plate model and should include the following every day:

- Fruit and Vegetables - at least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables or salad.
- Non-dairy source of protein - meat, fish, egg, beans or pulses such as lentils, kidney beans, chickpeas, hummus and falafel.
- A starchy food like bread, pasta, rice, couscous, noodles, potatoes or other type of cereals. Wholemeal/ brown varieties are recommended.
- Dairy foods such as milk, cheese, yoghurt, fromage frais

To keep packed lunches in line with the food-based standards for school meals, packed lunches should not include:

- High fat, high salt, high sugar snacks such as sweet or flavoured popcorn and other high fat / salt packet savoury snacks such as crisps.
- Confectionery such as chocolate bars, sweets and chewing gum.
- Chocolate spread as a sandwich filling.
- Fizzy / sugary drinks, this includes energy drinks which can contain high levels of caffeine and other additives and are not suitable for children. We advise that children should be consuming water as a drink at lunch time.

Special diets and allergies

As a school, we adopt a nut free policy.

The school also recognises that some pupils may require special diets that do not allow for the standards to be met exactly. In this case parents are urged to be responsible in ensuring that packed lunches are as healthy as possible. For these reasons pupils are also not permitted to swap food items. This could include children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

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. We recommend the use of re-usable containers to encourage sustainability.

To avoid a choking hazard, grapes and cherry tomatoes **must be cut into quarters**.

Storage of Packed Lunches

The school cannot provide cooled storage areas and therefore cannot take legal responsibility for foods prepared at home and then brought into school.

Assessment, evaluation and reviewing (Including the healthy schools token system):

- Packed lunches will be monitored by lunch staff and may have items removed (eg nut based or of a poor dietary consideration) – there may be occasions where the child will be provided with a school lunch in this event if deemed preferable or for health and safety/allergy reasons

- School meal pupils will also receive a sticker if they consume fruit, salad or vegetables with their meal.

7. Sharing the policy

- The school will write to all new and existing parents / carers to inform them of the policy.
- The policy will be available on the school's website for reference.
- The school will use opportunities such as parent/carer evenings to promote this policy as part of the whole school approach to healthier eating.
- All school staff, including teaching and catering staff will be informed of this policy and will support its implementation.