ST. OSWALD'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Packed Lunch Policy

Date reviewed: September 2025
Date of next review: September 2027

Rationale

- To ensure that all packed lunches brought from home and consumed in school (or on school trips) provide the pupils with healthy, safe and nutritious food.

- Schools are required to positively promote the health and well-being of their pupils.

- The content of lunchboxes needs to reflect the requirement of schools to meet minimum food and nutrition standards for school meals.

- Packed lunches should provide a nutritious, balanced diet to support the child's learning and development.

Aims

- To ensure that packed lunches (brought in from home) reflect the standards for school meals www.gov.uk/school-meals-healthy-eating-standards

- To encourage a high nutritional quality of packed lunches in schools and healthy eating habits of children at lunchtimes, that can influence health and wellbeing.

- To further raise the profile of healthy eating throughout the school.

- To encourage healthy eating habits from an early age and improve the overall nutrition of pupils.

What the school will provide:

- An appropriate area where pupils who choose to bring packed lunches can eat.

- Ensure that eating packed lunches is a sociable experience for children and that they learn and use a high standard of table manners.

- The school will ensure that tables where pupils eat their lunches in the hall are tidy and hygienic.

- A storage area for packed lunch bags, in the most convenient and appropriate place possible. However, the school cannot provide cooled storage areas and therefore cannot take legal responsibility for foods prepared at home and then brought into school.

- Drinking water for those who request it.

- The school will, within reason, send any uneaten packed lunch food items back home. The rationale for this is that parents can also monitor what their child has consumed during the day and then raise any concerns over their child's food intake with the school.

- The school will ensure that staff supervising pupils eat packed lunches are aware of food hygiene procedures.

Guidance

Suggestions for food to include in a healthy packed lunch:

• At least one portion of fruit or vegetables every day (These foods provide vitamins, minerals and fibre)

• Meat, fish, eggs or other source of non-dairy protein (e.g. lentils, beans, soya or hummus) every day (usually as part of a sandwich, wrap, roll or salad

• Oily fish such as tuna or salmon (These foods provide protein for growth)

• A starchy food such as bread, pasta, rice, potatoes or other types of cereals every day (These starchy foods are a healthy source of energy)

• Dairy food such as milk, cheese, yoghurt or fromage frais (These foods provide calcium for healthy bones and teeth)

• A drink – water is best followed by unsweetened fresh fruit juice, diluted fresh fruit juice, drinking yoghurt or dairy based smoothies.

• Cereal bars rather than cakes and biscuits

• Pretzels, seeds, fruit, crackers and cheese and vegetable or bread sticks with a dip.

Suggestions for food less often in a healthy packed lunch:

• Meat products such as sausage rolls, individual pies, corned meat and sausages/chipolatas

• Cakes

• Crisps

• Biscuits

Packed Lunches should not include:

• Nuts or nut products because of the danger to other children with allergies

• Fizzy/highly sugared drinks in cartons, bottles or cans

• Sweets/confectionary

• Chocolate spread as a filling for sandwiches

• Energy drinks

• Hot food due to health and safety concerns. Hot food needs to be kept at a safe temperature to reduce the risk of harmful bacteria developing, and school does not have the facilities to monitor the temperature of food brought in from home. There is also a risk of children or staff being scalded if hot food or liquids are accidentally spilled in the dining room.

Special Diets

The school recognises that some pupils may require special diets due to verified medical conditions. In this case, parents are urged to inform the school and be responsible in ensuring that packed lunches are as healthy as possible.

For these reasons, children must eat their own and no-one else's packed lunch.

Packed Lunch Containers

We ask that parents/carers and pupils:

- Provide a packed lunch container where food items can be stored securely and appropriately until the lunchtime period.

- Bring packed lunches in reusable containers, rather than disposing of plastic bags and bottles.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Packed lunches will be regularly monitored and reviewed by Senior Leaders/classroom staff /catering staff/lunchtime supervisors.

Useful Websites

Guidance on healthier snacks and packed lunches:

www.gov.uk/school-meals-healthy-eating-standards