



Introduction

As part of the Government's approach to reducing childhood obesity a Cross Government Strategy for England, Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives, was launched in January 2008. This strategy outlines an expectation on all schools to promote a culture of healthy eating. The government now expects all schools to adopt whole school food policies.

In particular, schools will be expected to develop healthy packed lunch policies, so that those not yet taking up school lunches are also eating healthier.

Durham County Council and its partners have developed this guidance document to support schools in their journey towards this goal.

Aim

To ensure that packed lunches (brought in from home) reflect the new standards for school meals introduced in September 2006.

Rationale: Schools are required to positively promote the health and well being of its pupils

- Work around healthy eating is a high priority of the Every Child Matters agenda. The content of lunchboxes needs to reflect the requirement of schools to meet minimum food and nutrition standards for school meals.
- To encourage healthy eating habits from an early age and improve the overall nutrition of 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.

Objectives

To ensure the nutritional quality of packed lunches in schools and the positive eating habits of children at lunchtimes.

To develop an awareness in pupils, parents, staff and the wider community that the school takes a pro-active approach to promoting healthy eating.

To encourage healthy eating habits in childhood that can influence health and well being in later life.

To ensure that food brought into school (packed lunches) reflects and meets food standards for School Food (2006).

Implementation

This packed lunch policy fits within a wider context of promoting a whole school approach to food and healthy eating which is reflected in the school meals provided by our kitchen staff and complements our 'Enhanced Healthy School Award' which we received in February 2013.

Children's packed lunches should be based on the 'Eatwell Plate' model which shows items from the 5 main food groups; (Food Standards Agency 2007).

Bread, Rice, Potatoes, Pasta - These starchy foods are a healthy source of energy. Packed lunches should include **2 or more portions**.

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

Milk and Dairy foods - These foods provide calcium for healthy bones and teeth. Include 1 portion at lunch

Meat, Fish, Eggs, Beans - These foods provide protein for growth. Packed lunches should include 1 portion of these foods

It is important 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 our children from becoming overweight as well as helping prevent tooth decay, heart disease, stroke, and diabetes. Please support our school packed lunch policy by not including these items in your child's packed lunch.

Drinks – any drinks provided in lunch boxes in our school should only include water in line with drinks provided for our children having a school lunch. Milk should not be brought in as packed lunch containers cannot be refrigerated. Fizzy drinks will not be allowed under any circumstances.

Foods- Packed lunches must not contain sweets or chocolate bars. Chocolate biscuits or small cakes will be allowed so long as the whole packed lunch provides a healthy and balanced meal for children.

Waste and Disposal

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.

Storage of Packed Lunches

The school will provide storage area / facilities 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.

Dining Facilities for Pupils Bringing Packed Lunch

The school will provide an appropriate area where pupils who choose to bring packed lunches can eat.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The school will carry out monitoring of packed lunch provision - where there may be concerns over a child's food / nutrition intake and / or content of packed lunches, this can be dealt with in a timely and sensitive manner. School will contact parents / carers directly to share any concerns we may have.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed as part of the schools agreed policy review process. In addition any major legislative or governmental changes regarding school food may lead to this policy being amended.

Signed:

Date: February 2021

Date for Review: February 2024