



**METHERINGHAM
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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Policies, Procedures, Regulations and Guidance

Document Title:	Packed Lunch Policy	
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Approved by:	SAW and R Committee	
Version Control Table <i>[To be updated as required]</i>		
Version Number	Date Authorised	Summary of Key Changes
1	November 2025	New Policy

Overall aim of the policy:

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.

Where, when and to whom the policy applies:

The policy applies to all pupils and parents providing packed lunches to be eaten within school or on school trips during normal school hours.

At Metheringham Primary School, we understand that our pupils benefit from eating a balanced and nutritious diet. Among other benefits, a good diet helps to;

- Keep skin, teeth, and eyes healthy
- Support muscles
- Helps achieve and maintain a healthy weight
- Strengthens bones
- Encourages brain development
- Supports healthy growth
- Boosts immunity
- Helps the digestive system function

In 2015, the School Food Standards for school lunches was published ¹ to ensure that all children who eat a school dinner benefit from eating quality food during the school day. The standards apply to all food and drink supplied by school to pupils, staff and visitors from the start of the school day to 6pm.

Food and drink in packed lunches at Metheringham Primary School,

- Metheringham Primary School will provide appropriate and attractive facilities for pupils eating packed lunches and ensure that free, fresh drinking water is available at all times.
- Metheringham Primary School will work with parents to encourage packed lunches to meet the standards listed below.
- As fridge space is not available, pupils are advised to bring packed lunches in insulated bags with freezer blocks where possible.
- Wherever possible, we will enable pupils eating packed lunches and pupils eating school lunches to sit together.

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, houmous, 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.
- a dairy food such as milk, cheese, yoghurt, fromage frais or custard every day.

¹ [School food standards practical guide - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

- a drink of water, fruit juice (maximum portion 150 mls), semi-skimmed, 1% fat or skimmed milk, yoghurt or another milk drink.

Packed lunches can occasionally include:

- Meat products such as sausage rolls, individual pies, corned meat and sausages (no more than once a week)
- Lower sugar cakes and biscuits, as part of a balanced meal

Appendix 1 & 2 gives guidance on appropriate potential packed lunches which works alongside the School Food Standards and the information above.

The advice is for guidance for parents and Metherringham Primary School actively encourages meals provided in line with it, however we **do not** allow the following to be brought into school as part of a packed lunch.

Restricted items

- No fizzy drinks
- No solid chocolate bars
- No sweets
- No food from fast food outlets
- No nuts

The lunchtime experience

Our lunchtime experience is calm, positive, and child-centred, helping children to develop healthy relationships with food and mealtimes. Staff create a relaxed atmosphere where children are encouraged to enjoy their packed lunch, try different foods at their own pace, and recognise when they feel hungry or full. Children are supported to eat until they are satisfied, with adults responding to individual appetites and needs, as these can vary from day to day. We do not pressure children to eat or insist that they finish everything in their lunchbox. Instead, staff use gentle encouragement, positive role modelling, and conversation to promote confidence, independence, and enjoyment of eating.

Staff release children on a 1:1 basis between 12:50 and 1:15. Pupils are encouraged to stay in the hall until they have eaten as much as they can. Staff will endeavour to visually check a child's lunchbox before releasing them. Children are told they can leave the table and go outside for lunchtime.

Lunchtime staff will report any changes in eating patterns to the class teacher, and this will be reported back to the parents.

Lunchtime staff will sometimes be asked to closely monitor eating patterns for medical reasons.

Assessment, evaluation and reviewing

Packed lunches will be regularly reviewed by lunchtime staff.

If a member of staff becomes aware that a child has a fizzy drink, solid chocolate, sweets or food from a fast food outlets in their lunch, they will notify the midday staff who will make a note of the child and the food but will not discuss this directly with the child.

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.

Healthy lunches will be rewarded by notes home, positive praise and stickers.

Starchy Foods

Base each meal on a starchy food, such as bread, potato, rice, pasta, couscous. Starchy foods give energy, fibre, vitamins and minerals.

- ✓ Bread, try different types, such as pitta bread, wraps, bread sticks or bread rolls.
- ✓ Other starchy foods, such as pasta or rice.
- ✓ Whole grain varieties are best for fibre, which is vital for a healthy digestive system.



Meat & Alternatives

Add some protein, for example meat, fish, eggs, beans or pulses. Protein foods build muscles and provide minerals.

- ✓ Lean meats, such as chicken, turkey or ham.
- ✓ Include oily fish, such as pilchards, sardines or mackerel at least once every three weeks
- ✓ Cheese, such as cottage cheese, edam or soft cheese.
- ✓ Egg, such as quiche or omelette.
- ✓ Meat alternatives, such as tofu or tempeh.
- ✓ Dishes containing pulses, beans or meat, for example dahl, stew or bean salad.
- ⚠ Use butter, margarine, mayonnaise or salad dressings sparingly, because these can be high in fat, or use lower fat alternatives.
- ✗ The school does not allow nuts in packed lunches.



Milk & Dairy Foods

Up to the age of 5, milk is provided for children who want it and after that, parents can purchase it if they wish. Ask your school for information.

- ✓ A side dish of a low fat, low sugar yoghurt or low sugar rice pudding provides calcium necessary for strong bones and teeth as well as providing protein and vitamins



Fruit & Vegetables



Don't forget to include fruit and vegetables. You can use fresh, frozen, tinned or dried. Fruit and vegetables are full of vitamins, minerals and fibre necessary for the body to function properly and to keep you strong and healthy.

- ✓ Add tomato, lettuce, cucumber or beetroot to a sandwich
- ✓ Include a portion of salad or roast vegetables
- ✓ Fresh fruit, such as apple, banana or pear.
- ✓ Dried fruit, such as raisins, apricots or figs.
- ✓ Fruit salad (fresh or tinned in juice) or vegetable salad.
- ✓ Finger foods, such as cherry tomatoes, cucumber sticks or celery are good with a dip, such as hummus or guacamole.



Using fresh fruit and vegetables, which are in season can help the environment

Drinks

Drinks, especially water, help children to concentrate and feel well. Water is freely available in school.



- ✓ You could try adding chopped fruit into water bottles to create new flavours
- ✗ Avoid squash, fizzy drinks and flavoured water, even those labelled 'sugar free' or 'no added sugar' as these can contribute to tooth decay and have little nutritional value

A Packed Lunch Guide for Parents

A healthy packed lunch is a balanced meal with a variety of nutrients to give your child the energy to learn, grow & develop.

Healthier Swaps

- ✓ Replace sweets and chocolate with dried fruit, a small bunch of grapes or fruit salad or sugar-free jelly.
- ✓ Replace cakes and pastries with fruit bread or malt loaf.
- ✓ Replace salted savoury snacks with rice cakes or breadsticks.



Snacks & Confectionery

Snack foods may be included occasionally but aim to make healthier choices. Snack foods tend to be high in fat, sugar and salt. Foods high in fat can cause excessive weight and may lead to heart disease. High sugar foods are high in calories and bad for teeth. High salt foods may increase blood pressure, which can lead to heart disease and some cancers.

- ✗ Chocolate, sweets, chocolate spread, jam, salted savoury snacks and crisp like products should not be included in lunch boxes. Hot school lunch desserts are only allowed cocoa powder and no confectionery.

FOR A HEALTHY LUNCHBOX **PICK & MIX** SOMETHING FROM EACH GROUP 1-6!



Developed in conjunction with the Achievement Program to support a whole-school approach to healthy eating.



FOR A HEALTHY LUNCHBOX **PICK & MIX** SOMETHING FROM EACH GROUP 1-6!

FRUIT 1	VEGETABLES 2	MILK, YOGHURT AND CHEESE 3	MEAT OR MEAT ALTERNATIVE 4	GRAIN AND CEREAL FOOD 5	WATER 6
<p>FRESH FRUIT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apple • Banana • Mandarin • Orange quarters • Passionfruit halves (with spoon) • Watermelon, honeydew, rockmelon chunks • Pineapple chunks • Grapes • Plums • Nectarines, peaches, Apricots • Strawberries • Cherries • Kiwifruit halves (with spoon) • Pear <p>MIXED FRUIT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit salad • Fruit kebabs <p>DRIED FRUIT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dried fruit, nut, popcorn mixes* <p>TINNED FRUIT/SNACK PACKS/CUPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In natural juice (not syrup) 	<p>FRESH CRUNCHY VEGIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corn cobs • Carrot sticks • Capsicum sticks • Green beans • Cucumber sticks • Celery sticks • Snow peas • Tomatoes (e.g. cherry and Roma tomatoes) • Mushroom pieces <p>Can serve with either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hummus • Tomato salsa • Tatziki • Beetroot dip • Natural yoghurt <p>SALADS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coleslaw and potato salad (reduced fat dressing) • Mexican bean, tomato, lettuce and cheese salad • Pesto pasta salad* <p>BAKED ITEMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grilled or roasted vegetables • Wholemeal vegetable muffins or scones • Vegetable slice (with grated zucchini and carrot) • Popcorn <p>SOUP (In small thermos)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pumpkin soup • Potato and leek soup • Chicken and corn soup 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk • Calcium-enriched soy and other plant-based milks • Yoghurt (frozen overnight) • Custard <p>Tip:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freeze the night before to keep cool during the day <p>Can serve with either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheese cubes, sticks or slices • Cottage or ricotta cheese • Cream cheese • Tatziki dip <p>Can serve with either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit • Wholegrain cereal, low in sugar • Vegetable sticks • Rice and corn cakes • Wholegrain wheat crackers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tinned tuna or salmon in springwater • Lean roast or grilled meats (e.g. beef, chicken, kangaroo) • Falafel balls • Lean meat or chicken patties • Tinned tuna or salmon patties • Lentil patties • Lean deli meats (e.g. ham, silveride, chicken) • Boiled eggs • Baked beans (canned) • Tofu cubes • Hummus dip • Lean meat or chicken kebabs sticks • Peanut butter* <p>Can serve with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wholegrain sandwich, roll, pita or wrap bread with salad • Rice and corn cakes • Wholegrain wheat crackers • Side salad <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetable frittata • Skinless chicken drumsticks • Savoury muffins or scones (e.g. lean ham, cheese and shallots) • Homemade pizzas with lean roast or deli meats and vegetables <p>Can serve with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Side salad • Steamed or roasted vegetables 	<p>MAINS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wraps • Sandwiches • Rolls • Toasted sandwiches <p>Tip: Use breads such as wholemeal, multigrain, rye, sourdough, pita, flat, corn, mountain, lavash, white fibre-enriched, soy and linseed, herb, naan, bagels, foccacias, fruit bread and English muffins.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pasta dishes • Rice, quinoa or cous cous dishes • Noodle dishes • Sushi <p>SAVORY BAKED ITEMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Homemade pizzas - Wholemeal savoury muffins or scones (e.g. ham, cheese and corn muffins) - Vegetable based muffins - Pasta or noodle bake <p>SWEET BAKED ITEMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit loaf • Wholemeal fruit based muffins <p>SNACKS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High fibre, low sugar cereal (e.g. muesli) • English muffins • Crackers • Crisprads • Rice cakes • Corn thins • Wholemeal scones • Pikelets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a water bottle (for refilling throughout the day) <p>Tip:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freeze overnight to keep foods cool in lunchboxes <p>Sweet and savoury snack foods (e.g. muesli/fruit/nut bars, biscuits, crisps, cakes, muffins, slices) should be limited in lunchboxes. They can lead to excess energy intake if consumed in large amounts.</p> <p>Sugar sweetened drinks and confectionery should not be provided in lunchboxes. They can lead to excess energy intake and tooth decay.</p>

