

# Somerdale Educate Together Primary School

## Healthy Lunchbox Guidance



### **Nuts & Allergies**

Every member of the school community should understand allergy and their responsibility for reducing risk, from pupils and parents to staff members. Whilst most allergic reactions are mild, some can be very serious and cause anaphylaxis which is a life-threatening medical emergency. **We ask that parents do not bring foods containing nuts in for this reason.** As a school, we cannot guarantee a nut-free environment, but we ask that parents are aware of the importance of not bringing nut-based products into school.

### Why do we have healthy lunchbox guidance?

As a Rights Respecting School, and in line with our child-centred principle, we always try to ensure that the decisions we make are always in the best interests of the child. This guidance reflects children's rights to developing in the best possible way, doing what is best for the children and to ensure children have their right to healthy food and information on how to stay healthy.

This guidance is designed to help you to provide a healthy and nutritious packed lunch for your child to help give them the best chance possible.

### Why is it important?

Eating behaviours and habits are formed in early life and good nutrition in childhood can help to prevent a variety of health problems, both in the short term and later life.

There is increasing concern that many children are consuming too much fat, sugar and salt and too little fibre, fruit and vegetables.

Meals provided by the school adhere to Government School Food Standards to ensure that they are offered healthy, nutritious meals. This includes:

- One or more portions of vegetables are on the menu every day
- Emphasis on wholegrain foods in place of refined carbohydrates
- No more than 2 portions of pastry products a week
- One or more portions of fruit on the menu every day
- Drinking water is made available

Packed lunches can contribute to almost a third of a child's weekly food intake, therefore we want to encourage healthy packed lunches for those children who bring them into school.

### What are the benefits?

- Encourages life-long good eating habits
- Better levels of concentration and energy throughout the day
- Supports your child's oral health and maintain a healthy weight
- Contributes to your child's 5-a-day
- You can control portion sizes and reduce food waste

### What does the research say?

Less than 2% of packed lunches meet the school food standards and offer a far less nutritious option. (Foodfoundation.org.uk)

92% of packed lunches contained foods high in fat and sugar (SafeFood)

Children who take a packed lunch into school are eating far too much fat, saturated fat, salt and sugar in one meal. (Food Standards Agency Lunchbox survey)

60% of packed lunchboxes contained savoury snacks high in fat and salt, such as crisps. (LearnSheffield)

Overweight children are more likely to become overweight as adults. This could lead to long-term conditions such as type 2 diabetes. Making changes to their diet and activity levels can help them reach a healthy weight. (NHS)

There is a reduction in the number of packed lunches meeting the standards for vitamin A, vitamin C and zinc. This is due to the lack of fresh fruit, salad and vegetables and unprocessed meat or fish. (University of Leeds)

In 2015, figures indicated that around one third of British 10-year-olds were obese – that is linked to what they are eating. (University of Leeds)

### Is it a one size fits all approach?

We are aware that there will be some children on a different prescribed diet due to having additional needs, such as food aversion or a restricted diet. Please speak to our SENCo for advice on this as we can refer to the school nurse to help support this.

### What makes a healthy lunchbox?

Variety is the key to a healthier lunch box. It is all about getting a balance and a good variety of foods over a period of time, for example a week. No single food can provide all the essential nutrients that the body needs.

A packed lunch should contain:

- A portion of bread (or similar), rice, potatoes or pasta (for a healthy source of energy)
- Plenty of fruit and vegetables (for vitamins, minerals and fibre to reduce risk of disease in later life)
- A portion of dairy or calcium-rich alternative (calcium for healthy bones and teeth)
- Some protein in the form of beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat (protein for growth)
- A healthy drink (for hydration)

## Sample Healthy Lunch Menu

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Pitta with ham, cheese & sliced mushrooms	Salmon, pea & sweetcorn pasta salad	Hummus & grated carrot wrap	Cheese & tomato sandwich	Mixed vegetable frittata
Carrot & cucumber sticks	An apple	Chopped fruit salad	Tinned pears (in juice), <i>drained</i>	A banana
Slice of malt loaf	Small pot of rice pudding	Plain yoghurt with sliced fruit	Plain popcorn	Cheese and crackers
Skimmed milk	Water	Water	Skimmed milk	Water

## Ideas and top tips from the NHS Better Health, Better Families



Base the main lunchbox item on foods like bread, rice, pasta, potatoes to keep children fuller for longer. Choose wholegrain where



Wraps and pots of fillings can be fun and a nice change from a sandwich each day. Always add salad to sandwiches and wraps to help the 5 a



Mix your slices. Try making a sandwich from white & brown bread if your child is hesitant to eat wholegrain.



Swap cakes, chocolate, cereal bars, processed fruit winders and biscuits for malt loaf, fruited teacakes, fruit breads or fruit. (fresh, dried or



Cut down on crisps. Reduce the number of times you include them, swap for homemade plain popcorn or



Swap the fruit bars. Fried fruit like raisins, sultanas and dried apricots are cheaper and can be healthier. Just remember to keep dried fruit to mealtimes as it can be bad for



Always add veg. Cherry tomatoes, sticks of carrot, cucumber, celery and peppers all count. Add a small pot of reduced-fat hummus or dips to make

### Sugar

Too much sugar can contribute to us having too many calories, resulting weight gain. Being overweight increases risk of health problems such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes and some cancers.

Sugar is also bad for oral health and can cause tooth decay. If not dealt with, rotten teeth may need to be extracted which can lead to further health issues.

Furthermore too much sugar can have more immediate effects on our behaviour and concentration levels, which can affect our ability to learn.

### Free Sugar

Ultra processed snacks are high in sugar, even those that are advertised as '1 of your 5 a day'. NHS advice states children aged 7-11 should have no more than 24g of free sugars a day. Due to the processing, reconstituting and reblending of ingredients to create fruit winders, these snacks contain high amounts of free sugars.

For example, Bear Fruit Yoyo, strawberry contains 8g of sugar. This equates to one third of the recommended daily allowar

Age	Daily Sugar Limit	
	In Teaspoons	In Grams
0-3 Years Old	0	0g
4-6 Years Old	4.5	19g
7-11 Years Old	5.5	24g

## Sugar Swaps

See how much sugar you could cut out if you swap these lunchbox favourites for something else...

Two Small Chocolate Chip Cookies **1.8 tsp (7g)** SWAP FOR Pot of Sugar-Free Jelly **0 tsp (0g)**

Fruit Bowl Strawberry Flakes **3.5sp (13g)** SWAP FOR Handful of Strawberries **1 tsp (4g)**

Cadburys Chocolate Bar **6.25 tsp (25g)** SWAP FOR Caramel Rice Cake **1 tsp (4g)**

Muller Light Yoghurt **3.1 tsp (12.4g)** SWAP FOR Natural Yoghurt **0.5 tsp (2g)**

Eat Natural Bar **4 tsp (16g)** SWAP FOR Crackers & Soft Cheese **0 tsp (0.3g)**

Nesquik Strawberry Milkshake **12.4 tsp (49.5g)** SWAP FOR Plain Water **0 tsp (0g)**

Tropicana Orange Juice **11.5 tsp (45g)** SWAP FOR No Added Sugar Orange Cordial **0 tsp (0g)**

### Portion Size

Carefully consider the portion sizes that you include in your child's packed lunch. They should have the amount they can finish comfortably, with little or no waste.

If children eat more than their bodies need, it converts to stored fat, which in later life can lead to health problems. So, if as an adult, you would eat a full pitta bread, your 5 year old may only need half of one.

Too much food and choice can be overwhelming and unappetising. If you pack a big portion of something they really like (e.g. popcorn), they are less like to eat the other things they least prefer (e.g. carrots).

You may find the less you pack, the more they eat!

### Morning Breaktime Snacks

In Early Years and Key Stage 1, the government provide a piece of fruit or vegetable for the children. Children should not bring in any snack.

In Key Stage 2, you are welcome to provide a piece of fruit or vegetable for the children to eat at morning playtime. Due to the high level of free-sugar content in ultra-processed foods such as fruit winders and other processed fruit snacks, we do not allow these in school for snack.

### Help and Information

The Eatwell Guide <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-guidelines-and-food-labels/the-eatwell-guide/>

Healthy food swaps <https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/food-facts/healthier-food-swaps/>

Healthy lunchbox recipes <https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes/>

Living Well healthy lunchboxes <https://mylivingwell.co.uk/eating-well/swap-well-to-eat-well/healthy-lunch-boxes/>

NHS Guidance for children who are 'fussy eaters' <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/weaning-and-feeding/fussy-eaters/>

NHS advice for parents of overweight children <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/childrens-weight/advice-for-parents-overweight-children/>