St Catherine's Catholic Primary School

"Loving and Learning Together as Jesus taught us"

Packed Lunch Policy

Date of policy review: October 2025
Next review: October 2027

Policy Reviewed & Passed by the Governors
Key Person Responsible: Maureen Kelly

Article 24: Every child has the right to the best possible health. Governments must work to provide good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment so that children can stay healthy. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

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 – in consultation with parents, pupils and staff 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

Introduction

To grow and stay healthy children need to eat a nutritionally well balanced diet. Schools are an influential setting and can contribute significantly to improving the health and well-being of pupils. Good nutrition in childhood can help to prevent a variety of health problems, both in the short term and later in life. There is increasing concern that many children are consuming too much fat, sugar and salt and too little fibre, fruit and vegetables. Packed lunches can contribute to almost a third of a child's weekly food intake and therefore need to be balanced and nutritious. Aim To ensure that packed lunches (brought in from home) reflect the new standards for school meals.

Rationale:

- Schools are required to positively promote the health and wellbeing of its pupils. Work around healthy eating is a high priority.
- The content of lunchboxes needs to reflect the requirement of schools to meet minimum food and nutrition standards for school meals.
- The contents of lunchboxes in some schools can be extremely unhealthy, recent audits of lunchboxes have shown that in the main they contain foods with high levels of fat, sugar and salt, and very few fruit and vegetables.
- 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 behaviour difficulties 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 improve the nutritional quality of packed lunches in schools and the 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 wellbeing in later life.
- To ensure that food brought into school (packed lunches) reflects and meets food standards for School Food.

Implementation
This packed lunch policy fits within a wider context of promoting a whole school approach to food and healthy eating.

- Children's packed lunches should include items from the 5 main food groups;

  Bread, Rice, Potatoes, Pasta
  These starchy foods are a healthy source of energy. Packed lunches should include 2 or more portions e.g. pasta salad, sandwich.

  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 e.g. carrot/cucumber sticks, cherry tomatoes, a piece of fruit.

  Milk and Dairy foods
  These foods provide calcium for healthy bones and teeth. Include 1 portion at lunch e.g. yoghurt, fromage frais, milk.

  Meat, Fish, Eggs, Beans
  These foods provide protein for growth. Packed lunches should include 1 portion of these foods e.g. boiled egg as filling in sandwich, mixed bean salad.

  Drinks – the only drink that should be provided is water

Please see appendix 1 for Eatwell Guide.

Foods and drinks high in fat and / or sugar
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 young people from becoming overweight as well as helping prevent tooth decay, heart disease, stroke, and diabetes. This is why sweets, chocolate, crisps, cereal bars, fruit bars, toffee/salted popcorn, squash and fizzy drinks are no longer available in schools.

Restricted items
To ensure consistency and to keep packed lunches in line with food standards for school meals, packed lunches at St Catherine's should not contain the following:

Fizzy /juice/squash/energy drinks
Chocolate-coated products / sweets / confectionary (A small piece of cake is allowed in moderation)
Sugary spreads such as chocolate or jam as a filling for sandwiches
Chewing gum
Crisps or any packet savoury snacks high in salt and fat salted nuts - (Baked biscuits are permitted)

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.

Promotion of Healthy Packed Lunches
There will be ongoing promotion of the need to provide healthy packed lunches through:

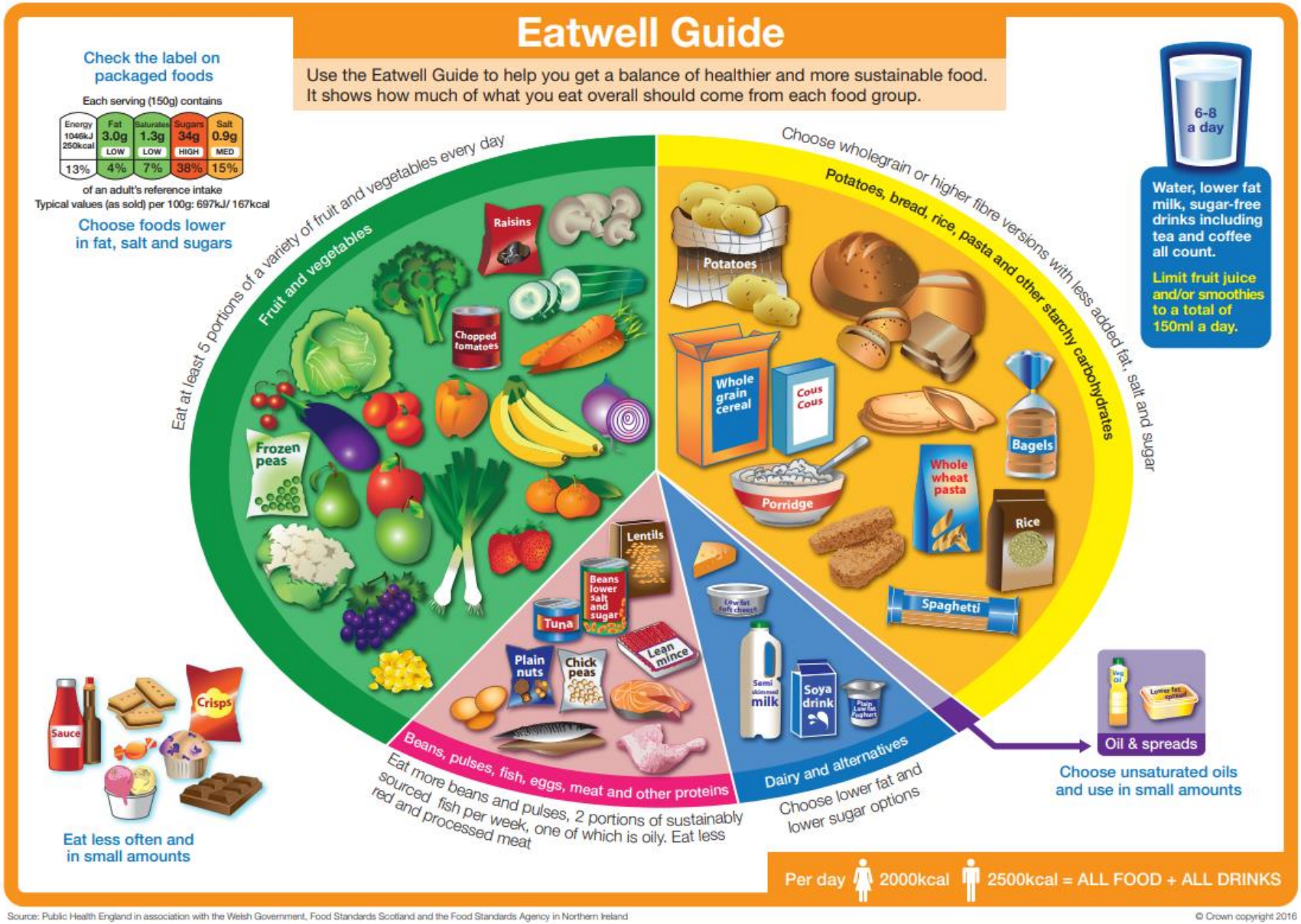
- Pupil, parent / carers newsletters
- Packed Lunch Policy Health weeks / healthy eating activities
- Curriculum content Parents evenings / parent consultations
- School involvement in National Healthy Schools Programme
- 'Eatwell Guide' to healthy packed lunches.

Packed Lunch Containers
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. Parents are advised to include an ice pack especially in the warm weather.

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.

Appendix 1



Source: Public Health England in association with the Welsh Government, Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland

© Crown copyright 2016