Cherry Orchard Primary School
Packed Lunch Policy

Introduction

At Cherry Orchard, we are committed to teaching your child about how to make sensible food choices as part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. This packed lunch policy has been developed by drawing on key government guidance associated with healthy eating and the school day. Government strategy outlines an expectation on all schools:

> *To promote a culture of healthy eating the government now expects all schools, in consultation with parents, pupil 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.*

We are also a Rights Respecting School. Article 24 of the UN Convention for the Rights of the Child states:

> *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.*

This policy applies to all pupils and parents providing packed lunches and other foods to be consumed within school or on school trips. This packed lunch policy fits within a wider context of promoting a whole school approach to food and healthy eating.

Aims

This policy has been drawn up in consultation with parents, pupils, staff and governors with the following aims:

- To ensure the contents of lunchboxes reflect the requirements of schools to meet minimum food and nutrition standards for school meals;
- To make a positive contribution to children's health by encouraging healthy eating habits in childhood that can influence health and wellbeing in later life;
- To take a proactive approach to promoting healthy eating;
- To give clear guidance to parents/carers, pupils, governors and staff on providing a healthy packed lunch;
- To support parents by holding healthy eating workshops and providing ideas for healthy packed lunches;
- To equip pupils with the skills, knowledge and understanding to enable them to make informed healthy lifestyle choices based on their nutritional understanding;
- To ensure that all children have a healthy and nutritious midday meal that sustains and prepares them for their afternoon learning.

Food contained in a packed lunch

Parents/carers of pupils who do not have school meals are expected to provide their children with packed lunches that are consistent with the nutritional standards based on the EatWell plate model and the School Food Trust guidelines.

The recommended contents of a healthy lunch box are:

- ***Fruit and Vegetables;*** at least two portions of fruit or vegetables every day (a portion is the amount your child can fit into the palm of their hand). This could be fresh, dried or tinned fruit
- ***Carbohydrate;*** a starchy food every day such as bread, pasta, rice, couscous, noodles, potatoes, chapatis/roti, plain crackers, breadsticks, rice cakes
- ***Protein;*** meat, egg or other source of non-dairy protein such as lentils, kidney beans, chickpeas, hummus, dhal, falafel
- ***Oily fish;*** tinned or fresh mackerel, sardines, salmon or tuna should be included at least once every three weeks
- ***Dairy;*** every day such as milk, cheese, yoghurt, fromage-frais, custard or calcium fortified soya products - reduced fat if possible
- ***Drinks;*** (with no added sugar) such as pure fruit juice, semi-skimmed/skimmed milk, milk-based or yoghurt-based drinks, fruit smoothies
- ***A bottle of water;*** It is recognised that the concentration and behaviour of children improve when children drink water throughout the day. Dehydration can give children headaches and make them tired. Therefore, we encourage children to bring in water bottles daily. This is in addition to their packed lunch drink
- ***Dessert/pudding;*** such as a small cake, biscuit, cereal bar, fruit loaf/bun OR scotch pancake as part of a balanced meal. Please look carefully at packaging as many items that may look healthy can have high levels of sugar and fat. Look for those with 100 calories or less per portion and only include one-a-day for lunch.

BANNED ITEMS - Packed Lunches should not include:

- **Items containing nuts are not allowed in school** (Although these are healthy, some children are allergic to nuts and they can cause a severe reaction even when in other pupils' lunches).
- **Sweets/confectionery/chewing gum**
- **Fizzy or sugary drinks, or energy drinks**
- **Crisps** (A standard sized bag of crisps of around 25g will be allowed as an accompaniment **on Fridays only)**
- **No more than one dessert item per day** (cake, biscuit, cereal bar, fruit loaf/bun OR scotch pancake)
- **No more than two portions of food each week that includes pastry**

For healthier lunch box ideas:

- Replace cakes and pastries with fruit bread or teacake
- Replace salted savoury snacks, such as crisps, with breadsticks, rice cakes, cheese and crackers or popcorn (not sweet or toffee)
- Include dried fruit or fruit salad
- Drink water, milk, 100% fruit juice, sparkling water, fruit smoothie, or yoghurt drink.

Children who eat school dinners will be asked to choose a vegetable or salad item as part of their lunch.

Special Diets and allergies

The school recognises that some pupils may require special diets that do not follow the National Food Standards exactly. In this case parents/carers are asked to inform the school and make their child's lunchbox as healthy as possible. For this reason, pupils are not permitted to swap food items.

PLEASE DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILDREN WITH NUTS OR FOOD CONTAINING NUTS (for example, Nutella or Bombay Mix) AS WE HAVE A NUMBER OF CHILDREN WITH NUT ALLERGIES.

Provision for Packed Lunches

- School will provide dining room facilities where pupils can eat their lunches.
- School will ensure that fresh drinking water is readily available at all times.

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 plastic containers, rather than disposing of plastic bags and bottles.

Fridge space for packed lunches is not available so it is advisable to bring packed lunches in insulated bags with an ice pack to keep the food fresh.

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.

Other points to note

- Any type of food gifts for special occasions such as birthdays are no longer permitted.
- Very occasionally, the children may organise a cake sale for charity and purchase cakes to raise money for a good cause.
- Very occasionally, the children may bring in food for parties such as Christmas, when the restrictions of this policy do not apply. **Any foods containing nuts should still not be sent into school on these occasions.**
- The use of sweets for rewards is not allowed. Instead, children are rewarded with stickers, house points, moving their peg up the learning ladder, praise, visits to other classes or the head teacher to celebrate their work, and Star of the Week awards.
- During SATs week, all Year 6 pupils are offered a free healthy breakfast every day.

Curriculum

Whilst we fully respect individual food choices and understand that there are many different needs and tastes, we want to work with parents to educate children about healthy diet choices so that our children, through understanding a balanced diet, will develop a greater appreciation of a healthy lifestyle.

The formal curriculum develops pupils' knowledge of healthy eating predominantly through PSHE, Science and Design Technology lessons. We will also run parent and child workshops on being active and eating healthily at the beginning of Reception and in Year 3.

Monitoring

To promote healthy eating, class teachers, teaching assistants, learning mentors and lunchtime supervisors will regularly monitor the content of packed lunches.

Parents/carers and pupils who do not adhere to the packed lunch policy will receive a reminder of our packed lunch policy. If a packed lunch is not sufficiently healthy, the school may confiscate an item of food and offer your child an alternative. If a child regularly brings in a packed lunch that does not conform to this policy, the school will contact the parents to discuss this.

If food items are confiscated, they will be returned to parents/carers at the end of the day.

Policy review

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

Policy Approved: October 2026
Review Date: October 2028