



Food and packed lunch policy

Rationale

Sandal Primary School and Nursery recognises the importance of a healthy nation and its role in improving the health of the school community by teaching children and families ways to establish and maintain life-long healthy and environmentally sustainable eating habits. This shall be accomplished through food education and skills (such as cooking and growing food), the food served in schools, and core academic content in the classroom.

Responsibilities

The Governing Body recognises the important connection between a healthy diet and a student's ability to learn effectively and achieve high standards in school. The Governors also recognise the role a school can play, as part of the larger community, to promote family health, and sustainable food and farming practices. The Governors recognise that sharing meal-times is a fundamental experience for all people; a primary way to nurture and celebrate our cultural diversity; and an excellent bridge for building friendships, and inter-generational bonds.

Aims

- To improve the health of pupils, staff and their families by helping to influence their eating habits through increasing their knowledge and awareness of food issues, including what constitutes a health and environmentally sustainable diet, and hygienic food preparation and storage methods.
- To increase pupils' knowledge of food production, manufacturing, distribution and marketing practices, and their impact on both health and the environment.
- To ensure pupils are well nourished at school, and that every pupil has access to safe, tasty, and nutritious food, and a safe, easily available water supply during the school day.
- To ensure that food provision in the school reflects the ethical and medical requirements of staff and pupils eg. religious, ethnic, vegetarian, medical and allergenic needs.
- To make the provision and consumption of food an enjoyable and safe experience.
- To introduce and promote practices within the school to reinforce these aims, and to remove or discourage practices that negate them.

Objectives

- To work towards ensuring that this policy is both accepted and embraced by:
 - Governors
 - School management
 - Teachers and support staff
 - Pupils
 - Parents
 - Food providers
 - The school's wider community
- To integrate these aims into all aspects of school life, in particular:
 - Food provision within the school
 - The curriculum
 - Pastoral and social activities

Methods

- Establish an effective structure to oversee the development, implementation, and monitoring of this policy, and to encourage a participatory approach to meeting the objectives.
- Develop an understanding and ethos within the school of safe, tasty nutritious, environmentally sustainable food, through both education and example.
- Create an environment, both physical and social, conducive to the enjoyment of safe, tasty, nutritious, environmentally sustainable food.
- Help to promote and raise awareness of environmentally sustainable food production methods and socially responsible food marketing practices.
- To provide extra-curricular opportunities for pupils to grow, understand and hygienically prepare a variety of foods.

SWEETS AND TREATS

It is the policy of Sandal Primary School that sweets and confectionary items will not be given as rewards or treats to children. If a child brings in sweets etc for their birthday, these will be handed out at the end of the day for children to take home.

PACKED LUNCHES

Aim

- To make sure that children who bring a lunch from home to eat in school (or on school trips) have food which is just as healthy and nutritious as food now served in school and regulated by national standards.

Why do we need a policy?

The government has placed a duty on schools to ensure that every child is healthy and has invested hugely in improved school meals, free fruit for schools and The School Food Trust which encourages healthy eating. Eating healthily is important because it will help children to:

- Be fitter and healthier now and later in life
- Learn more quickly and behave better

School meals conform to government nutritional guidelines with less sugar, fat and salt and more fresh fruit and vegetables. School lunches also provide a good balance of “complex carbohydrates” such as pasta, rice, bread or potatoes with dairy and other protein food. There is no reason why a packed lunch cannot provide the same nutrition as a cooked meal. **Please visit www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk for more information.**

Who does it apply to and when and where?

To all pupils and parents providing packed lunches to be eaten within our school or on school trips during normal school hours.

The Policy

- The school will provide facilities for pupils bringing in packed lunches and ensure that free, fresh drinking water is available.
- The school will work with the pupils to provide attractive and appropriate dining room arrangements.
- The school will work with parents to ensure that packed lunches are as close as possible to the guidance below.
- The school will allow children eating packed lunch to sit with children taking a school lunch unless social distancing measures are required.
- During fine weather, children may sit outside at the picnic benches.
- Parents will need to provide children with a suitable container which they can actually eat the lunch from. A plastic box with a removable lid is ideal. (any lunch boxes left over a school holiday will be thrown away)
- Children must only eat their own food and not other children's.

Guidance

Suggestions for food to include in a healthy packed lunch

- At least one portion of fruit or vegetables every day
- Meat, fish or other source of non-dairy protein (e.g. lentils, beans, soya or hummus) every day (usually as part of a sandwich, roll or salad).
- Oily fish such as pilchards, salmon or tuna occasionally
- A starchy food such as bread, pasta, rice, noodles, potatoes or other type of cereal every day.
- Dairy food such as milk, cheese, yoghurt, fromage frais or custard.
- A drink: water is best followed by semi-skimmed or skimmed milk, fruit juice, drinking yoghurt, milk drinks or smoothies.
- Nut free cereal bars rather than cakes and biscuits.
- Seeds, fruit, crackers and cheese and vegetable or bread sticks with a dip.

Suggestions for food to include less often in a healthy packed lunch

- Snacks such as crisps
- Chocolate coated biscuits or wafers
- Cakes
- Meat and pastry products such as sausage rolls or pies

Suggestions for food to not include in a healthy packed lunch (these are all foods we have already asked children not to bring to school)

- Confectionary such as chocolate bars. Sweets are not allowed at lunch or any other time.
- Nut or nut products (although they can be very healthy) because of the danger to other children with allergies.
- Fizzy drinks as these are mostly very unhealthy and are likely to make a mess and spoil food.

Special diets & allergens

The school also recognises that some pupils may have verified medical conditions requiring special diets that do not allow for the standards to be met exactly. In this case parents are urged to be responsible in ensuring that packed lunches are as healthy as possible.

Assessment, evaluation and reviewing:

Packed lunches are reviewed by lunchtime staff as part of their supervision of the children. Children eating healthy lunches will be rewarded by stickers and other awards. Pupils' on special diets following verified medical advice will be given due consideration.

Publication of the policy:

The school will write to all new and existing parents/carers to inform them of the policy via the school newsletter which will be available to view on the school website. The school will use opportunities such as parents' evenings and new intake evenings to promote this policy as part of a whole school approach to healthier eating. All school staff, including teaching and catering staff, will be informed of this policy and will support its implementation.

Related policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- PSHE Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Medical Policy

Also - School Food Standards: A Practical Guide for Schools and Their Cooks and Caterers

Date policy written:	May 2018	
Approved by:	FGB	Date: 7 th July 2025
Last reviewed on:	Summer2025	
Next review due by:	Spring 2028	

