Gatton Primary School Packed Lunch Guidelines for Parents and Carers

Many of our parents and carers choose to have a hot school meal for their children. We believe it is easier to provide all nutrients children need in a hot, freshly cooked meal which is provided by our in-house school meal provider. (Please refer to the school website for the lunch menu).

However, the school also recognises that some parents / carers prefer to provide a packed lunch for their child. We ask that the parents and carers who choose the packed lunch option for their children provide them with a healthy, well-balanced lunch.

Aim

As part of the School Food Plan, a new set of standards for all food served in schools was launched by the Department for Education and become mandatory in January 2015.

Our aim is to make sure that children who bring a packed lunch to eat in school (or on school trips) have food which is just as healthy and nutritious as food served in school and regulated by national standards. This guidance applies to all parents providing packed lunches to be eaten within school or on school trips during normal school hours.

The school will work with parents and children to ensure that packed lunches meet the standards listed below. Children will need to bring their packed lunch in a suitable container such as a reuseable lid with a leak proof removable lid. Soups and other hot foods should be brought in a thermos flask. Carrier bags are not appropriate containers.

Packed lunches should include:

• **At least** one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetable or salad every day. Across the week try to provide a variety of different fruits and vegetables.
• **Meat, fish or other sources of non-dairy protein** (e.g. egg, lentils, beans or soya) should be offered as part of a sandwich, roll or salad every day.
• **Oily fish**, such as pilchards, salmon or sardines at least once every three weeks.
• **A starchy food** such as bread, pasta, rice, noodles, couscous, pitta, wrap, potatoes or other types of cereals every day. Across the week, try to provide three different types of starchy foods including at least one wholegrain/wholewheat variety.
• **Dairy foods** such as milk, cheese, yogurt, or dairy alternatives
• Pretzels, rice/ corn cakes, crackers and cheese, vegetables or breadsticks with a dip
• A sugar-free/ low sugar/ fruit-based dessert option such as malt loaf, banana loaf, sugar-free jelly
• A drink of water – no other drinks are permitted

Packed lunches should not include:
• Confectionary such as chocolate bars, chocolate-coated biscuits and sweets
• Very salty snacks including crisps
• Meat and pastry products such as sausage rolls, pies and samosas.
• Fruit juice, squash, fizzy drinks or those containing added sugar – even pure juices are high in sugar
• Nut or nut products (although they can be very healthy) but are not allowed because of the danger to other children with allergies. (Please do not use nuts or ingredients that contain nuts in your packed lunch).

Packed lunches can include a 'special treat' once a week. This will be the same day for the whole school to help us to continue to monitor lunchboxes. Treat day will be on Friday; on this day, lunch boxes could include:

- Samosa, pakora, pastries
- Cereal bars, oat-based biscuits
- Biscuits (25-30g)
- A small piece of cake (40-50g)
- A small pack of crisps (35g)
- A pure fruit smoothie

It must still not include chocolate bars, chocolate covered biscuits or nuts. Chocolate cake, which is made with cocoa rather than chocolate, does meet the guidelines.

Packed lunches can be difficult to manage; thinking of ideas for their contents can be challenging for parents. For ideas on healthy lunch box recipes for children over the age of five years, visit the Change4Life website or use the NHS Food scanner app to choose the healthier options when shopping. For packed lunch ideas for children under the age of 5, visits Packed lunches for 1-4 year olds

Snacks
Children are asked to bring their own healthy snack for break time, for example, a piece of fruit or a savoury snack low in sugar, fat and salt, for example, homemade popcorn, rice cakes, scotch pancakes, savoury muffins or bagel, visit NHS Healthier snacks. For snack ideas for children under the age of 5, visit snacks for 1 – 4 year olds.

Special diet
Our inhouse school meal provider caters for a variety of special diets including, vegetarian, gluten-free, dairy-free diets in line with the school's halal dietary requirements. However, the school recognises that some children may have verified medical conditions requiring special diets that do not meet standard guidelines. In this case, parents are urged to be responsible for ensuring that packed lunches are as healthy as possible. For these reasons pupils are also not permitted to swap food items.

Monitoring
The midday supervisors advise pupils, for example, who bring foods high in fat, sugar and salt that they are not suitable and that they do not meet the packed lunch guidelines. For more information on what is classed as the high level of fat, sugar and salt, visit https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools/portion-sizes-and-food-groups#foods-high-in-fat-sugar-and-salt . Parents are also advised to use the NHS Food scanner app to help them to navigate what food options are healthier. Alternatively, to learn how to read and make sense of food labels visit British Nutrition Foundation.

Dissemination

The packed lunch guidelines will be shared via parents' newsletters and communications. All school staff, including teaching and catering staff, will be informed of this guidance and will support its implementation.

Parents whose child/children repeatedly bring in foods which are not compliant with our packed lunch policy will be informed verbally and/or via written letter or referred to the school healthy team.