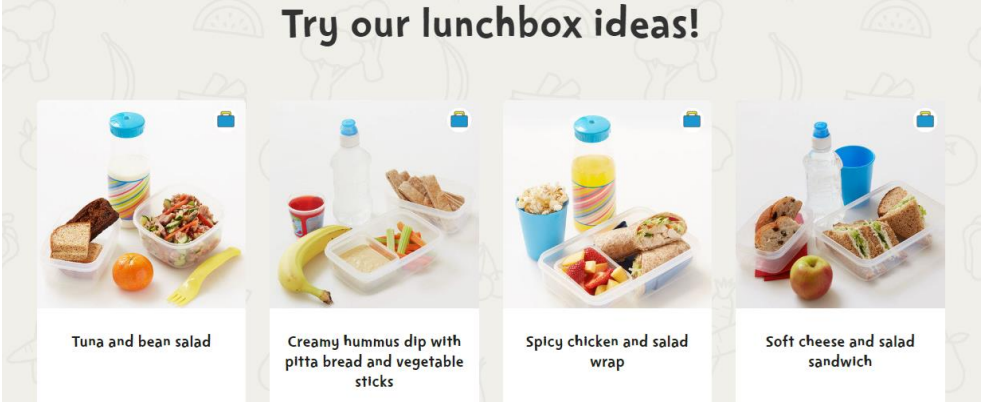
Bernards Heath Infant and Nursery School

Home Prepared Packed Lunch Policy

Updated:	November 2025
Next Review Date:	November 2027
Reviewed by:	Hannah Rimmer


Try our lunchbox ideas!
Tuna and bean salad
Creamy hummus dip with pitta bread and vegetable sticks
Spicy chicken and salad wrap
Soft cheese and salad sandwich

NHS Choices

Policy Summary:
This is a guide for families who are choosing to provide a home prepared packed lunch for their children and is also available on our website.
To summarise the policy:

- Parents should ensure that home prepared packed lunches provide a healthy and well balanced meal
- All children at school will be given water to drink at lunchtime, any drinks at lunchtime must be a healthy choice, no cans, sugary or fizzy drinks
- Whole/crushed nuts must not be sent into school – this includes cereal bars/snacks that contain nuts or any other product with nut ingredients
- Packed lunches must **not** contain sweets or chocolate
- Biscuits, chocolate coated biscuits, crisps and small cakes are allowed as long as the packed lunch provides a healthy and balanced meal
- Re-useable ice packs are a good choice in warmer weather, all lunches must be in a sealed plastic container/lunch bag
- Within reason any uneaten food will be sent home in the lunchbox

Where meals do not appear to be well balanced, a member of staff will talk to parents in a timely and sensitive manner.

Bernards Heath Infant and Nursery School has written a home prepared packed lunch policy to reflect the importance of healthy eating and healthy lifestyles linked to a balanced diet.

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 children. 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.

Home prepared packed lunches can contribute to almost a quarter of a child's weekly food intake and therefore need to be balanced and nutritious.

This policy applies to all home prepared packed lunches including after school club snacks which are to be eaten within school or on school visits during school hours.

Aims

- To encourage healthy eating habits from an early age and improve the overall nutrition of children
- To ensure that home prepared packed lunches provide children with healthy and nutritious food that is similar to food served in schools. All food served in schools is now regulated by the Food and Nutrient Based Standards for School Lunches.

Rationale

- Schools are required to positively promote the health and well-being of the children
- The contents of home prepared packed lunches need to reflect the requirement of schools to meet minimum food and nutrition standards for school meals
- Historically, the contents of home prepared packed lunches in some schools have been unhealthy and nationally 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

- The short term effects of unhealthy packed lunches and food intake can include poor growth, tooth decay, obesity, anaemia, constipation, poor concentration and behavioural problems - all of 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 home prepared packed lunches at school 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 well-being in later life

- To ensure that food brought into school (home prepared packed lunches) reflects and meets the Guide for Nutrition Based Standards

Implementation

Our home prepared packed lunch policy fits within a wider context of promoting a whole school approach to food and healthy eating. Children's packed lunches should be based on the 'Eatwell Plate' model which shows items from the 5 main food groups; (The NHS Eat well guide).

NHS Choices shares a range of suggestions for creating healthier lunchboxes.

Keep them fuller for longer

Base the lunchbox on foods like bread, rice, pasta and potatoes. Choose wholegrain where you can.

Mix your slices

If your child doesn't like wholegrain, try making a sandwich from one slice of white bread and one slice of wholemeal/brown bread.

Freeze your bread

Keep a small selection of bread in the freezer. Make lunchboxes more interesting by using different shapes, like bagels, pittas and wraps, and different types of bread, such as granary, wholemeal and multi-grain.

DIY lunches

Wraps and pots of fillings can be more exciting for kids when they get to put them together. Dipping foods are also fun and make a change from a sandwich each day.

Less spread

Cut down on the spread used and try to avoid using mayonnaise in sandwiches.

Cut back on fat

Pick lower fat sandwich fillings, such as lean meats (including chicken or turkey), fish (such as tuna or salmon), reduced-fat cream cheese, and reduced-fat hard cheese.

Ever green

Always add salad to sandwiches - it all counts towards your child's 5 A DAY.

Always add veg

Cherry tomatoes, or sticks of carrot, cucumber, celery and peppers all count towards their 5 A DAY. Adding a small pot of reduced-fat hummus or other dips may help with getting kids to eat

Watch the teeth!

Dried fruit counts towards your 5 A Day, but can stick to teeth so should only be eaten at mealtimes to reduce the risk of tooth decay.

Swap the sweets

Swap cakes, chocolate, cereal bars and biscuits for malt loaf, fruited teacakes, fruit breads or fruit (fresh, dried or tinned - in juice not syrup).

Go low fat and lower sugar

Go for low-fat and lower sugar yoghurt or fromage frais and add your own fruit.

Check your cheese

Cheese can be high in fat and salt so choose stronger-tasting ones - and use less of it - or try reduced-fat varieties of cheese.

Foods Which Must Be Avoided

1. Whole/crushed nuts **MUST NOT** be brought into school in for the safety of all children.
2. Packed lunches must also **NOT** contain sweets or chocolate.
3. Biscuits, chocolate coated biscuits, crisps and small cakes are allowed as long as the packed lunch provides a healthy and balanced meal

Special Diets and Allergies
Please ensure that we are aware of any special diets that do not allow for our policy to be followed exactly. In such cases we do ask that parents talk to us and make sure the packed lunch is as healthy as possible.

Children are not permitted to swap or share food items.

Packed Lunch Containers
It is the responsibility of parents / carers to provide an appropriate packed lunch container where food items can be stored securely and appropriately until the lunchtime period. Parents might include an ice pack, since we do not have facilities to refrigerate home prepared packed lunches.

Please ensure the outside of all lunch boxes / containers are clearly labelled with your child's name.

Waste and Disposal
The school will, within reason, send any uneaten home prepared packed lunch food items back home. The rationale for this is that parents can be aware of what their child has consumed during the day and plan the family evening meal accordingly as well as to offer you the opportunity to raise any concerns over their child's food intake with the class teacher.

Promotion of Healthy Home Prepared Packed Lunches
There will be on going promotion of the need to provide healthy packed lunches through:

- Newsletters
- Our school handbook
- Whole School Home Prepared Packed Lunch Policy
- 'New to ….' Meetings for parents
- Healthy School Week / healthy eating activities
- Curriculum content
- School website

Monitoring and Evaluation
The school will carry out monitoring of packed lunch provision - where there may be concerns over a child's food/nutritional intake and/or content of home prepared packed lunches, this will be dealt with in a timely and sensitive manner.

www.eatsamazing.co.uk