

# Healthy Packed Lunch Guidance for Parents/ Carers with Children at Primary School



**WARRINGTON**  
Borough Council

A healthy packed lunch will give children the **energy** and **nutrition** they need to get the most from their school day – helping them to **stay healthy, feel good and be ready and able to learn**. Just like school meals, packed lunches should be made up of foods from the main food groups in the **Eatwell Guide** [www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/the-eatwell-guide](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/the-eatwell-guide) and portions should be appropriate for a child's age and size. This will ensure every child has a healthy and nutritionally-balanced lunch.

## What should I include in my healthy packed lunch?

Please try to include **ONE** of each of the following in your lunch each day:

### STARCHY CARBOHYDRATE

- ✓ bread, wrap, pitta, bagel, rolls, baguette
- ✓ rice or couscous
- ✓ noodles or plain pasta – avoid flavoured instant packet products and limit canned pasta
- ✓ potatoes
- ✓ oatcakes, rice cakes or crackers

Wholemeal/wholegrain options contain more fibre and keep you fuller for longer

**Gives you energy for the day ahead!**



### DAIRY FOOD (or non-dairy alternative)

- ✓ cheese – hard, soft, spread
- ✓ yoghurt or fromage frais
- ✓ milk
- ✓ custard

Choose low fat, low sugar options where possible

**Good for healthy bones and teeth!**



### FRUIT (fresh, frozen, tinned or dried)

- ✓ apple
- ✓ banana
- ✓ satsuma
- ✓ pear
- ✓ plum
- ✓ mango
- ✓ melon
- ✓ dried fruit e.g. raisins, apricots, dates. Add to meals and not as a snack
- ✓ cherry tomatoes (chopped)
- ✓ handful of grapes (halved)
- ✓ fruit salad or kebab

Wash fruit and vegetables prior to preparing.

Ensure canned fruit is in juice not syrup.



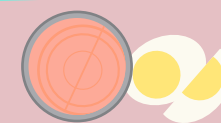
**Fruit and vegetables give you vitamins, minerals and fibre to stay healthy. Part of your '5 a day'**

How much? A portion is one child-sized handful.

### VEGETABLES OR SALAD

- ✓ chopped vegetable sticks (e.g. carrot, cucumber, pepper)
- ✓ salad in sandwiches
- ✓ vegetable soup
- ✓ Baked beans count as a vegetable but only once during a week. Ensure beans are reduced in salt and sugar

If you are using canned products, choose those without added sugar and salt.



### PROTEIN

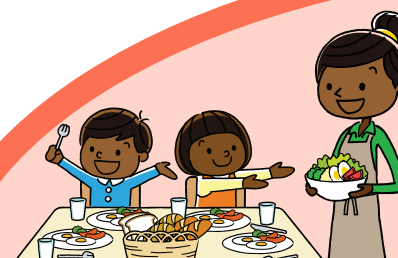
- ✓ meat e.g. sliced lean ham, chicken or beef in a sandwich
- ✓ fish – preferably try to include oily fish such as salmon, tinned mackerel, sardines and pilchards. Aim to have one portion a week
- ✓ eggs
- ✓ lentils, beans, chickpeas
- ✓ alternative meat free option

Try to limit processed foods e.g. sausages, meatballs, fishfingers, fishcakes, sausage rolls

**Helps your body to grow and develop**

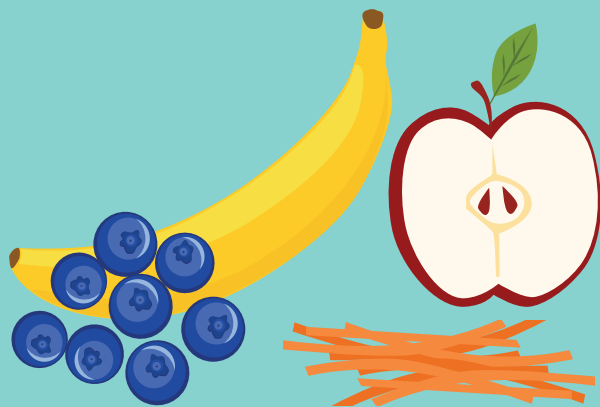
**DRINKS** – plain tap water is the best option, especially for teeth. Please send your child to school with their own named, clean water bottle each day.

**Drinking enough each day helps keep your body working well and your skin looking healthy!**



### Me-sized meals

Young children don't need as much food as teenagers and adults. When they eat more than they need, the excess energy is stored as fat in their bodies.



## 5 top tips for your packed lunch

- Freezer packs can keep food cool. Freeze a (reusable) bottle of water which will be ready to drink by lunchtime.
- Get your child to help pack their lunch box – they are more likely to enjoy it.
- Love to dip? – cut up pitta bread or veg sticks to have with a dip.
- Use pastry cutters to cut funny-shaped sandwiches.
- Protect your fruit by putting it in a small plastic container e.g. apple/banana guard.



## What about snacks for break time?

### The best options for breaktime snacks are:

- Portion of fresh fruit (no dried fruit as snacks please as the sugar can stick in teeth).
- Vegetable sticks.
- Other ideas for healthy snacks could be rice cakes, bread sticks, bag of plain popcorn.

### Please check your school's policy on snacks

## What should I NOT bring to school?

Please do **NOT** include the following items:

- ✗ Sweets and chocolate bars – these foods are high in sugar and calories, low in goodness, and are harmful for teeth.
- ✗ Squash or fizzy drinks – water is best for teeth.
- ✗ Other items e.g. nuts, sesame, fish – please check your school's allergy policy.



Thank you!

## Get more vegetables in your lunches!

Here are some GREAT ideas for upping the veg content in your lunchboxes  
<https://simplyveg.org.uk/lunchboxes>

## Be safe!

- Please cut up food into small sizes for young children. Cut grapes and cherry tomatoes in half (lengthways if oblong).
- Be aware of allergies – please check your school's allergies guidance.

# School dinners are best!

**Making packed lunches can be time consuming and expensive – why not try school dinners?**

School meals provide your child with a nutritionally-balanced variety of foods. Every infant child (aged 5-7) is entitled to a FREE school lunch.

Also, FREE school meals for all age groups are provided to families who receive qualifying incomes such as income support and universal credit. Ask your school office how to order yours. More information can be found on Warrington Borough councils school meals page [warrington.gov.uk/schoolmeals](http://warrington.gov.uk/schoolmeals), for any specific concerns or requests please contact school meals team by calling 01925 443082 or email [SchoolMealsManagement@warrington.gov.uk](mailto:SchoolMealsManagement@warrington.gov.uk)



Here are some websites with more information to help your family to stay healthy, happy and well:

[www.nhs.uk/healthier-families](http://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families)

[www.nhs.uk/start4life](http://www.nhs.uk/start4life)

And some information on saving money, local food, financial support and eating well on a budget:

[www.warrington.gov.uk/cost-living-support](http://www.warrington.gov.uk/cost-living-support)



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