

CUTENHOE HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY



Learning for life where the social, emotional, spiritual, physical and learning needs of every member of the school community are met.

Packed Lunch Policy

Non-Statutory	
Date of policy	September 2026
Review requirements	Every 2 years
Date of next Review	September 28
Approval Body	Headteacher

Cutenhoe Hill Primary School and Nursery is committed to promoting and respecting the health, safety and wellbeing of all our children and any adults who work in our school

Contents

Introduction	2
Allergy Safety	3
Objectives	3
Individual Allergy Arrangements	3
Allergy Management	4
Restricted items	5
Products containing nuts	6
Choking Prevention and Safe Preparation	6
General	7
Special Diets and Allergies	8
Appendix 1:	9

Introduction

At Cutenhoe Hill Primary School we want our children to develop healthy eating habits, ensuring they get the right energy and nutrition to thrive in school and beyond. Schools are an influential setting and can contribute significantly to improving the health and well-being of pupils. We are committed to promoting the health, safety and wellbeing of all pupils – what is packed in a lunchbox may impact somebody else without your knowledge!

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, pupils 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.

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.

Poor nutrition in childhood can lead to short-term issues such as poor concentration, tooth decay and behavioural difficulties, as well as long-term health risks including obesity, heart disease and diabetes.

Allergy Safety

Cutenhoe Hill Primary School is committed to creating a safe and inclusive environment for pupils with allergies. In line with Benedict's Law and the Department for Education's Allergy Safety in Schools guidance, the school takes reasonable steps to reduce the risk of allergic reactions and ensure appropriate support is available for pupils with diagnosed allergies.

Parents and carers are responsible for providing accurate and up-to-date information about their child's allergies and must ensure that any food sent into school complies with any individual allergy arrangements communicated by the school.

Objectives

- To improve the nutritional quality of packed lunches in school and the eating habits of children at lunchtimes
- 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 ensure that all children have a healthy and nutritious midday meal that sustains and prepares them for their afternoon learning;
- To take a proactive approach to promoting healthy eating;
- To ensure that food brought into school (packed lunches) reflects and meets food standards for school food.
- To safeguard all children and adults, particularly those with allergies or additional needs.

Individual Allergy Arrangements

Where a pupil has a diagnosed allergy, the school may implement specific control measures identified within their Individual Healthcare Plan. Parents and carers will be informed of any additional restrictions or precautions required to keep pupils safe.

All families are expected to support these reasonable adjustments.

Parents/carers should ensure that packed lunch items are clearly identifiable and retain original packaging where possible. This enables staff to verify ingredient information if required.

Allergy Management

The school has a number of pupils with diagnosed food allergies and intolerances. Parents/carers must comply with any allergy-related guidance issued by the school and must not send foods that have been identified as a risk to individual pupils or groups of pupils.

Where necessary, additional restrictions may be introduced to safeguard pupils with specific allergies. Parents/carers will be informed of these requirements and are expected to support them.

The school reserves the right to prohibit additional food items where they present a risk to a pupil with a diagnosed allergy.

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 Eat Well 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 water, pure fruit juice, semi-skimmed/skimmed milk, milk-based or yoghurt-based drinks, fruit smoothies and squash with no added sugar

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 ask that all children bring their school water bottles to school daily.

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.**

*Fizzy or carbonated drinks and drinks in glass bottles are **NOT** allowed in packed lunch boxes.*

Packed lunches SHOULD NOT include:

Foods which are high in fat and /or sugar

It is important not to fill up on too many foods that are high in fat and/ or sugar at the expense of other more nutritious foods. Limiting high fat and sugar foods will help protect young people from becoming overweight as well as helping prevent tooth decay, heart disease, stroke and diabetes.

Restricted items

To ensure consistency and to keep packed lunches in line with food standards for school meals, packed lunches cannot contain any of the following:

- Fizzy/ sugary drinks in cartons, bottles or cans
- Chocolate-coated products, sweets or confectionary examples include: Mars Bars, Smarties
- Chocolate and nut spreads containing nuts (including products containing hazelnuts such as Nutella®).
- Popcorn of any type
- Any products containing nuts - **Cutenhoe Hill Primary School is a nut free school**
- Energy drinks
- Chips and fried foods (such as chicken nuggets)
- Cold take-away food

Snacks such as crisps in the lunch box, are not encouraged every day. Try healthier alternatives such as savoury crackers or breadsticks.

Chocolate-covered biscuits and wafers are not allowed. Plain biscuits may be included occasionally as part of a balanced lunch.

Cakes and biscuits are allowed but again only as part of a balanced diet, try to include plain or fruit scone or malt loaf.

Sweets are **NOT** allowed, try replacing with fresh fruit.

Meat products such as sausage rolls, pies and corned beef should be used occasionally only.

Products containing nuts

Cutenhoe Hill Primary School operates as a nut-aware and nut-free environment. While the school cannot guarantee the complete absence of nuts, parents/carers must not send any food containing nuts or nut products into school.

WE HAVE A NUMBER OF CHILDREN WITH NUT ALLERGIES.

Products containing nuts include, but are not limited to:

- Peanut butter
- Chocolate and nut spreads containing nuts, including Nutella
- Cereal bars
- Cakes and biscuits

The school recognises that a number of foods can trigger allergic reactions in children. In addition to nuts, common allergens include milk, eggs, sesame, soya, wheat (gluten), fish and others. Parents are asked to check food labels carefully and be mindful that foods brought into school may impact other children – we may ask you to adapt lunchboxes to cater for this in the future depending on the needs of others.

Food Sharing

Children must not share, swap or exchange food or drinks with other pupils. This is an important control measure to reduce the risk of allergic reactions and to support the safety of all children.

Staff will regularly remind children that food and drinks must not be shared, exchanged or traded with others.

Choking Prevention and Safe Preparation

- Food must be prepared appropriately to reduce choking risk, particularly for younger children:

- Cut small round foods (e.g. grapes and cherry tomatoes) into quarters lengthways.
- Slice hard foods such as apples, pears and carrots into thin, manageable pieces appropriate to the child's age.
- Remove bones, stones and pips.
- Cut sausages into thin strips and remove skins.
- Avoid hard sweets and other high-risk choking foods.
- No popcorn.
- No marshmallow or jelly cubes.

If a packed lunch contains a prohibited item, presents a choking hazard, or contains food that may place another child at risk due to a known allergy:

- The item may be removed or replaced
- The school may provide a safe alternative where appropriate
- Parents/carers may be contacted
- Further support and guidance will be offered

General

Midday Supervisors and class staff check whether the children have eaten the food in their packed lunch and encourage children to eat food that they have left. Uneaten food is returned to packed lunch boxes so that parents can see what is being eaten by their child.

- Parents should try to ensure that lunches are in insulated bags and that small gel packs or ice packs are used to keep food cool.
- Parents should provide cutlery for items such as yoghurts. These should be placed in the packed lunch box.
- Parents should ensure that lunch boxes and any cutlery are washed on a daily basis.
- Children must always bring their school water bottles to school even if they have a separate drink in their lunchbox. Children are permitted to drink water from their school water bottle at any point during the school day. Children are allowed to refill their school water bottles if required.

Special Diets and Allergies

Cutenhoe Hill Primary 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.

Appendix 1: Healthy Lunch Box examples:





Cut up fruit



**Filled wrap
(cut up)**



**Carrot &
cucumber sticks**



Cheese crackers



SAFETY REMINDER

Grapes should always be cut into quarters lengthways to reduce choking risks.

Please ensure foods are prepared appropriately for your child's age and stage of development.



**Vegetable
pasta salad**



Cheese cubes



**Cherry tomatoes
& cucumber**



Strawberry slices



SAFETY REMINDER

Cherry tomatoes and grapes should always be cut into quarters lengthways to reduce choking risks.

Please ensure foods are prepared appropriately for your child's age and stage of development.

HEALTHY PACKED LUNCH PICK & MIX PLANNER

Choose:

- ☒ 1 Main Item
- ☒ 1 Fruit
- ☒ 1 Vegetable
- ☒ 1 Dairy Item
- ☒ Water to drink

1. MAIN ITEM (Choose One)

- ☐ Sandwiches (cut into fingers or squares)
- ☐ Filled wrap (cut into bite-sized pieces)
- ☐ Bagel
- ☐ Pitta bread with filling
- ☐ Pasta salad
- ☐ Rice salad
- ☐ Savoury muffin
- ☐ Boiled egg with crackers

2. FRUIT (Choose One)

- ☐ Satsuma segments
- ☐ Strawberry slices
- ☐ Apple slices
- ☐ Pear slices
- ☐ Melon cubes
- ☐ Peach slices
- ☐ Banana
- ☐ Grapes (cut into quarters lengthways)

3. VEGETABLES (Choose One)

- ☐ Cucumber sticks
- ☐ Carrot sticks
- ☐ Pepper strips
- ☐ Sweetcorn
- ☐ Sugar snap peas
- ☐ Celery sticks
- ☐ Cherry tomatoes (cut into quarters lengthways)

4. DAIRY OR PROTEIN (Choose One)

- ☐ Cheese cubes
- ☐ Cheese crackers
- ☐ Yogurt
- ☐ Boiled egg

- ☐ Hummus dip
- ☐ Cottage cheese

DRINK

- ☒ Water

CHOKING RISK REMINDER

⚠ Grapes and cherry tomatoes should always be cut into quarters lengthways.

⚠ Foods should be prepared appropriately for your child's age and stage of development.

⚠ Please follow any school allergy guidance.