

GRINDON INFANT SCHOOL



Packed Lunch Policy

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To grow and stay healthy children need to eat a nutritionally well balanced diet. Schools are required to positively promote the health and well-being of its pupils. Work around healthy eating is a high priority of the school curriculum.

The content of lunchboxes needs to reflect the requirement of schools to meet minimum food and nutrition standards for school meals.

We know that 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 consume too much fat, sugar and salt and too little fibre, fruit and vegetables. Packed lunches can contribute to almost a third of a child's weekly food intake and therefore need to be balanced and nutritious.

Our packed lunch guidelines fit 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 Guide' model which shows items in the 5 main food groups: (Food Standards Agency).

Bread, Rice, Potatoes, Pasta (all cold)

These starchy foods are a healthy source of energy. Packed lunches should include 2 or more portions.

Fruit and Vegetables

These foods provide vitamins, minerals and fibre. Lunches should include at least 1 portion of fruit and 1 portion of vegetables / salad, or more.

Milk and Dairy Foods

These foods provide calcium for healthy bones and teeth. Include 1 portion at lunch.

Meat, Fish, Eggs, Beans

These foods provide protein for growth. Packed lunches should include 1 portion of these foods. Oily fish, such as salmon, should be included at least once every 3 weeks.

Foods and drinks 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. This is why sweets, chocolate, crisps, cereal bars, fruit bars, toffee/salted popcorn, squash and fizzy drinks are no longer available in schools. Please support your school by not including these items in a packed lunch.

Drinks - any drinks provided in lunch boxes should only include either plain water, milk, unsweetened fresh fruit juice, diluted fresh fruit juice, fruit or dairy based smoothies.

To ensure consistency and to keep packed lunches in line with food standards for school meals, packed lunches should **not** contain the following:

Fizzy / sugary drinks in cartons, bottles or cans;

Chocolate bars / sweets / confectionery;

Chocolate spread as a filling for sandwiches;

Chewing gum;

Sugared / toffee and salted popcorn, marshmallows;

Crisps or any packet savoury snacks high in salt and fat;

Salted nuts or products containing nuts.

Fruit/Vegetables that are not prepared correctly.

To assist us in ensuring the safety of all children in school at lunchtime, packed lunches should not contain nuts or any nut products, e.g. nutty cereal bars, peanut butter. This protects the children who have severe allergies to nut products and can suffer anaphylaxis as a result of contact with such products.

Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework – September 2025

This policy also aligns with the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework – September 2025 Food and Drink and Safer Eating requirements:

- **Choking Prevention and Food Preparation**– Cut small round items (e.g., grapes, cherry tomatoes) into quarters lengthwise. Slice hard or firm fruits and vegetables (e.g. apples, carrots, melon, cucumber) into thin batons or wedges—and ideally steam or soften them for younger children. All skin must be removed from fruit and vegetables. Sausages and hot dogs should be cut in half lengthwise, then into thin strips; remove skins. White bread can form a ball shape at the back of a child's throat but can be toasted to avoid this or brown bread is a good alternative. If children will only eat white bread and won't tolerate it toasted then the Food Standard Agency suggest ensuring the bread is thin, not dry so has a spread on it or has a moist filling inside and the sandwiches are cut into small manageable pieces to aid swallowing then this is less of a choking risk. Avoid whole nuts, popcorn, marshmallows, hard sweets, jelly cubes or similar, especially for under-5s. Please also limit processed and sugary foods and as always, no sweets or chocolate bars. If sending crisps then please send soft ones such as Skips, Wotsits, Quavers, Pom Bears or Space Raiders but please don't send them every day.
- **Supervision and Staff Requirements** - Continuous adult supervision: Children are within sight and hearing during all snack and mealtimes. A staff member with valid paediatric First Aid is present at all eating times.
- **Dietary Information & Food Checking**– School gathers dietary information at enrolment: allergies, intolerances, preferences, special diets, especially celiac disease. The Lunchtime Supervisory Assistant in the dining hall inspects packed lunches before serving—ensuring

safety and preventing cross-allergy exposure. Staff maintain and update records, liaising with parents and, when necessary, healthcare professionals.

Waste and Disposal

The school will, within reason, send any uneaten packed lunch food items back home. The rationale for this is that parents can also monitor what their child has consumed during the day and then raise any concerns over their child's food intake with the school.

Hot Food

Please note all items in a packed lunch box must be cold – no hot items are to be sent into School for Health and Safety reasons (avoid food inside being too hot and burning children or staff). Please note School cannot heat packed lunch food either so all food sent in a packed lunch must be eaten cold.

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 are advised to include an ice pack. Food products prepared and stored in ambient temperatures (between 8-63 degrees centigrade), after a period of time, can have increased levels of bacteria in them so Food Standard Agency advice is food should not be stored at these temperatures. As it is impossible for School to judge the temperature of food, no hot/warm food is to be sent into School.

Storage of Packed Lunches

The school will provide storage area / facilities for packed lunch bags, in the most convenient and appropriate place possible. However, the school cannot provide cooled storage areas and therefore cannot take legal responsibility for foods prepared at home and then brought into School. Parents are therefore advised to send packed lunches in an insulated bag with freezer blocks where possible to stop the food spoiling.

Dining Facilities for Pupils Bringing Packed Lunch

The School will provide an appropriate area where pupils who choose to bring packed lunches can eat and ensure that free, fresh drinking water is readily available at all times.

Special Diets

The School recognises that some children may require special diets that do not allow for the standards to be met exactly. In this case parents must contact School and discuss this and will be urged to be responsible in ensuring that packed lunches are as healthy as possible.

For these reasons children are not permitted to swap food items.



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Author's Name	Grindon Infant School
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SIGNATURES:

Head Teacher	
Chair of Governors	