



## **Healthy Lunch Box Guidelines for Parents**

### **Aims**

To provide guidance for parents who wish to provide packed lunches for their children. It also focuses on the importance of healthy eating and the benefits that this can bring to the child.

To create an awareness of food allergies and the associated risks when children bring packed lunches into school.

### **Healthy Eating**

Research from the Food Standards Agency, suggests that the content of a child's lunchbox is not always as healthy as it should be; nine out of ten lunch boxes contain too much-saturated fat, salt and sugar. Five out of ten fail to include fruit.

A diet that is high in fat, high in salt and high in refined carbohydrates diminishes mental alertness. A child eating these types of food is likely to be tired by the end of the day. A diet high in saturated fat and salt may form the foundations for heart disease and high blood pressure later in life and may also lead to obesity.

Lunchboxes are sometimes the preferred option for children, and they have the potential to provide a nutritious and tasty meal. A healthy lunch box should help to improve a child's attention, behaviour and learning throughout the day and should aim to provide one- third of the child's daily nutrients.

SCS realises the need to promote healthy eating for every child at school. We recognise the value of promoting healthy eating as it plays an important role in the prevention of disease and the promotion of good health.



### **The Essential Food Groups**

- a. The key to a healthy lunch box is to include a balance of appropriate foods from the four main food groups:
- b. **PROTEIN:** The lunchbox should contain a source of protein to keep the child alert. This may be with a sandwich filling of chicken, egg or tuna. Chicken salad or tuna pasta salad may be an alternative.
- c. **COMPLEX CARBOHYDRATES:** The lunchbox should contain complex carbohydrates, such as wholemeal bread, pasta, rice or banana, for slow-release energy. This will help to sustain the child's energy levels and assist in maintaining their concentration.
- d. **CALCIUM:** The lunchbox should contain a source of calcium for growth, healthy bones and teeth. Cheese, milk, yoghurt, from-age fruits, yoghurt drinks, smoothies and milkshakes are excellent sources of calcium.
- e. **FRUIT and/or VEGETABLES:** A well-balanced lunch box should include a portion of fruit or vegetable. Young children will find prepared cucumber, carrot sticks or chopped apple or pear appetising.
- f. A lunchbox should include a wide variety of foods. This will assist in providing an appropriate range of nutrients and will prevent the child from becoming bored.

### **Foods to Avoid**

Foods that are high in fat and sugar content should be limited. This may help stop your child from becoming overweight and assist in the prevention of tooth decay. Sweets, chocolate, crisps, sweetened cereal bars and fizzy drinks should not be included in a healthy lunch box.

### **Allergies**

In keeping with SCS's 'no nuts' policy, nuts or foods containing nuts should not be included in the lunch box. It is also for this reason that we discourage children from sharing food.

### **Guidance for Parents**

- a. Parents may promote good health and healthy eating by acting as a positive role model. Please do the best for your child by:





- b. Recognising the value of promoting healthy eating and the important role and effect that this plays in your child's health and development.
  - c. Not including sweets, chocolates, crisps, and fizzy drinks within the lunch box.
  - d. Not including nuts or foodstuffs containing nuts within the lunch box.
  - e. Notifying and providing the school with information regarding food allergies that their child may have.
  - f. Ensuring that lunch boxes are washed thoroughly every day to maintain a safe, hygienic container.
  - g. Checking that all the food used is within the 'best before or 'use by date.
  - h. Ensuring that lunches remain cool by including ice packs or an equivalent cooling system in the container.
  - i. Helping children to take responsibility for their own nutrition by being aware of the healthy lunch box policy and guidelines.
  - j. Encouraging your children to act as positive role models for other children in respect of healthy eating.
  - k. Encouraging children to help promote the SCS Healthy Packed Lunch Guidelines.
  - l. Encouraging all children at SCS to participate in a healthy eating educational programme.
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