



St. Andrew's C.E. Primary School

Food in School

Dear Parents,

This Curriculum Newsletter summarises the current situation with food in school. It has been written to offer advice and to remind you of the current position with both the food we serve and the food and snacks that children bring to school. Hopefully, it will also be of some help to parents when preparing your child's packed lunch.

In May 2006 the Government announced new nutritional standards for school food to be phased in by September 2009. These standards are now fully in place at St. Andrew's. The standards cover all food and drink sold or served in schools: school lunches, breakfast, tuck shops, break-time snacks and after-school clubs. Good health is important for everyone.

Setting the new nutritional standards represents just one of a number of initiatives. Another, the "Healthy Schools" accreditation, which we have achieved, is also aimed at improving children's overall health.

A varied and balanced diet together with regular exercise is an important way of protecting health, and promoting proper growth and development. **In the short term it can help children to improve their concentration in class and fulfil their potential both inside and outside school.** It helps to minimise some health risks such as anaemia and dental decay. A good diet in childhood can also help to prevent ill health later in life. Unhealthy diets, which include too many fatty foods, too much salt, and not enough vegetables and fruit, are linked to the risk of heart disease, stroke and some cancers.

What is a healthy diet?

There are no healthy or unhealthy foods, only healthy or unhealthy diets. For children aged five and over a healthy diet means broadly a balanced diet with plenty of variety and enough energy for growth and development:

- plenty of fibre-rich starchy foods such as bread, rice, pasta, potatoes and yams
- plenty of fruit and vegetables
- not eating too many foods containing a lot of fat, especially saturated fat
- moderate amounts of dairy products
- moderate amounts of meat, fish or alternatives
- not having sugary foods and drinks too often.

Special diets and allergies

The school also recognises that some pupils may require special diets that do not allow for the standards to be met exactly. In this case parents are urged to be responsible in ensuring that packed lunches are as healthy as possible.

We also have some children with allergies to peanuts. For the safety of these children I ask parents **not to send nuts into school as part of a packed lunch or snack.** For some of our children, even being in the same room can trigger an allergic reaction. However, not every child with a peanut allergy will necessarily have an anaphylactic reaction but the possibility is always there.

Anaphylaxis is a severe and potentially life threatening reaction to an allergen, where the whole body is affected.

Other Symptoms can include:

URTICARIA (nettle rash), itching flushing and weals

ANGIOEDEMA (swelling of lips, tongue and face)

NAUSEA vomiting and or diarrhea

ABDOMINAL PAIN (stomach ache)

SWELLING OF LARYNX (voice box), hoarse voice, difficulty in swallowing
SHORTNESS OF BREATH wheeze, asthma and changed voice
FALLING BLOOD PRESSURE (may feel faint)
CHANGE OF COLOUR
DIZZINESS and LOSS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Water in School

Water bottles are readily available in school for children to take a drink whenever they need one. Please ensure your child has his/her water bottle in school everyday. We also have fresh drinking water available around school. This is a combination of water fountains and taps. We are hoping to extend the access to water fountains in the near future.

How does drinking water link to health?

- Drinking adequate amounts of water regularly throughout the day can protect health and contribute to well-being.
- Drinking adequate amounts of water can help prevent a range of short and long-term health problems from headaches, bladder, kidney and bowel problems.
- Water has none of the health problems associated with drinks containing sugar, additives, sweeteners, acids or caffeine.

Lunchbox Ideas and Advice

www.netmums.com/food/Lunchbox_Ideas.101/

Wherever possible packed lunches should include:

- at least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables every day.
- meat, fish or other source of non-dairy protein (e.g. lentils, kidney beans, chickpeas, humous, every day
- oily fish, such as salmon, at least once every three weeks.
- a starchy food such as any type of bread, pasta, rice, couscous, noodles, potatoes or other type of cereals every day.
- dairy food such as milk, cheese, yoghurt, fromage frais or custard everyday
- only water, still or sparkling, fruit juice, semi-skimmed or skimmed milk, yoghurt or milk drinks and smoothies.

Packed lunches should not include:

- Crisps too often. Instead, include vegetables and fruit (with no added salt, sugar or fat). Savoury crackers or breadsticks served with fruit, vegetables or dairy food are also a good choice.
- Too much confectionery such as chocolate bars, chocolate-coated biscuits and sweets. Cakes and biscuits are allowed but encourage your child to eat these only as part of a balanced meal.
- Meat products such as sausage rolls, individual pies, corned meat and sausages / chipolatas should be included only occasionally.
- Hot flasks due to the risk of scolding.

Importance of Breakfast

Teachers continue to say that eating breakfast improves concentration, mood and memory amongst children and this is, in part, supported by a small number of studies showing short-term effects. What is more evident, however, is that most children who skip breakfast tend to eat foods high in fat or sugar or overeat during the day and feel unwell in the mornings. These are some of the reasons why it is essential for children to come to school having had breakfast.

How does drinking water improve learning?

- The key to boosting the capacity to learn is to keep well hydrated throughout the day.
- When we are thirsty mental performance including memory, attention and concentration can decrease by about 10 per cent
- Pupils concentrate better because they are not distracted by the effects of dehydration such as thirst, tiredness and irritability
- Can aid behaviour management by helping to settle pupils in the classroom.

Exercise

We are only too aware that lack of exercise and a poor diet can lead to any number of health problems, not just physical but sometimes mental as well. It's essential that healthy eating and exercise is something we adopt from an early age. It has been reported that over the years the opportunity for physical exercise within schools has reduced. This is true. Combine this with the lack of exercise that children are getting at home due to the wider availability of games consoles then the problems start to mount. The problems can then escalate and are carried over to adulthood, but at St. Andrew's we are making a conscious effort to encourage our pupils to engage in more physical activity within the school day, particularly at break and lunch time. The improvements to playground equipment are part of a wider policy to improve children's health and well being.

Snacks at break time

In Early Years and key stage 1 pupils are provided with a piece of fruit or dried fruit like raisins. At key stage 2 our snack policy suggests the following:

A piece of raw fruit, chopped vegetables, crudités, dried fruit eg sultanas, raisins, dates, apricots or a plain biscuit. If possible please send in a container.

Birthday Treats

Sweets for birthdays are permitted. Our only stipulation is that lollies are not sent in as they could potentially be dangerous.