

Packed Lunch Policy

Related Policies and Documents

This policy should be read alongside:

Medical Conditions Policy
Allergy Safety Policy
First Aid Policy
Individual Healthcare Plans (IHPs)
Food Hygiene and Food Safety procedures
Educational Visits Policy
Equality and Accessibility policies
Behaviour Policy
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
PSHE Scheme of Work

The school will ensure that these policies and procedures work together to support pupils to eat safely and healthily.

1. Purpose

At Sele First School, we are committed to promoting healthy eating habits and supporting pupils' health, wellbeing and learning.

This policy sets out the school's expectations for packed lunches brought from home. It aims to ensure that packed lunches:

- provide a healthy and balanced contribution to a child's diet;
- are appropriate for the child's age and needs;
- are prepared, stored and transported safely;
- take account of allergies, medical conditions and other dietary requirements;
- support the school's Healthy School ethos; and
- enable all pupils to eat safely and inclusively.

The policy is intended to provide clear and practical guidance for families and staff while recognising that responsibility for the contents of a packed lunch brought from home rests primarily with the parent/carer.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all pupils who bring a packed lunch to school, including packed lunches brought for:

- normal school days;
- educational visits and school trips;
- residential visits; and
- other school activities where pupils are required to bring food from home.

Where food is provided or prepared by the school, the school's food safety, allergen and medical procedures will also apply.

3. Healthy Packed Lunch Expectations

Parents and carers are encouraged to provide a nutritious and varied packed lunch which reflects the child's age, appetite and individual needs.

A balanced packed lunch may include:

- a starchy food such as bread, wraps, pitta bread, pasta, rice or crackers;
- a source of protein such as lean meat, fish, eggs, cheese, beans, hummus or suitable alternatives;
- at least one portion of fruit and/or vegetables;
- a dairy food or suitable dairy alternative; and
- water or milk, or another suitable low/no-sugar drink.

Families are encouraged to vary the foods provided and to avoid routinely including foods high in saturated fat, salt and free sugars.

The school's approach to healthy eating is educational and supportive. Staff will encourage pupils to develop positive and healthy attitudes towards food through the curriculum and everyday school life.

The statutory School Food Standards apply to food and drink provided by schools. They do not, in themselves, require parents to provide packed lunches which meet the same standards. However, the school encourages families to use the standards and current DfE healthy-eating guidance as a useful reference when preparing lunches.

4. Foods Not Permitted

For the health, safety and wellbeing of all pupils, the following must not be included in packed lunches:

- peanuts;
- tree nuts;
- nut butters and nut-based spreads;
- foods which clearly contain nuts;
- sweets and confectionery;
- chocolate bars intended primarily as confectionery;
- crisps and similar savoury snack foods;
- fizzy drinks;

- energy drinks or high-caffeine drinks; and
- glass bottles or containers.

The school is a **nut-free school** because some pupils may have potentially life-threatening allergies.

Parents and carers must check ingredient labels carefully before sending food into school. Where products are labelled as containing nuts, peanuts or other relevant allergens, they must not be included in a packed lunch.

Parents/carers should also consider precautionary allergen statements such as “may contain” where these are relevant to their child’s individual allergy and IHP.

The school recognises that a completely allergen-free environment cannot always be guaranteed. It will therefore use proportionate and practical risk-reduction measures in accordance with its Allergy Safety Policy and individual pupil risk assessments/IHPs.

5. Allergies and Medical Dietary Requirements

Sele First School recognises that pupils may have:

- food allergies;
- food intolerances;
- coeliac disease;
- diabetes;
- other medical conditions requiring dietary management;
- sensory or other individual dietary needs; or
- cultural or religious dietary requirements.

Parents and carers must inform the school as soon as possible of any relevant medical or dietary requirement.

Where a pupil has an allergy or medical condition which requires specific management, the school will work with the family and, where appropriate, healthcare professionals to establish appropriate arrangements.

Where required, an **Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP)** will be developed and kept under review.

The school will make reasonable adjustments where required to ensure that pupils with medical conditions or disabilities are able to participate safely and fully in school life.

The school’s arrangements for supporting pupils with allergies will follow the DfE’s **Allergy Safety in Schools statutory guidance**, published in July 2026.

6. Allergens and Food Safety

Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring that food brought from home is suitable for their child and has been prepared, stored and transported safely.

Parents and carers should:

- check food labels carefully;
- consider the child's known allergies and medical needs;
- avoid sending food which may create a foreseeable allergy risk;
- use appropriate food containers;
- use an insulated lunch bag where appropriate;
- include a frozen ice pack where necessary to help keep perishable food cool;
- clearly label lunch boxes and drinks bottles with the child's name; and
- ensure food is within an appropriate use-by period.

School staff will follow the school's allergy, medical conditions and first aid procedures when supporting pupils with known allergies or medical conditions.

Staff should not make assumptions about whether a food is safe for a pupil with an allergy. Where there is uncertainty, staff should refer to the pupil's IHP, allergy information and the school's established procedures.

7. Prevention of Cross-Contamination and Food Sharing

Pupils must not:

- share or swap food with other pupils;
- give food from their packed lunch to another child;
- eat another pupil's food; or
- take food from another child's lunch box.

Staff will reinforce this expectation in an age-appropriate and positive way.

Where appropriate, staff will support younger pupils to understand that some foods can make other children very unwell and that food must not be shared.

Staff will follow any additional precautions identified within an individual pupil's IHP or allergy risk assessment.

The school will take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of allergen exposure, while recognising that an entirely allergen-free environment cannot be guaranteed.

8. Emergency Medication and Allergic Reactions

Where a pupil has been prescribed an adrenaline auto-injector (AAI) or other emergency medication, arrangements will be managed in accordance with the pupil's IHP, the school's Allergy Safety Policy, Medical Conditions Policy and First Aid Policy.

Emergency medication must be:

- readily accessible;
- stored in accordance with the school's medication procedures;
- appropriately labelled;
- within its expiry date; and
- available to the pupil and/or staff in accordance with the individual healthcare arrangements.

Staff who have responsibility for pupils with allergies will receive appropriate information and training in accordance with the school's allergy safety arrangements.

If a pupil is suspected of experiencing anaphylaxis, staff will follow the school's emergency allergy procedure and administer emergency medication where authorised and appropriate.

Emergency services will be contacted in accordance with the school's emergency procedures.

The packed lunch policy does not replace the school's detailed emergency procedures for anaphylaxis or other medical emergencies.

The DfE's 2026 statutory allergy guidance specifically requires schools to have arrangements for supporting pupils with allergies, including appropriate IHPs, staff training and arrangements concerning adrenaline devices.

9. School Trips and Educational Visits

Where pupils are required to bring a packed lunch for an educational visit, the same requirements within this policy apply.

For pupils with allergies or medical conditions, trip planning will take account of:

- the pupil's IHP;
- known allergens and dietary requirements;
- access to emergency medication;
- staff awareness and training;
- safe storage of medication and food where necessary;
- supervision arrangements; and
- emergency procedures.

Relevant medical and allergy information and emergency medication will accompany the pupil in accordance with the school's Educational Visits, Medical Conditions and First Aid procedures.

Parents/carers will be given appropriate information where specific requirements apply to a particular visit.

10. Responsibilities of Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- provide an appropriate and safe packed lunch;
- follow this policy;
- comply with the school's nut-free requirements;
- check ingredient labels carefully;
- inform the school of any allergy, intolerance or medical dietary requirement;
- provide updated medical information where circumstances change;
- ensure that prescribed medication is provided to the school in accordance with the school's medication procedures; and
- reinforce with their child the importance of not sharing or swapping food.

Parents and carers should contact the school if they are unsure whether a particular food is appropriate.

11. Responsibilities of Pupils

Pupils will be encouraged, in an age-appropriate way, to:

- make healthy food choices;
- eat and drink safely;
- keep their food in their own lunch box;
- never share or swap food;
- tell an adult if they feel unwell after eating;
- tell an adult if they believe they have eaten something they should not have; and
- follow staff instructions concerning allergies and food safety.

Children will not be expected to take responsibility for managing another child's allergy.

12. Responsibilities of Staff

Staff will:

- promote healthy eating positively and sensitively;
- be aware of pupils' relevant medical and allergy information;
- follow IHPs and associated risk assessments;
- follow the school's Allergy Safety, Medical Conditions and First Aid policies;
- supervise pupils appropriately during lunchtime;
- discourage food sharing and swapping;
- respond appropriately to concerns about food safety or allergens; and
- report and record incidents and near misses in accordance with school procedures.

Staff should avoid singling out or embarrassing a pupil because of their food choices, allergy or medical condition.

Where a concern arises about the contents of a packed lunch, staff should deal with the matter sensitively and inform the appropriate member of the leadership team where necessary.

13. Monitoring Packed Lunches

The school may monitor packed lunches where there is a reasonable health, safety, allergy or policy concern.

The purpose of monitoring is to:

- safeguard pupils;
- support healthy eating;
- identify potential allergy risks;
- ensure that the school's nut-free requirements are followed; and
- work constructively with families.

The school will normally address concerns through discussion with parents/carers rather than through punitive measures.

Where an item presents an immediate or significant safety risk, the school may remove the item from the child's access and contact the parent/carer.

Any repeated or significant concern will be managed in accordance with the school's wider policies and procedures.

14. Equality, Inclusion and Reasonable Adjustments

The school will ensure that this policy is applied fairly and inclusively.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered for pupils with:

- disabilities;
- medical conditions;
- allergies;
- dietary requirements arising from a medical condition; and
- other protected or individual needs.

The school will work collaboratively with pupils, parents/carers and relevant professionals to ensure that pupils can eat safely and participate fully in school life.

The school will not disadvantage a pupil because of a medical or disability-related dietary requirement.

15. Food Waste and Environmental Considerations

Pupils will be encouraged to avoid unnecessary food waste.

Where possible, families are encouraged to use reusable lunch boxes and drinks bottles.

The school will promote responsible waste disposal and recycling in accordance with its environmental and sustainability arrangements.

16. Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher, relevant staff and governing body will monitor the effectiveness of this policy.

The policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where there are:

- changes to legislation or statutory guidance;
- changes to DfE food or allergy guidance;
- changes to the school's medical or allergy arrangements;
- significant incidents or near misses; or
- changes to school circumstances.

The school will ensure that this policy remains consistent with its Medical Conditions Policy, Allergy Safety Policy and First Aid Policy.

17. Key Guidance and Legislation

This policy should be read alongside current versions of:

- Department for Education – **Allergy Safety in Schools: Statutory Guidance**, July 2026.
- Department for Education – **School Food Standards Practical Guide**, updated July 2026.
- Department for Education – **Allergy Guidance for Schools**, updated July 2026.

- Department for Education – **Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions at School**.
- Children and Families Act 2014, including section 100.
- Food Information Regulations 2014.
- Requirements for School Food Regulations 2014.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Relevant Northumberland County Council guidance and procedures.

The DfE confirms that the statutory allergy guidance applies to governing bodies of local-authority-maintained schools, including maintained first schools, and sets out requirements around allergy safety, IHPs, training, emergency arrangements and learning from serious incidents and near misses.

Policy History

Date	Action
2013	Policy established
March 2019	Reviewed by governors and staff
May 2019	Reviewed by parents
October 2022	Reviewed by PSHE Lead and SENDCo
September 2025	Reviewed by Headteacher
September 2026	Updated to reflect current DfE food and allergy guidance and alignment with Medical Conditions, Allergy Safety and First Aid policies

Policy date: September 2026

Review date: September 2027

Approved by: Governing Body (Premises Committee)

Policy owner: Headteacher

Appendix 1

Healthy Choices Packed Lunch Child Friendly Information

