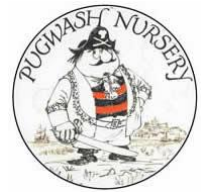




Rye Community Primary School & Pugwash Nursery
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Headteacher: Miss Kelly Martin



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7th January 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

Further to Mrs McDonald's letter introducing the healthy lunch initiative, I would like to thank you for the overwhelming amount of support you have expressed for this. I think the timing after Christmas is something we all appreciate! However, with any new initiative, we understand that there may also be a few queries, of which we have had a couple and have sought to address below.

School meals provided by Chartwells are made fresh, from scratch, on site, daily, with quality ingredients (5% organic), as well as meeting sugar reduction targets and the Government's School Food Standards. Children having school meals are offered daily, two portions of vegetables, fruit and yoghurt and freshly baked bread to accompany every meal. They are offered fried food only once per week, three fruit-based desserts and only water or milk to drink. To reassure parents, desserts such as the secret Brownies are actually made with beetroot as one of the main ingredients!

The focus on encouraging healthier choices in packed lunches supports our desire for all packed lunch children to also receive nutrition in line with their peers. This is why a request was made to limit or ideally **replace** foods falling outside the Government's School Food Standards i.e. those containing **high** sugar, salt and fat content and to ensure that at most, these are limited to once or twice per week as a treat.

With this in mind, no 'healthy lunchbox reminder slips' will be given out on a Friday. This will be known in school as "treat day"- this is also in line with Chartwell's approach to having a treat based meal on a Friday, with 'Fish and Chip Friday'. We would ask that a measured approach is taken towards Friday treats, one of the reasons this initiative was started was the concerning trend of many lunchboxes containing simply an array of chocolate based foods! To highlight to you, our concerns were heightened when we were increasingly seeing lunchboxes which consisted of a chocolate spread sandwich, crisps, a full sized mars bar, a wagon wheel and a tube of smarties! Now of course in isolation none of these food items are "bad", when enjoyed in moderation. However, if a child is eating this for lunch every day, then they are missing out on vital vitamins and minerals from a number of food groups, not to mention the tooth decay happening after lunch, as teeth will not be brushed straight after these food items either!

We recognise that not everyone had a lunchbox quite so akin to this. However, we could see that lunchboxes contained less variety and little or no fruit or vegetables, as children wanted more sweet items like their friends. This then puts pressure on you, the parents, to add more of these items. We recognise that we are in the fortunate position of being able to see what is in all children's lunchboxes, but for you at home, you can only gauge what you are buying for your children.

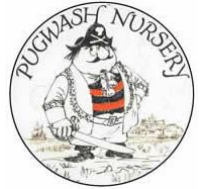
It is hard! We are not denying that! However, eating habits are established in childhood and this is another way of us working together to improve lifelong experiences for our children. There is much research which shows that helping children to make healthy choices in childhood helps them to make healthy choices as adults. Already we have had many parents expressing their thanks that we are doing this and we join you in the wish that schools had played their part in promoting healthier eating when we ourselves were at school, making it easier for us as adults now! Many parents have expressed that they are grateful that they can now inform their child that "school says" they are not allowed so many treat things in their lunchbox!



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We are also aiming for a Healthy Schools Award Mark, which many of our surrounding schools have. It is also a key element within our School's Improvement Plan (SIP) which marries with the personal development strand of the OFSTED framework whereby our school will 'demonstrate evidence of providing opportunities for its pupils to learn how to be active, healthy and engaged citizens'.

Learning about the importance of healthy nutrition as part of caring for our personal health is in the curriculum. The impact of balanced nutrition leads to improved wellbeing and mental health, improvements in behaviour and attendance, all key areas within our school's improvement journey.

Finally, thank you again for the overwhelming amount of support for us with this project, we are taking forward some of your ideas and will be re-introducing cooking workshops for parents, including preparation of healthy lunchboxes. If you have any other great ideas such as this, please do contact us; equally if you have any other queries we are also here to help.

Yours Sincerely,

Miss Martin and Mrs McDonald
Headteacher and Assistant Inclusion Leader

We would ask that NO chocolate spread is in sandwiches, as we have said before, we have a child with a severe nut allergy and it is impossible for us to know whether the chocolate spread is in fact "Nutella". This causes unnecessary anxiety for the child and the family and we would appreciate your support with this.

We have included once again Mrs McDonald's recipe sheet to give you ideas of healthy lunchbox choices, including sweet alternatives to chocolate such as oatly flapjack or fruit cereal bars.

You may find this link helpful. <https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/food-facts/healthier-food-swaps/#lunch>