



School Food: Eat Better, Do Better

Research shows that pupils are more likely to concentrate in lessons if they eat a healthy breakfast and lunch during the school day. Regardless of whether you prefer your child to take a packed lunch or purchase their food at school, the following information about the recent changes to secondary school meals in Jersey, and links to healthy lunchbox ideas, may be of interest to you.

New Standards for Secondary School Meals in Jersey:

Over the past few years, the quality of school food has increased significantly. The Education and Public Health departments recently introduced new Jersey School Food Standards, which mean that the caterers in the majority of secondary schools now have to provide a healthy and balanced range of foods for students to choose from, whether it is purchased at morning break, lunch or in school vending machines. Recent changes include:

- Phasing out sugary drinks and confectionery, including chocolate bars
- Greater variety of healthier snacks and drinks
- Restrictions on deep fried foods and processed meat products
- Greater variety of hot meals, sandwich options & fresh salads
- Regular monitoring of catering services

Most secondary schools now offer a wide range of options such as traditional hot dishes and meal deals, salads, sandwiches and healthy drinks. So opting to purchase school lunches means you can not only save yourself the time and effort of preparing a packed lunch everyday, but you can also be assured that your child can choose from a range of food that will contribute to their health and well-being.

Example of current menu options includes:

Main Meal 1	chicken & vegetable pie
Main Meal 2	spinach & ricotta lasagne
Veg/salad	leeky mashed potatoes/broccoli florets
Pudding	see daily special/home bake
Grab & Go	sandwiches/wraps/baguettes/salad pots
Additional choices	soup of the day/hot panini/hot filled burrito



Please check your school website for full menu options.

New 'Cashless' Card Option:

Most Jersey secondary school caterers now offer a cashless card system which can be topped up on-line in advance. This option means that students do not need to carry cash to school and parents can be assured the lunch money is being spent in an environment promoting healthy, balanced food options.

Packed Lunch Ideas:

If your child prefers to take a packed lunch to school, you may be looking for some new ideas to ensure your child's lunchbox has variety and flavour, as well as being nutritionally balanced.

To help you with this, the School Food Trust have designed a series of 3-week packed lunch menu cycles, under the titles 'low cost', 'low effort' or 'vegetarian'. Simply go to www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk, click on the 'parents and carers' box and then click on 'packed lunch ideas'. Further lunchbox menus are available on the Change4Life site at <http://www.nhs.uk/Change4Life/Pages/healthy-lunchbox-picnic.aspx>.

As a general guide, a healthy, balanced lunchbox would include something from each of the main food groups pictured in the Eatwell Plate below:



Main food groups to include:

- Starchy foods: These include bread, rice, potatoes, pasta, and other starchy foods.
- Protein foods: These include meat, fish, eggs, beans and others protein sources
- Dairy items: This could be cheese or yoghurt.
- Vegetables or salad, and a portion of fruit.

Please be aware that many schools, in consultation with students and parents, have developed packed lunch policies to support the healthy lifestyle topics taught in the classroom, so check your school's website for further details.

If you would like more information on healthy eating in general, please visit the British Nutrition Foundation website at www.nutrition.org.uk and click on Healthy Living.

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