The Vineyard School's Snack Policy

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1. Our Aim, Vision and Approach

At our school, we are dedicated to ensuring that all our children are happy and reach their full potential.

We have ambitious goals for our students, and this extends to our food and nutrition education and offerings. We believe that feeding our children with real, nutritious foods is fundamental to nourishing their brains and bodies, and this vision underpins our food education and provision. Our aim is for every child in our school to become 'Food Literate'. To know what real food is, and be able to cook, prepare, and clean up after food by the time they leave us in Year 6. They should have a positive attitude toward food and the confidence and knowledge to choose foods that nourish them and promote their health.

1.1 Real Food Literate

Becoming 'food literate' means children will:

- Develop a positive attitude towards food.
- Understand what "real food" is.
- Real food is whole and has had limited processing. The food originates from nature either from plants (fruits and vegetables) or from animals (meat and dairy)
- Recognise that food is fuel and significantly impacts health and well-being.
- Acquire the skills and knowledge to choose, prepare, and cook foods that positively affect their health.
- Gain solid nutrition knowledge, understanding different food groups and nutrients, their roles in the body, and how and why to obtain them through real food.

1.2 The importance of Nutrition Knowledge and Food Education

The impact of nutrition and eating real food on our children's health, education, attainment, and happiness cannot be underestimated. It is our duty to provide them with nutritious snacks which fuel their brains and bodies during the school day.

Nutrition impacts sleep, hormone function, energy, attainment (academic and sporting), emotions, and the ability to learn effectively. Hands-on experiences with food are creative, mathematical, develop fine motor skills, and provide opportunities for science, getting messy, making mistakes, problem-solving, using initiative, speaking, listening, understanding, self-expression, manners, common sense, service, pride, patience, resilience, turn-taking, appreciation, ownership, and responsibility.

We are focused on educating our children in food education and fostering a positive attitude toward food, understanding its role in our health and well-being. This is especially important in the primary years, as this is the time to build their confidence around food.

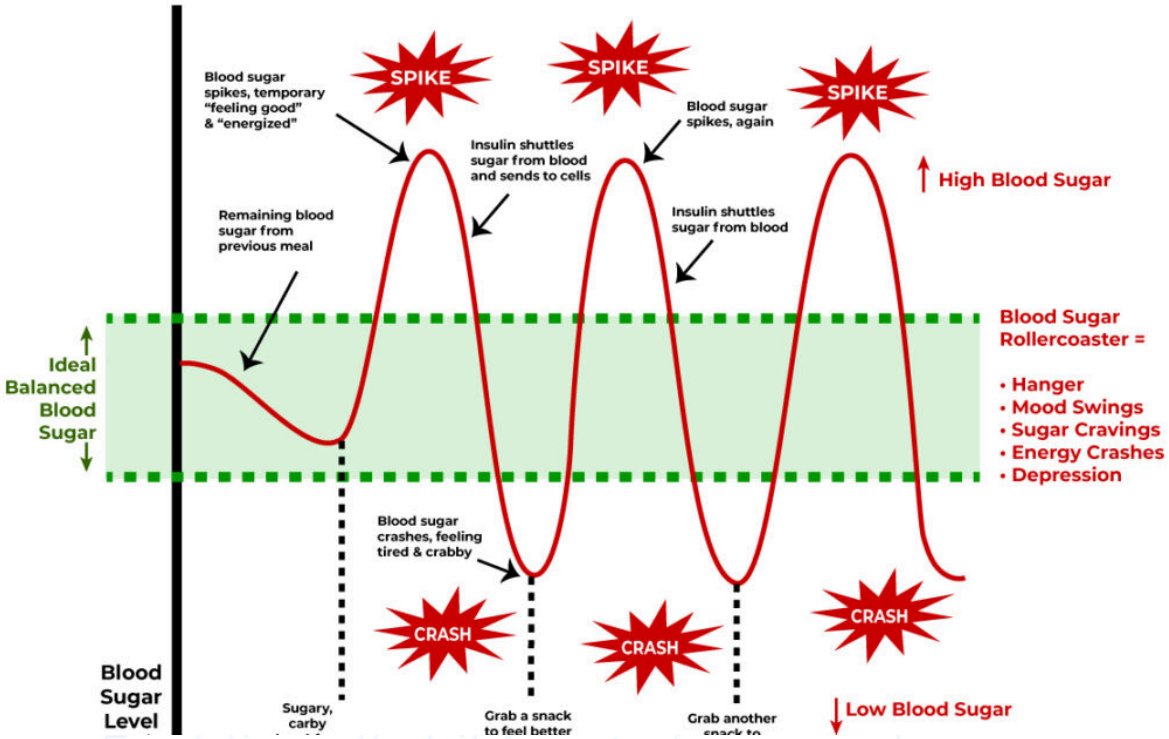
The impact of our vision, provision and policy is far reaching for all our students.

1.3 The Nutrition Science

The recommended snacks are based on balancing blood sugar levels to keep the body fueled for longer. This is a fundamental aspect of nutrition, profoundly impacting how we feel and our productivity.

The snack examples combine slow-releasing, fiber-rich carbohydrate foods (like oat cakes) with protein foods (like hummus). This combination promotes stable blood sugar. In practical terms, this means sustained energy, improved concentration, better mood, and ultimately, enhanced attainment and success for both children and adults. The impact of eating this way extends to school attainment, mood, sleep, weight management, behavior, happiness, sporting achievements, creativity, emotional stability, friendships, communication, and a renewed interest in the importance and enjoyment of food. These are all highly relevant and important aspects for our school community.

Below is an infographic that visually explains this concept.



Enabling all children to learn and grow

2. Foods welcome in snacks

- **Carbohydrate: Energy food -** choose wholegrain/wholewheat varieties such as bread, pasta, rice, noodles, couscous, pitta, wrap, chapattis, potatoes or other types of cereals every day. Provide different types across the week for variety

- **Protein: growth and repair food** - choose unprocessed Meat, fish, dairy and non dairy protein like egg, lentils, beans, tofu, houmous, chickpeas, seeds - offered in sandwiches, rolls, pittas, salads etc

- **Fresh fruit** and **vegetables or a salad** - e.g cucumber, tomatoes, peppers, carrots, apple, oranges, berries, mango, banana - a variety of different fruits and vegetables which provide colour, fibre and different vitamins and minerals.

- **Oily fish & beneficial dietary fats**, such as mackerel, salmon or sardines, seeds, olives, avocado

- **Dairy foods** such as milk, cheese, yogurt, or dairy alternatives

- **Other welcomed Foods:**

- Dried fruit

- Pinenuts (seed), coconut, seeds (sunflower, pumpkin, linseed, poppy, chia, sesame, hemp) Hummus & Tahini are all permitted

- Plain breadsticks, crackers, oatcakes, plain popcorn, wholemeal rice cakes.

- Smoothies (oats, milk, fruit, honey, yogurt)

- Wholegrain and oat based homemade product - biscuits/muffins

- A drink of water – no other drinks are permitted. We are a water only school

3. **Snacks should not include:**

Confectionery such as chocolate bars, chocolate-coated biscuits, shop bought cakes, muffins, doughnuts, flapjacks, fruit bars, sweets, cereal bars and chewing gum - instead include whole fruit or make oat and whole grain baked goods at home.



Processed foods high in salt like crisps - instead include plain popcorn, oatcakes, vegetable sticks, seeds, savoury crackers or breadsticks



Processed fruit snacks (e.g. Fruit winders)



Meat and pastry products such as sausage rolls and processed pies



4. Allergy Awareness

<u>Key Definitions</u>

An *allergy* is a medically diagnosed, mild to life-threatening immune response requiring potential medication.

An *intolerance* is a difficulty digesting or processing a food

A *food preference* is a personal choice.

<u>Prohibited and Permitted Allergens</u>

The Vineyard School operates an **allergy-aware approach** to reduce the risk of exposure to known allergens.

The school strongly discourages pupils, staff and visitors from bringing in nut products, including peanuts and tree nuts, because of the risk they may pose to members of the school community.
However, the school does not rely on a "nut-free" label alone and recognises that effective allergy safety depends on awareness, risk reduction, clear allergen information, robust hygiene measures and effective emergency response arrangements.
Foods containing nuts (peanuts, almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, cashews, pecans, Brazil nuts, pistachios, macadamia nuts), should not be brought into school unless specifically agreed in advance by the school for a controlled purpose and subject to risk assessment.

All other major allergens from the 14 common allergens are permitted:

- celery
- cereals containing gluten (wheat, rye, barley, oats)
- crustaceans (prawns, crabs, lobsters)
- eggs
- fish
- Lupin
- milk
- molluscs (mussels, oysters, squid)
- mustard
- sesame
- soya
- sulphur dioxide and sulphites

Seeds, pine nuts, and coconut are permitted due to their nutritional value.

Pupils are reminded to wash their hands before and after eating

Staff will follow the school's Allergy Safety Policy, medical conditions procedures and any relevant individual healthcare plans when supervising food brought into school and responding to allergy related concerns.

5. **Practical considerations: Containers and wrappers**

Our policy focuses on including 'real foods' with minimal processing and packaging/wrappers.

By default we aim for foods to be consumed in their natural state and to be naturally low in trans fats, added sugar and added salt.

- Children are to bring their snacks in a named suitable container such as a reusable plastic or metal bento box with a water tight lid.
- Carrier bags are not appropriate containers.

- Reusable food wrappers, covers and containers are highly recommended in support of our aim to reduce and eliminate single use plastics in our school.
- Unfortunately, we do not have any facilities to heat up any food during our snack times.
- Snacks will be stored in children's bags or in a designated area of individual classrooms.
- We will provide a safe, clean and positive environment for our pupils in which to eat and enjoy their snack together.

6. Individual needs and requirements

Our school community is culturally and religiously diverse and we welcome and encourage snacks that reflect this while also adhering to school policy and guidelines.

Children with individual food requirements are to bring snacks in line with their needs.

Children may have verified medical conditions or special educational needs and therefore require special diets that do not meet standard guidelines. In these cases, families are urged to be responsible for ensuring that snacks meet the needs of their children while also incorporating the school guidelines and policy as much as possible.

For these reasons and to keep all our students safe, sharing of food, food containers, and food utensils is not allowed. Pupils are also not permitted to swap food items.

Children are to wash and clean their hands before and after eating.

7. Monitoring

Our staff will support and advise pupils at breaktimes and will communicate with our families and phase leaders should they have any concerns regarding the content of a child's snack.

Any communication will be done away from children and in a positive and supportive manner. Our staff and families will work together to find solutions to any problems.

Pupils with food allergies and intolerances will be supported by our staff with everyone aware of individual needs and requirements.

8. Dissemination

The snack policy and guidelines will be shared with families via our weekly whole school newsletters, regular communications and website. All school staff, including teaching and catering staff, will be informed of this guidance and will support its implementation.

All staff will use positive language at breaktimes and promote a positive attitude and atmosphere during the school day and around food. Food is to be enjoyed together in our school.

Families whose child/children repeatedly bring in foods which are not compliant with our snack policy will be informed verbally and/or via written letter by our phase leaders and senior team and offered help and support to comply with the policy.

Children will always be encouraged to eat their snack regardless of the contents adherence to our policy. No child will go without any food.

Our staff will discuss any concerns with relevant adults and never with the children.

9. Resources:

Snack Ideas and affordability

Snacks can be difficult to manage; thinking of ideas for their contents can be challenging for families.

For guidance and inspiration on nourishing snack ideas please refer to the example photographs in this document where different snacks made from 'real food' can be provided.

10. Snack Suggestions and examples

* Banana wholemeal sandwich & yogurt pot
* Apple and cheddar cheese
* Oat cakes and Babybel
* Vegetable sticks and hummus
* Olives and trail mix (no nuts)
* Fruit and plain yogurt pot
* Crackers and cottage cheese
* Chicken wholemeal wrap
* Plain rice cakes with Marmite and cheese
* Vegetable sticks and tzatziki
* Wholemeal pitta bread and guacamole
* Cherry tomatoes, crackers & mashed avocado
* Wholemeal turkey and salad roll
* Ryvita and hummus, carrot & pepper
* Dried mango and falafel
* Oatcakes, boiled egg, grapes
* Berries & yogurt pot
* Egg mayonnaise wholemeal roll
* Satsuma, seed mix and beef jerky

All these options are readily available, use real food, and are affordable. The main challenge for us all is transitioning away from convenient packaged snacks like crisps and biscuits.













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