

Dear Parents and Carers

Just before Christmas I was sent a report from the National Child Measurement Programme with a summary of results from the past 3 years from our Reception and Y6 classes which I shared with Governors last week. Each year children in these year groups are measured (with their parents' consent) for both their height and weight.

Our results showing the proportion of children who were classified as overweight or obese are as follows:

	Reception	Year 6
School	20.7%	26.3%
Plymouth	25%	31%
National	22%	34%

Whilst it is to be celebrated that we are below both Plymouth and National scores, it is concerning that the proportion is so high, particularly when only 87% of our Y6 children were given consent to be measured compared with 94% nationally so our Y6 measure is possibly even higher.

I know that the height and weight measure is a simplistic way of determining overall health but I am increasingly aware of unhealthy choices being made across the school which we need to address. This week I have seen a packed lunch consisting of a Lunchable pack, crisps, a chocolate dessert pot and a pre-packed chocolate cake and last week was made aware of a packed lunch which consisted of a chocolate spread sandwich and three chocolate biscuits. This is not only poor for general health but will also be having a negative effect on children's teeth and we know of children in school who have already had to have multiple teeth removed at a very young age.

These are not isolated incidents and I would like to confirm the schools policy on encouraging the healthy eating of food that is as fresh as possible. Processed food that is high in additives and sugar does not give the long lasting energy boost children need to see them through the afternoon (and beyond if they are attending an after school club). There has been a recent study by Public Health England showing that the average 10 year old has eaten 18 years' worth of sugar in their lifetime. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/01/02/average-child-has-eaten-18-years-sugar-age-10-research-finds/>

**The Food Councillors** have spoken to their classes and come up with some ideas on how we can improve things in school:

- Try the different options on the school dinner menu – there is a daily meat or fish option, a vegetarian option, and jacket potatoes and wraps with different fillings. Remember all infant meals (Foundation to Y2) are FREE and meals for the juniors only cost £2.20 each day (less than the price of a Happy Meal and includes a nutritionally balanced main meal, dessert and a drink)
- Bread should ideally be wholemeal or 50/50 white and brown and you could sometimes have wraps instead
- Every packed lunch should contain at least one piece of fresh fruit
- You could have carrot sticks or cucumber sticks and sometimes you could have dips or hummous
- Keep some pasta from the night before and add grated cheese / cut up salad of your choice / raisins to make a great, simple pasta salad
- You could buy a pineapple and cut it into pieces, freeze them and take some out each day so none of it is wasted and it will be ready to eat by lunchtime
- Be careful which yoghurts you choose because some of them have a lot of sugar



**Packed lunches brought into school should contain:**

- freshly prepared food as often as possible
- a starchy food such as bread, rice, potatoes or pasta
- protein foods such as meat, fish, eggs or beans
- a healthy dairy item such as a piece of cheese or a yoghurt
- vegetables or salad and a portion of fruit
- only a very small sweet treat (and ideally not every day)



You can find further ideas for lunch boxes and healthier eating at:

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/healthy-lunchbox-ideas-kids>

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/school-packed-lunch-inspiration>

<http://theconversation.com/sugar-six-easy-ways-to-encourage-children-to-eat-less-89876>

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/top-sources-of-added-sugar/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/how-does-sugar-in-our-diet-affect-our-health/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mMHVEFWNLMc&safe=active>

<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/habits.html>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/grownups/portion-sizes-for-kids>

<https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes>



**No sweets or chocolate bars** are allowed in lunchboxes and these will be sent home if they are included in a lunch box. I understand that older children will be making their own lunches and it is important that you are aware of the choices they are making. Sandwiches, wraps etc should have a savoury filling – not chocolate spread or jam. We are still a **no nuts** school, as they are unfortunately not a healthy choice to have around when we have people in school with a nut allergy.

The Food Councillors will be tallying all children who eat a school dinner which includes some fruit or vegetables, or a healthy packed lunch (according to the list on the previous page) and there will be a weekly **Healthy Meals Award** for the class with the most points at the end of each week.

I will try to publish a healthy recipe on each newsletter so if you have any requests please let me know by email or by asking your children to let me know. If you have your own ideas for healthy recipes or lunchboxes please send them in via [widewell.office@horizonmat.com](mailto:widewell.office@horizonmat.com) so we can pass them on to other parents.

It is really important that we work together for the benefit of all our children's health, please support us in helping your children grow up able to make healthy choices, with occasional treats, and hopefully avoiding a lot of health problems in the future.

Kind regards,

*Claire Prynne*