



## Nursery Food – Policy for Packed Lunches (brought in from home)

### Introduction:

To grow and stay healthy children need to eat a nutritionally well-balanced diet.

According to Public Health England Guidance it is clear that early years settings contribute significantly to improving the health and well-being of children.

Good nutrition in childhood can help to prevent a variety of health problems, both in the short term and later in life. There is increasing concern that many children are consuming too much fat, sugar and salt and too little fiber, fruit and vegetables.

Packed lunches can contribute to almost a third of a child's weekly food intake and therefore, need to be balanced and nutritious.

Packed lunches need to adhere to our no nut in settings policy as some children could have severe allergies to nuts and other foods.

### Aim:

To ensure that packed lunches (brought in from home) reflect the new standards for healthy meals in early years.

### Rationale:

- Settings are required to positively promote the health and wellbeing of children.
- Work around healthy eating is a high priority of the Every Child Matters agenda.
- The content of lunchboxes needs to reflect the requirement of our setting to meet minimum food and nutrition standards for nursery meals.
- The contents of some lunchboxes can be extremely unhealthy, our recent audits of lunchboxes have shown that in the main they contain foods with high levels of fat, sugar and salt, and very few fruit and vegetables.
- To encourage healthy eating habits from an early age and improve the overall nutrition of children.
- The short-term effects of unhealthy packed lunches and food intake can include poor growth, tooth decay, obesity, anemia, constipation, poor concentration and behavioral problems which may have an impact on a child's learning.
- The longer-term effects of a poor diet in childhood can be an increased risk of stroke, cancer, heart disease and diabetes in adulthood.





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## Objectives:

To improve the nutritional quality of packed lunches in the nursery and the eating habits of children at lunchtimes.

- To develop an awareness in children, parents, staff and the wider community that the nursery takes a proactive approach to promoting healthy eating.
- To encourage healthy eating habits in childhood that can influence health and well-being in later life.
- To ensure that food brought into the nursery (packed lunches) reflects and meets food standards for nurseries.

## Implementation:

This packed lunch policy fits within a wider context of promoting a whole setting approach to food and healthy eating.

Children's packed lunches should be based on the 'Eatwell Guide' model which shows items from the 5 main food groups: (Food Standards Agency).

### 1. Bread, Rice, Potatoes, Pasta

These starchy foods are a healthy source of energy. Packed lunches should include 2 or more portions.

Examples of these could be:

- Sandwiches made with sliced bread, pitta bread, wraps, chapattis or bread rolls
- A scone or currant bun
- A bagel
- Pasta, couscous or rice

### 2. Fruit and Vegetables

These foods provide vitamins, minerals and fiber. Packed lunches should include at least 1 portion of fruit and 1 portion of vegetables/salad, or more.

Examples of these could be:

- Carrot/cucumber sticks, celery, sliced peppers etc.
- A piece of fruit-apple, orange, banana, pear, kiwi, plum etc.
- Grapes- these must be cut length ways to reduce the risk of choking
- Dried fruit- raisins, apricots etc.
- Fruit salad





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### 3. Milk and Dairy foods

These foods provide calcium for healthy bones and teeth. Packed lunches should include 1 portion at lunch.

Examples of these could be:

- A pot of yoghurt, custard or rice pudding
- A piece of cheese (match box sized)
- 2 triangles of spreadable cheese (this could be included in the sandwich)

### 4. Meat, Fish, Eggs, Beans

These foods provide protein for growth. Packed lunches should include 1 portion of these foods.

Examples of these could be: (these could be included in the sandwich)

- Slices of cooked meat
- Slices of chicken or turkey breast
- Hard-boiled egg
- Tuna, salmon, mackerel or sardines
- Hummus

