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## *Packed Lunch Policy*

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### Statement of Intent

This policy has been written in line with the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework** and also the [Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance](#). The setting is committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of its service delivery. It provides a framework for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children who attend our setting.

The setting regards snack and mealtimes as an important opportunity to promote positive social interaction, healthy lifestyles and well-being to the children in our care and to help them to develop appropriate social manners. Good nutrition means **eating a healthy and balanced diet** with food and drink providing the energy and nutrients necessary for growth and development.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6839b752210698b3364e86fc/Early\\_years\\_foundation\\_stage\\_nutrition\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6839b752210698b3364e86fc/Early_years_foundation_stage_nutrition_guidance.pdf)

We aim to meet the requirements of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework by providing healthy, balanced, varied and nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary and religious needs. We request that parents supply healthy and nutritious snacks, and we keep parents informed about healthy packed lunch requirements.

Whilst we provide breakfast, snack, lunch and tea for those children in our care at those times of day, we recognise that there may be occasions when parents will need to or will choose to provide a packed lunch instead.

### Packed Lunch Policy

We promote a 'whole-setting' approach to our policy covering all aspects of the approach to food and drink which is shared and regularly reviewed by staff, families and children. This policy is in place to provide guidelines for parent/carers on the expectations for packed lunches and to ensure packed lunches brought from home provide children with healthy, balanced and nutritious food to be physically active, to learn, grow well and be healthy.

### Food Hygiene

Food Hygiene is considered of the utmost importance and all staff who serve, or handle food receive Food Hygiene and Safety training during the staff induction programme and as part of their Continuous

professional Development. Our kitchen is subject to annual checks by the Food Standards Agency and is given a Food Hygiene Rating which is displayed at the door.

## Healthy Nutrition

### Procedure

We have systems in place to ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and preferences as well as their parents' wishes.

Before a child starts attending the setting, we ask parents to tell us about their child's dietary needs and preferences, including allergies. In the case of food allergies, a separate Food Allergy Healthcare Form should be completed and signed by the parent/carer detailing the child's needs and medication requirements.

### Commitment to the Nourishing Our Future Award

Our setting is committed to achieving and maintaining the standards set out in the *Essex Early Years Nourishing Our Future Award (NOF Award)*. This award recognises best practice in promoting healthy eating and nutrition in early years settings. We work to ensure our menus, mealtime environments, and food education activities meet the award's criteria, supporting children's health, growth, and lifelong positive relationships with food. By embedding the NOF Award principles into our daily practice, we aim to provide a consistent, nurturing, and inclusive approach to healthy eating for all children in our care.

Parents/carers record information about each child's dietary needs on her/his enrolment form and sign the form to confirm that it is correct.

We have a strict NO NUTS policy and take care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products. We are especially vigilant when we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts.

We ask that **no nuts** are put in lunch boxes and **no peanut butter** used in sandwiches.

Through discussion with parents and research reading by staff, we obtain information about the dietary rules of religious groups, to which children and their parents belong, and of vegetarians and vegans, and about food allergies. We take account of this information in the provision of food and drink.

We require staff to show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. Staff do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child or in any way that makes a child feel singled out because of her/his diet or allergy.

We use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves. We organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate. Children are encouraged to try new foods and there is an agreed approach to managing fussy eating.

We provide children with utensils that are appropriate for their ages and stages of development.

We have fresh drinking water freely available for the children. They can independently serve themselves using the jug and cups available. The jug is refilled as necessary.

We inform parents who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in the setting and we provide information about suitable containers for food storage and hygiene.

In order to protect children with food allergies, we do not allow children to share and swap their food with one another at lunchtime.

For children who drink milk, we provide whole pasteurised milk.

Parents /carers can provide alternative milk e.g., soya/goat, as required.

### Safe Storage & Handling of Packed Lunches

All packed lunches provided must be clearly labelled with the child's name and in an insulated lunchbox or bag.

The lunch box or bag must be suitable for its purpose and should include freezer blocks.

Individual items should be labelled so that staff can perform a visual check upon the child's arrival.

Refrigeration is not available therefore parents should pack food that remains safe at room temperature with a freezer block.

Staff will monitor and visually check packed lunches for compliance with food safety and healthy eating standards.

To protect children with food allergies, we do not allow children to share and swap their food with one another at lunchtime.

### Waste and Disposal

Staff will, within reason, send any uneaten pack lunch food home so that parents/carers can monitor what their child has consumed during the day

### Packed Lunch Guidelines

Those who opt to bring in a packed lunch for their child are asked to label all lunch boxes and food containers clearly, with the child's full name.

Food brought from home must be appropriately labelled (e.g. tuna sandwich). Packed lunches will require a visual check by a member of staff on arrival at the setting and so labelling items enables this to be done quickly and safely.

Parents are advised to send children's packed lunches in insulated bags with freezer blocks. Healthy eating advice is given to parents on the types of food brought in from home.

We encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, a piece of fruit and/or raw vegetables, and a milk-based dessert such as yoghurt. A small cake or biscuit can be included from time to time.

We ask parents NOT to include sweets, sweet drinks, crisps, processed foods, snackable packet food, fruit processed snacks. We will return food to parents if it is inappropriate and will offer the children an alternative.

We provide children who bring packed lunches with plates, cups and cutlery to use at mealtimes. During mealtimes children sit with a member of staff to encourage a positive eating experience and appropriate table manners.

The setting will provide cows milk and water throughout the day.

We understand that this can be a difficult area for parents to navigate and so recommend that parents consult the following which follows Healthy Food guidelines. We are always glad to help any parents who wish to ask us for further advice.

### Packed lunches should include:

At least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables

Meat, fish or other source of non-dairy protein

A starchy food such as any type of bread, pasta, rice, couscous, noodles, potatoes or other cereal.

Dairy food such as milk, cheese, yogurt, fromage frais or custard

### Ideas of what to include ...

Sandwiches

Crackers, pitta bread, wraps, rice cakes

Baked savoury snacks

Vegetable sticks

Bread sticks

Dips

Cheese (not processed)

All types of fruit

Dried fruits

Yogurts

Homemade Muffins

Small slice of cake

### What not to include ...

Squash/fruit juices

Sweets (of any description)

Fruit replacement snacks such as yo-yo, fruit strings

Solid chocolate bars

Processed snacks such as Dairy Lea Lunchable, Fridge Raiders, Peperami

Crisps & other fried snacks

Nuts or nut-related products

**\*\*\* Please remember that nuts or nut related products are not allowed as we have children in school who suffer from nut allergies.**

## What does a good lunch box look like?



### ***Please note***

*We recognise that some children may require specialised diets that do not allow for the standards to be met exactly. In this case parents are urged to be responsible in ensuring that packed lunches are as healthy as possible.*

### Assessment, evaluation and reviewing packed lunch content

Packed lunches will be regularly reviewed by the setting manager and each child's key person.

Parents are encouraged to adhere to the setting Healthy Nutrition policy, if at any point the child's key person is concerned about the contents of the packed lunch they will discuss their concerns with the parent/carer.

### Involvement of parents/carers

Parents are encouraged to adhere to the Healthy Nutrition policy.

We encourage feedback from the parents/carers which will be taken into consideration when reviewing the policy.

### Policy Review

We will include guidance for parents in our prospectus.

The policy is available on the setting website and in the setting handbook.

We will use opportunities such as cultural celebrations, mealtimes, online record keeping, parent emails, parents' evenings and outings, to promote healthy nutrition as part of a whole setting approach to healthier eating.

The following setting policies and procedures in relation to this policy are:

Nutrition

Health and Safety

Risk Assessment

### Guidance

Food allergy and intolerance| Food Standards Agency

Waltham Forest Education Hub – <https://thehub-beta.walthamforest.gov.uk/>

Nursery packed lunches - [www.ndna.org.uk](http://www.ndna.org.uk)

[www.greenfields.nursery.co.uk](http://www.greenfields.nursery.co.uk)

Packed lunch policy and procedure

<https://nourishingourfuture.co.uk/>