Lunch Box Policy

EYFS - 3.63, 3.64, 3.65, 3.66, 3.67, 3.68, 3.69, 3.70, 3.71, 3.72

Refer to Nutrition and Food Hygiene Policy

Policy Statement

This policy follows the same principles as our overall Nutrition and Food Hygiene Policy and the Department for Education's Early Years Nutrition Guidance (May 02025). We aim to educate our children with the skills, knowledge and understanding to enable them to make informed healthy lifestyle choices. This approach is most effective when we are able to work closely in partnership with parents and carers and we would ask for your cooperation in achieving this objective.

We recognise that it is not our remit to tell parents what they can and cannot feed their children, and no foods will be banned (other than confectionery which is not a meal-time food), although consumption of high-sugar foods may be restricted. However, we hope that all parents wish to secure their children's health and equip them for independent living in the future when they will make their own choices about healthy lifestyles. On that basis, we anticipate that parents will abide by this policy.

Why do we need a lunch box policy?
There is a nationally recognised issue with obesity causing concern in the adult and child populations. As recognised through the 'Every Child Matters' agenda, we are committed to ensuring that our children are as healthy as possible.
We want to ensure that all packed lunches brought from home and eaten in our settings provide healthy and nutritious food that is equal to what is served to children having a school prepared meal, as these meals are regulated by national standards.

Our Settings
This policy recognises that our children come from diverse home backgrounds, cultures, ethnic and faith groups. Some of our children have special educational needs and some are exceptionally able. Our settings aim to meet the needs of all of these groups of children and ensure equality and equity of provision whilst taking account of this diversity and difference.
We also recognise that some children are 'fussy' eaters and that it is a major step to get some children to eat anything at all. We would ask parents to let us know if this is the case so that we can deal with such children sensitively and with encouragement and praise for what they have eaten. We would be very happy to support parents with any such issues and encourage you to speak to the setting manager about your child's needs.

To whom does this policy apply?
This policy applies to all children and parents/carers providing packed lunches to be eaten on any of our premises or on trips provided by the company.

What have we agreed about lunchbox food?
- We will provide a safe, healthy and appealing eating environment for children bringing in packed lunches and ensure fresh drinking water is available at all times.
- We will work with parents/carers to try to ensure that packed lunches abide by the standards below.
- As fridge space is limited, parents are advised to bring packed lunches in insulated bags with freezer blocks to keep food fresh.

The following guidelines for lunchbox contents and frequency of serving for each item mirror the statutory guidelines for school provided meals. This ensures equality of entitlement for all children.

Packed lunches for Holiday Club may include:
- At least one portion of fruit (grapes and tomatoes must be cut in quarters as left whole these can become a choking hazard) and one portion of vegetables every day.
- Meat, fish or other source of non-dairy protein (e.g. lentils, chickpeas, humus) every day.
- Oily fish such as salmon at least once every three weeks.
- A starchy food such as bread, pasta, rice, noodles every day.
- Dairy food such as cheese, yogurt or fromage frais every day.
- A drink (not a fizzy one) such as a carton of fruit juice (unsweetened) smoothie or yoghurt drink. Water will be available.

Packed lunches should avoid:
- Confectionery such as chocolate bars, chocolate coated biscuits and sweets.
- Meat products such as sausage rolls, pies, corned meat and sausages (sausages need to be cut length ways as these can become a choking hazard) should be included only occasionally.
- **Nuts and nut products (e.g. peanut butter, some chocolate spreads) should NEVER be sent to the settings because of allergy concerns.**

Monitoring and Evaluation
On a daily basis, the staff in our settings see what children have in their lunchboxes as a matter of course. This is an opportunity for us to talk with children about healthy eating. **At no time will a child be made to feel ashamed of their lunch box contents.** However, we may send parents a reminder of this policy if lunchbox contents **regularly** include items on the "to avoid" list in this policy. If children have a high number of "to avoid" items in their lunchbox, they will be given a piece of fruit as an alternative. It is not our intention to tell parents / carers what and how they should be feeding their children and we will not do so, but we want to work with you to educate your children about healthy dietary

choices so that they can learn to make their own informed choices independently when they are older. We have the best interests of the children at heart.

Allergen Awareness

With effect from December 2014, the law changed with regards to food product ingredients being identified on the packaging.
By law the manufacturer must highlight in bold any known allergens contained in the product to ensure we know exactly what ingredients we are giving the children.
We ask parents / carers to be aware of this in case any individual children have allergens to products when you are preparing your child's lunch box to ensure the food, they are eating is safe for them.
Children are not allowed to swap food items because of allergy risks.

We have a designated table for children who have severe allergies such as peanuts, fish, almonds, coconuts and coconut milk and celery where a high level of risk is considered and EpiPens may be required for emergencies

Children who have allergies, intolerances, preferences or parental requests will have their name displayed on a notice in the kitchen for staff to easily identify the child. At our Holiday Club all lunch boxes will be checked by the Club staff and any foods that are a high risk will be marked and left in the child's lunch box.

Internal use only

This policy was adopted on	17.08.2026
Signed on behalf of the setting	
Date disseminated to staff	
Date for review	17.08.2027