



## **Why do we need a healthy lunch box policy?**

The government has placed a duty on schools, nurseries and pre-schools to ensure that every child is healthy. Eating healthily is important because it will help children to:

- Be fitter and healthier now and later in life
- Be able to make the most of learning opportunities and enjoy their play

## **Our commitment**

We will provide facilities for children bringing in packed lunches and ensure that free, fresh drinking water and milk is available.

We will work with the children to provide sociable and appropriate eating arrangements.

We will work with parents to ensure packed lunches are as close as possible to the guidance below.

## **What we are asking from you**

Parents will need to provide children with a suitable container which they can actually eat the lunch from (rather than need to take food out and place it straight onto the table). A plastic box with a removable lid is ideal and must be labelled with your child's name.

## **Suggestions for food to include in a healthy packed lunch:**

- At least one portion of fruit or vegetables every day. If you include grapes, please ensure they are cut in half lengthways to prevent choking.
- Meat, fish or other source of non-dairy protein (e.g. lentils, beans, soya or hummus,) every day (usually as part of a sandwich, roll or wrap).
- A starchy food such as bread, pitta, crackers or wraps.
- Dairy food such as milk, cheese, yoghurt, fromage frais or custard. Please provide yoghurt in a pot rather than a squeeze tube as these are impossible to open and go everywhere! It's also a good developmental skill for children to practice using a spoon (which we'll provide).
- Cereal bars or fruit-based cakes rather than chocolatey cakes and biscuits (cereal bars must **not** contain nuts).

## **Suggestions for food to include less often in a healthy packed lunch (once a week):**

- Snacks such as crisps.
- Chocolate coated biscuits or wafers.
- Cakes.
- Meat and pastry products such as sausage rolls or pies.

## **Food not include in a healthy packed lunch:**

- Confectionery such as chocolate bars. Sweets are not allowed at lunch or any other time.
- Nut or nut products (although they can be very healthy) because of the danger to other children with allergies.
- Fizzy drinks or juice. We will provide milk and / or water.

## **Storage**

Packed lunches will be kept out of direct sunlight in the main kitchen. We do not have refrigeration facilities in which to store packed lunches.

## Lunchtime

After washing hands, there is around 20-25 minutes for eating lunch and then we sing songs after cleaning our hands and faces. We will encourage the children to eat their lunch in the healthiest order e.g. carbs, protein, veg and fruit first. Anything that isn't eaten will be returned so that you can see what hasn't been eaten (open yoghurt excepted – it's very messy!). Children's tastes change over time and they will eat varying amounts depending on what else they have eaten that day, activity levels and whether they fancy it that day! If there is consistently too much in their lunchbox for them to eat happily, we will talk to you about reducing the amount you are giving them. Again, if they are finishing it very quickly and are still hungry, we will talk to you about that too.

## Portion sizes

We were very surprised when we looked at the portion sizes required for children between 3-5 years old when we first started providing lunches. As parents and carers, we don't want them to be hungry so it's easy to just add a little more than needed. As a rule, if you look at the size of your child's closed fist, the food you give them should be equal in size to this.

