Packed Lunch Policy

Tachbrook Nursery School

Agreed Spring: 2023
Reviewed: Autumn 2024

Purpose

The government has placed a duty on 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
- Learn at a faster pace and behave better
- Improve oral health

To grow and stay healthy, children need to eat a nutritionally well balanced diet. Nursery is an important setting to help teach these skills and can contribute significantly to improving the health and wellbeing 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 eating too much fat, sugar and salt and too little fibre, fruit and vegetables.

The short term effects of unhealthy packed lunches and food intake can include poor growth, tooth decay, obesity, anaemia, constipation, poor concentration and behavioural problems, which may have an impact on children'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.

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

Aims

● To ensure that the content of packed lunches meet minimum food and nutrition standards for school meals.
● To encourage healthy eating habits from an early age and improve the overall nutrition of children.
● To encourage healthy eating habits in childhood that can influence health and well -being in later life.
● To promote positive interactions, attitudes and enjoyment towards food and drink.
● To provide meaningful opportunities where children are involved in planting, growing, harvesting, preparing, cooking and sharing healthy foods.

Special diets and allergies:

● No food that contains nuts or nut products is allowed in packed lunches.
● We understand that some children may have verified medical conditions requiring special 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. If any of the foods suggested on the 'Not to include' list need to be a part of your child's daily diet, please inform your child's key person.
- The school will display all allergies regarding children within the school;

Snacks

If your child is hungry before or after lunch the school provides fresh water, milk, fruit and vegetables throughout the day which children can help themselves too. During colder weather we

provide hot chocolate and warm toast. There is no extra cost for this.

Packed Lunch Facilities

● We know how important a positive lunchtime experience is on wellbeing. We will ensure children sit in small 'family style' groups. A meal supervisor will sit at each table with a group of 6-8 children.
● Fresh drinking water will be made available at each meal, so you will not need to provide a drink for your child.
● We will work with parents to ensure packed lunches meet the standards listed below.
● Fridge space is not available, so children are advised to bring packed lunches in insulated bags with freezer blocks where necessary.
● Children are only allowed to eat their own food.
● We are not permitted to heat up the food for children, in case it is heated incorrectly and makes your child ill.

Ideas for Packed Lunches

Please bring your child's lunch in a small children's purpose made lunch box/ bag with their name clearly labelled on it. Please place your child's lunch box/ bag in the lunch box container at the front door.

Every day:

● At least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables every day. Grapes and cherry tomatoes should be halved lengthways for nursery age children to prevent the risk of choking;
● Meat, fish, eggs, or a non-dairy protein (e.g. lentils, kidney beans, chickpeas, hummus, falafel) every day;
● Oily fish, such as salmon or tuna, at least once every three weeks (or vegetarian alternative)
● A starchy food such as wholemeal bread (wholemeal rolls, pitta bread or wraps), pasta, rice, couscous, noodles, potatoes or another cereal every day.
● A dairy food such as milk, 'proper' cheese (ie not Dairylea lunchables or similar), unsweetened yoghurt (or vegan alternative).
● Pretzels, crackers and cheese. Maybe unsweetened cereal.
● Vegetable sticks and dips.

Please do not include

● Any confectionery such as chocolate bars, chocolate-coated biscuits and sweets.
● Any crisps.
● Any drinks- fresh water will be provided.

We will send home any 'do not include' items and speak to families about healthy options.

If children arrive at school without a packed lunch, families will be contacted and expected to make arrangements for a healthy packed lunch to be delivered to school by 11.00am.

If school has to provide a packed lunch, the family will be charged £10.

Free School Meals

For families who have qualified for a free school meal once a fortnight they will receive a digital

supermarket voucher, this should be used to buy and make food for a packed lunch. Parents should read and follow the same advice above when making their child's lunch.

Waste and Disposal

Our staff will, within reason, send any uneaten packed lunch food items back home. This is so that parents can monitor what their child has consumed during the day and raise any concerns over their child's food intake with the school.

Responsibility, Management and Support

The leadership team have overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.
The whole Nursery Team will endeavour to raise any concerns with parents in a timely and sensitive way. Parents are asked to share any worries about their child's eating at home or nursery.