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Dear Parents and Carers

Re: Packed Lunches

Please find attached some information, advice and tips regarding healthy packed lunches.

As I am sure you are aware, the whole nursery is a nut-free zone and therefore, we ask that you do not include nuts in any form in your child's packed lunch. This includes spreads such as Nutella, snacks, sweet treats or cooking ingredients. For all items, please always check the list of ingredients carefully. If we are unsure whether an item in your child's packed lunch contains nuts, ie. a chocolate spread which looks similar to Nutella, we will not allow your child to eat this item and will provide them with an alternative.

We also ask that you do not include whole grapes, tomatoes or similar items as these are a choking hazard for small children. We are happy for you to include these items but please do cut them up at home before including in lunch boxes.

If you have any questions or we can help in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Lois & Bethany

Family Worker Team

What to Include in a Healthy Packed Lunch for your Child

✓ A portion of starchy foods, such as:

- Cooked yam or potato
- White or wholegrain bread
- White or wholegrain rice
- Couscous or pasta
- Malt loaf



✓ A portion of fruit and vegetables, such as:

- Sliced carrot, cucumber or tomatoes
- Avocado fingers
- Sugar Snap peas or green beans
- Sliced melon or pear
- Satsuma or orange segments



✓ A portion of protein foods, such as:

- Sliced boiled egg
- Sliced chicken or turkey
- Houmous or other pulses and bean dips
- Tuna, mackerel or salmon
- Tofu
- ~~Smooth nut butters~~



✓ A portion of dairy or dairy alternative foods, such as

- Cheese e.g. cream cheese or cottage cheese
- Milk or unsweetened calcium fortified soya milk
- Homemade rice pudding
- Plain yoghurt



✗ Avoid foods high in salt, fat and sugar, such as:

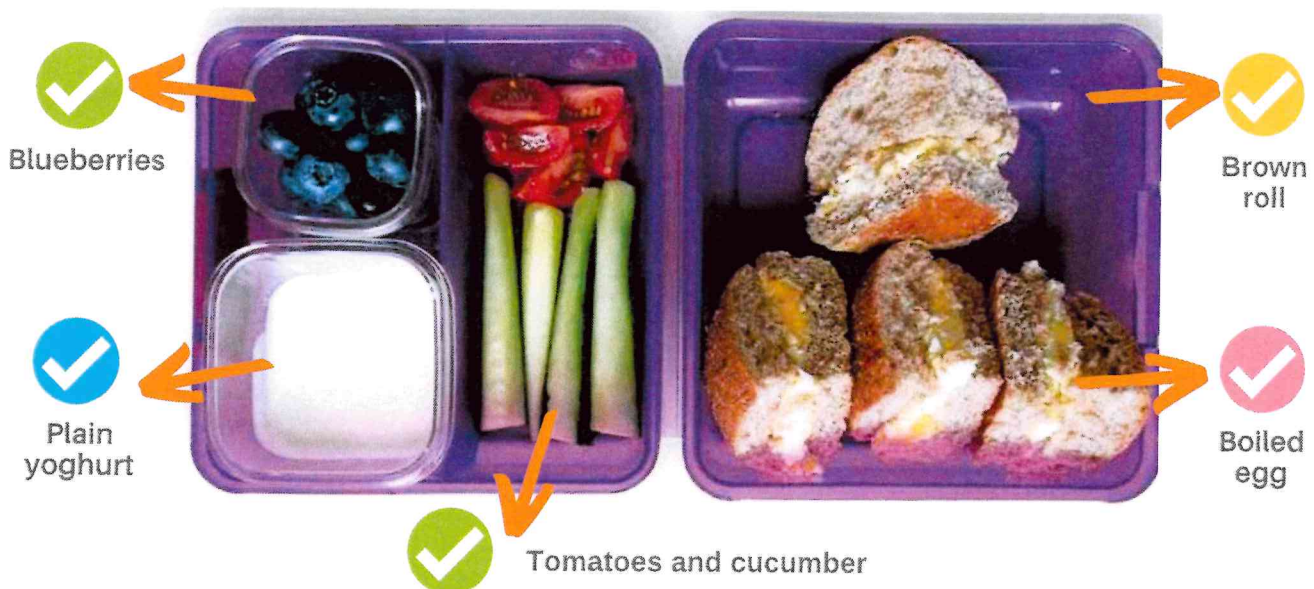
- Flavoured yoghurts
- Crisps, including vegetables crisps
- Biscuits, cereal bars, and mini cakes
- Squash and fruit juice

✓ A tooth-friendly drink

- Tap water
- Cows' milk
- Unsweetened calcium fortified milk alternatives (e.g. soya-based and pea-based)



Healthy Lunch Example



Name:

Class:

More healthy packed lunch ideas

Each day a healthy packed lunch should include:

A portion of starchy food

White or wholegrain bread, rolls, pitta bread or wraps, plain naan bread, bagels, cooked pasta, rice, noodles, couscous or potato as a salad.



At least one portion of fruit and/or vegetable

Fresh, frozen, canned or dried, these can all count towards 5-A-DAY.

Vegetables: carrot, cucumber, pepper or celery sticks, tomatoes, grated carrot in sandwiches or wraps, sweetcorn, peas or pulses in salad.

Fruits: sliced apple or melon, plums, grapes, strawberries, kiwi, satsumas, chunks of pineapple, or dried fruit.



A portion of meat, fish, eggs, beans or other non-dairy sources of protein

Sliced meat, chicken, fish, sliced egg in sandwiches, rolls or wraps, meat alternatives such as tofu or pulses like kidney beans and chickpeas in salads.



A portion of milk or dairy foods

Yoghurt or fromage frais, cheese in sandwiches or wraps, whole milk (for children aged one to two) or semi-skimmed (for children aged two and over).

A drink – to help with hydration and concentration.

Water – is the best choice.

Milk – use whole milk (for children aged one to two) or semi-skimmed (for children aged two and over).

Diluted fruit juice (half juice, half water).

Avoid squash, fizzy drinks, and flavoured water even if labelled 'sugar free'.

'no added sugar' or 'reduced sugar'. These can contribute to tooth decay and have little nutritional value.

Desserts, cakes, biscuits and crisps: these foods are high in saturated fat, sugar and salt – too much of these foods can be harmful to health.

Try to make desserts, puddings and cakes with fruit or milk, such as a banana muffin or rice pudding.

Limit confectionery such as chocolate, sweets or cereal bars to help protect your child's teeth.

Avoid salty snacks such as crisps. Replace with plain breadsticks.



Example packed lunch menu

Provide a variety of foods from each of the food groups listed on the front page across each week. A week's packed lunch menu might look like this:

Monday

- Tuna and sweetcorn pasta salad with red pepper sticks
- Apple slices and plain yoghurt
- Water to drink

Tuesday

- Chicken and potato with salad
- Ginger biscuits with satsumas
- Milk to drink

Wednesday

- Cheese salad wrap
- Banana and raisins
- Water to drink

Thursday

- Egg salad sandwich
- Seasonal fruit salad with fromage frais
- Milk to drink

Friday

- Chicken vegetable couscous salad
- Blueberry muffin
- Milk to drink



For more ideas on healthy packed lunches visit the Let's Get Cooking at Home website: www.letsgetcookingathome.org.uk/get-cooking/perfect-packed-lunches

Practical tips for healthy, safe and tasty packed lunches

Communicate with your setting about your child's packed lunch.

- Inform your setting of food allergies or intolerances.
- Check if your setting has a food policy.
- Ask how they store food. If they don't have a fridge, use a cool bag and a frozen bottle of water or reusable ice pack.

Choosing foods

- Vary lunchbox contents for a good balance of nutrients.
- Seasonal fruits and vegetables add colour, texture and are often cheaper and tastier.
- Read food labels. Look out for the colour coded nutrition information on the front of packets. Remember the more green(s) on the label, the healthier the choice.

Preparing the packed lunch

- Include your child in shopping, choosing and preparing what goes in their lunchbox, giving them choices within the food groups.
- Wash fruit and vegetables, and remove any stones.
- Keep it fresh. Rinsing slices of apple in dilute lemon juice, for example, will stop the slices from turning brown.
- Think sustainably. Use containers and cutlery that can be washed and used again.
- Label your child's packed lunch with their name.



Healthy Packed Lunch Information and Ideas

Keep them fuller for longer

Base the main lunchbox item on foods like bread, rice, pasta and potatoes. Choose wholegrain where you can.

Freeze for variety

Keep a small selection of different types of bread in the freezer so you have a variety of options – like bagels, pittas and wraps, granary, wholemeal and multigrain.

Use a Flask to keep food hot or cold

Use a flask or insulated cup to keep foods hot such as soup, leftover dinners, lasagne, pasta, etc. Pack leftover cooked chicken, chicken nuggets, or tenders to be eaten chilled or warm in a thermos flask.

Cut back on fat

Pick lower-fat fillings – like lean meats (including chicken or turkey), fish (such as tuna or salmon), lower-fat spread, reduced-fat cream cheese and reduced-fat hard cheese. And try to avoid using mayonnaise in sandwiches.

Mix your slices

If your child does not like wholegrain, try making a sandwich from 1 slice of white bread and 1 slice of brown bread.

Always add veg

Cherry tomatoes, or sticks of carrot, cucumber, celery and peppers all count towards their 5 A Day. Adding a small pot of reduced-fat hummus or other dips may help with getting kids to eat vegetables.

Ever green

Always add salad to sandwiches and wraps too – it all counts towards your child's 5 A Day!

Cheesy does it...

Cheese can be high in fat and salt, so choose stronger-tasting ones – and use less of it – or try reduced-fat varieties.

Cut down on crisps

If your child really likes their crisps try reducing the number of times you include them in their lunchbox, and swap for homemade plain popcorn or plain rice cakes instead.

Add bite-sized fruit

Try chopped apple, peeled satsuma segments, strawberries, blueberries, halved grapes or melon slices to make it easier for them to eat. Add a squeeze of lemon juice to stop it from going brown.

Tinned fruit counts too

A small pot of tinned fruit in juice – not syrup – is perfect for a lunchbox and easily stored in the cupboard.

Swap the fruit bars

Dried fruit like raisins, sultanas and dried apricots are not only cheaper than processed fruit bars and snacks but can be healthier too. Just remember to keep dried fruit to mealtimes as it can be bad for teeth.

Switch the sweets

Swap cakes, chocolate, cereal bars and biscuits for malt loaf, fruited teacakes, fruit breads or fruit (fresh, dried or tinned – in juice not syrup).

Yoghurts: go low-fat and lower-sugar

Pop in low-fat and lower-sugar yoghurts or fromage frais and add your own fruit.

What Should a Healthy Packed Lunch Contain?

Follow these tips to ensure you include the key nutrients needed to support your child's growth and learning.

Include starchy foods

What? Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta.

How much? Include at least one portion.

Examples: Sandwiches, pitta bread, wraps, pasta salad, potato salad, sweet potato wedges, rice dishes, cous cous, bread sticks, crackers, oat cakes, rice cakes.

Why? These foods will provide energy, fuel for vital tissues and organs including the brain, fibre, B vitamins and other minerals.

Tips: Try to include some wholegrain varieties from this food group each week such as brown, wholemeal, granary or 50/50 bread, wholewheat pasta or brown rice.

Pack some dairy and/or alternatives

How much? Include at least one portion.

Examples: Cheese, yoghurts, custard, rice pudding, milk or yoghurt-based smoothies.

Why? These foods provide calcium, B vitamins and protein.

Tips: If your child is over two years and growing well opt for semi-skimmed milk and low fat yoghurts and cheeses.

Don't forget the protein

What? Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins.

How much? Include at least one portion in every lunchbox.

Examples: Chicken, turkey, pork, beef, lamb, beans, fish, shellfish, lentils, chickpeas, pulses, soya products such as tofu, quorn, nuts, hummus.

Why? These foods provide protein, iron and zinc.

Tips: Try to include at least one portion of fish each week. Oily fish such as fresh, tinned or frozen salmon, sardines, pilchards, mackerel, herring, and fresh tuna may be beneficial for children's cognitive development. Try a salmon or mackerel pate as a dip or sandwich filler.

Foods to avoid in your child's lunchbox

What: Foods high in fat, sugar or salt, **Nuts.**

Examples: Crisps, biscuits, cereal bars, chocolate, sweets and other confectionary, fried foods, takeaway or fast food meals, pastries, fizzy drinks or juice style drinks. Peanut butter or any food containing nuts.

Why? These foods are often known as empty calories because they provide energy but very few useful nutrients. These foods often contain lots of sugar, salt or saturated fat. Too much sugar can damage children's teeth and too much saturated fat can lead to excess weight gain and poor health.