

Home Provided Meals Policy

Policy Statement

We understand that healthy eating habits and having a healthy approach to food is key from an early age. Therefore, we follow our own menus which provide children a well-balanced nutritious meal. However, we understand that there are some exceptions to this and there are occasions where, some Parents/Carers may provide their child/ren with a packed meal.

This policy is to ensure all children bringing in prepared food and snacks from home are being offered healthy and nutritious food, to reduce choking risks, and to help prevent allergic reactions for children who may have airborne food allergies.

Procedure

When a child is bringing in their own food items provided from home, the following guidelines will need to be adhered to:

- Food provided from home will need to offer the child a healthy, nutritious and varied diet. All provided meals should be prepared in line with our guide to packed meals below. This will be for all meals including:
 - ✓ Breakfast
 - ✓ Lunch (Two-Courses)
 - ✓ Tea (Two-Courses)
 - ✓ Snacks (Morning and Afternoon)
- Additional healthy snacks must be provided by Parents/Carers to enable Practitioners to offer their child food should they become hungry between served mealtimes
- Parents/Carers must provide enough food for their child to have second helpings if they wish and ensure that there is enough food available throughout each day or session of attendance
- Healthy desert options must be provided for each meal by the Parent/Carer so Practitioner can offer the child a desert after each main meal (lunch and tea). If a child refuses their main course, they will still be offered the healthy desert option
- Withholding food will not be used as a form of punishment or bribery in our settings
- If a child shows distress and does not want to eat, they will have their food removed without fuss. Parents/Carers will be called to inform them that their child has missed a meal and will be advised to provide an alternative option
- Cultural and religious dietary requirements will be respected, for children on special diets Parents/Carers will provide as much information as possible and ensure that packed meals meet the child's requirements
- All packed meals will need to be clearly labelled with the following information:
 - ✓ The child's full name
 - ✓ Allergen information
- Parents/Carers will need to provide a detailed breakdown inside the packed meals to show any allergens. This way we can ensure that we are protecting the other children in the setting from possible allergens. Food items that are in packets will have their own allergen information and no additional information will need to be provided
- We will encourage Parents/Carers to supply regular new foods as well as familiar favourites for their child as we know children's food preferences can vary from day to day

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- Where possible, we will encourage Parent/Carers to provide their child/ren with meals that correspond with our menus. This is help the child with a packed meal, feel included with their peers during the mealtime
- Our team members will provide Parents/Carers with feedback daily to confirm what the child has eaten from their packed meals and what hasn't been eaten
- Most young children can regulate their own appetite, so we encourage them to eat but we will not force a child to eat if they are not hungry
- Our usual processes for Managing Children's Dietary Requirements and Mealtime Management and Nutrition, policies will be followed, when serving meals and snacks to the children with a packed meal
- Children who are able, will be encouraged to help set the table, pour their own drinks and collect their own packed meal and snacks
- Milk will be supplied and served by the Nursery during both morning and afternoon snack times
- Fresh drinking water is available for children to access throughout the day and at mealtimes. For children under 6 months old, cooled boiled water will be offered

Packed Meal Storage and Contents:

When Parents/Carers are wanting to provide packed meals for their child/ren, the following processes will need to be followed:

- Packed meals and snacks will need to be provided to the nursery in a cool box or bag with an icepack, as we do not have enough refrigeration space available.
- The meals provided MUST not be food items that require heating or reheating
- A wide variety of foods will need to be in the child's packed meal, with a balance from the four main food groups:
 - ✓ Fruits and Vegetables
 - ✓ Meats and Proteins
 - ✓ Dairy
 - ✓ Grains
- To protect our children from possible allergic reactions and/or choking incidents, all children's packed meals MUST adhere to our mealtime safety rules. The following items MUST not be provided:
 - Honey for children 12 months or under
 - Citrus fruits for children 12 months or under
 - Carrot rounds, carrot MUST be shredded finely or cut in thin strips / batons
 - Cucumbers MUST not be cut into slices and will only be given in thin strips/batons
 - Fish that contain traces of bones (fillets only)
 - Sausages
 - Nuts and nut derivatives (including Peanut butter, Nutella and nut oils)
 - Grapes, blueberries or other small fruit that could pose a risk of choking
 - Chocolate covered biscuits or snacks
 - Fruits in syrup or other sugary liquids
 - Small dries fruit such as raisons
 - Cakes or sugary sweet treats