



## Safeguarding children

### 1.16.7 Lunch box policy

#### Policy statement

At School House Nurseries we want the children to eat healthily.

We also understand that nurseries are an influential place for children and can contribute significantly to improving their health and wellbeing

Good nutrition in childhood can help prevent a variety of health problems, both in the short term and later in life. There is increasing concern that many children are consuming too much fat, sugar and salt and too little fibre, fruit and vegetables. Packed lunches can contribute to almost a third of a child's weekly food intake and therefore they need to be balanced and nutritious.

#### Policy aim

- To ensure that packed lunches (brought in from home) reflect the new standards which have been set by the Department for Education – Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance (May 2025).
- To encourage healthy eating habits from an early age and improve the overall nutrition of children. 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 a child'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.

#### Objectives

- To improve the nutritional quality of packed lunches in our nursery and the eating habits of children at lunchtimes.
- To develop an awareness in children, parents, staff and the wider community that the nursery takes a pro-active approach to promoting healthy eating.



- To encourage healthy eating habits in childhood that can influence health and wellbeing in later life.

## Implementation

Below is our list of dos and don'ts to include in the lunchbox

- We would like all lunch boxes to include:
  - At least one portion of fruit (e.g., small apple, orange, dried fruit, cherry tomatoes).
  - At least one portion of vegetables (e.g., carrot sticks, cucumber, celery).
  - Meat, fish or other source of non-dairy protein (e.g., chicken, turkey, ham, beef, pork, tuna, lentils, kidney beans, chickpeas, hummus and falafel).
  - A starchy food such as any type of bread, pasta, rice, couscous, noodles, potatoes or other type of cereals. (For example, pitta bread, tortilla wraps, rice cakes, oat cakes).
  - Dairy food such as milk, cheese, yoghurt, fromage frais or custard.
  - **PLEASE ENSURE THAT FOOD IS CUT UP CORRECTLY E.G. GRAPES, BLUEBERRIES AND CHERRY TOMATOES SHOULD BE CUT INTO QUARTERS NOT HALVES.**
  - There is no need to provide a drink in your child's packed lunch as water/milk can be provided.
- Lunch boxes must not include:
  - Snacks such as crisps (alternatives include savoury crackers, breadsticks, rice cakes).
  - Confectionery such as chocolate bars, chocolate coated biscuits and sweets (alternatives include small cakes, shortbreads and flapjack or plain biscuits).
  - Items that contain nuts or nut products (i.e., peanut butter). We are a nut-free nursery.
  - Fizzy drinks, squash and fresh juices.
  - Flasks, drinks in glass bottles or ring pull cans.
  - The remains of the previous day's take-away or left-over meals.
- Food will not be used as a behaviour management tool as either punishment or reward.

## Promoting independence

We want to ensure that children still have the opportunity to be independent during mealtimes if they have a lunchbox. With this in mind, we want to avoid foods being in packets and peels that could potentially create a barrier for children to continue being independent. When preparing your child's lunchbox you can help by:

- Ensuring that food is cut up safely and appropriately – ready for children to eat.
- Ensuring that food such as oranges are peeled beforehand.

- Making sure food is cooked/prepped and ready to eat; we cannot heat any foods.
- Avoiding packets, children need to be able to access food easily.
- Please label food, as this allows us to know what each food is and what is in it.

### **Storage and disposal of food**

- Waste and disposal: The nursery will within reason send any uneaten packed lunch food items back home. The rationale for this is that parents can also monitor what their child has consumed during the day and then raise any concerns over their child's food intake with the nursery. If the bag is left at nursery, these items will be disposed of due to hygiene reasons.
- Packed lunch containers: It is the responsibility of the parents / carers to provide an appropriate packed lunch container where food items can be stored securely and appropriately until lunchtime. This needs to be dropped off first thing in the morning when your child is arriving at the setting.
- Storage of packed lunches: The nursery will provide storage area / facilities for packed lunch bags in the most convenient and appropriate place possible. However, the nursery cannot provide cooled storage areas and therefore cannot take legal responsibility for foods prepared at home and then brought into nursery.
- Hot food: We are unable to heat / re-heat food at nursery.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The nursery will carry out monitoring of packed lunch provision. Where there may be concerns over a child's food / nutrition intake and / or content of packed lunches, this can be dealt with timely and sensitively.

OFSTED are required to report on how the nursery promotes the personal development and wellbeing of all children – this may include food provision including packed lunches brought into nursery.

**This policy was updated and reviewed on:**

<b>Review date</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>
September 2025	Stuart Watt	