

Healthy packed lunch policy

At Merry Kidz day nursery we are committed to teaching your child about how to make sensible food choices as part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. This packed lunch policy has been developed by drawing on key government guidance associated with healthy eating and the early years setting day. Government strategy outlines an expectation on all Early year settings and schools:

To promote a culture of healthy eating the government now expects all schools, in consultation with parents, pupil and staff, to adopt whole school food policies. In particular, schools will be expected to develop healthy packed lunch policies so that those not yet taking up school lunches are also eating healthier.

This policy applies to all children, parent/career and staff bringing pack lunches and other foods to be consumed within setting. This packed lunch policy fits within a wider context of promoting a whole setting approach to food and healthy eating.

This policy was drawn up in consultation with parents, staff and management team with the following aims:

- To ensure the contents of lunch boxes reflect the requirements of the setting to meet minimum food and nutritious standards for nursery meals.
- To make a positive contribution to children's health by encouraging healthy eating habits in childhood that can influence health and well-being in later life.
- To take a proactive approach to promoting healthy eating.
- To give a clear guidance to parents/carers, children and staff on providing a healthy packed lunch.
- To support parents by providing ideas for healthy packed lunches.
- To ensure that all children have a healthy and nutritious midday meal.

Food contained in a packed lunch

Parent/ carer of children who do not have nursery meals are expected to provide their children with packed lunches that are consistent with nutritional standards based on the Eat well plate model and Eat better, start better practical guide.

The recommended content of a healthy lunch box is:

- Fruit and vegetables: at least two portions of fruit or vegetables, berries every day (a portion is the amount your child can fit into the palm of their hand). This could be fresh, dried or tinned in their juice fruit.
- Carbohydrate: a portion of a starchy food every day such as bread, pasta, rice, couscous, noodles, potatoes, chapatis/roti, naan bread, plain crackers, breadsticks, crisp-breads, rice cakes.
- Protein: a portion of beans, pulses, fish, egg, meat or other proteins.
- Dairy: every day such as milk, cheese, yogurt, fromage- frais, custard or other alternatives.
- Desserts: desserts made with cereal, milk or fruit. Avoid salty snacks such as crisps. Limit confectionary such as chocolate, chips, limit provision of cakes and biscuits, fruited malt bread, fruit tea cakes, fruit scones, fruited scotch pancakes, semolina, fruit scone, scotch pancake.
- Drinks: whole or semi- skimmed milk, water.

Packed lunches should not include:

- Sweets/ confectionary
- Sugary drinks, juice, juice drinks,
- Crisps
- No more than one dessert item per day (small cake, biscuit, cereal bar, fruit loaf/ bun, scone, fruit malted bread or scotch pancake).
- No more than two portions of food each week that includes pastry.
- Items containing nuts are not allowed, as we have children with severe allergy to the nuts.
- If children packed lunch with contain crisps, sweets, confectionary, juice and other sugary unhealthy options, staff has a right to remove it from packed lunch. It will be return to parents when child is collected.

For healthier snacks:

- Replace cakes and pastries with fruit bread or tea cake
- Replace salted savory snacks, such as crisps, with breadsticks, rice cakes, cheese and crackers.
- Include dried fruit or fruit salad.
- As drink, drink water, milk.

Special diets and allergies

Merry Kidz day nursery recognizes that some children may require special diets that do not follow National Food Standards, Eat better, start better guidance exactly. This applies to the SEND children as well, as to those who has allergy or special diet requirement.

Packed lunch containers

We asked that parents/carers:

- Provide a packed lunch in the containers, where food can be securely stored until lunch time.
- Bring packed lunches in reusable plastic containers, rather than disposing of plastic bags and bottles.
- Fridge space for packed lunches is not available as possibility to reheat food.
- The setting will, within the 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 practitioners.

Whilst we fully respect individual food choices and understanding that there are many different needs and tastes, we want to work with parents to educate children about healthy diet choices so that our children, through understanding a balanced diet will develop a greater appreciation of healthy lifestyle.