

Twyford Playgroup EY484175

Food and Packed Lunch Policy

Date Reviewed: September 2026

Manager Signature: Rachel Knott

Chair of Committee Signature: Pamela Lawrence

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- The government has placed a duty on preschools 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. Twyford Playgroup is an influential setting 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 consuming 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 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.
- 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
- To encourage healthy eating habits from an early age and improve the overall nutrition of children.
- To improve the nutritional quality of packed lunches enjoyed at Twyford playgroup
- To develop awareness in children, families, staff and the wider community of the federation.
- To encourage healthy eating habits in childhood that can influence health and well-being in later life.
- Promote positive interactions and attitudes towards food and drink.
- Display all allergies regarding children within the playgroup
- Provide meaningful opportunities where children and families are involved in planting, growing, harvesting, preparing, cooking and sharing healthy foods.

Special diets and allergies:

- Please note that 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.

Packed Lunch Facilities

- We know how important a positive lunchtime experience is on wellbeing. We will ensure children sit in small 'family style' groups.
- Free, fresh drinking water and cold milk will be made available.
- Staff will work with parents to ensure packed lunches meet the standards listed below.
- As fridge space is not available, children are advised to bring packed lunches in insulated bags with freezer blocks where possible.
- 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.

Some Ideas for Packed Lunches

Every day:

- At least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables every day. Grapes and cherry tomatoes should be halved lengthways for playgroup age children.
- 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, 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, popcorn (choking hazard under 5) or gummy sweets.
- Any drinks other than water or juice – just send your child with their usual labelled water bottle.

Please note, we will send home any of these items and speak to families when the child is collected about healthy options.

If children arrive at playgroup without a packed lunch, families will be contacted and expected to arrange for a healthy packed lunch to be delivered to playgroup by 12pm.

Waste and Disposal

Our staff will, within reason, send any uneaten packed lunch food items back home. This is so 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 Playgroup.

Responsibility, Management and Support

The management team have overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

The playgroup team 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 playgroup.

At our playgroup children enjoy a family-style lunchtime which is a wonderful learning opportunity. Children have time to enjoy a healthy lunch and some lovely conversations.

Please support us by following our guidelines for a healthy lunch:

- ★ We are a water and juice only setting, so we will provide your child with water - we will encourage them to drink plenty throughout the session.
- ★ Include food that is high in carbohydrates such as bread, wraps, pasta or rice.
- ★ Add some protein such as chicken, cheese, tofu, beans etc....
- ★ Add some vegetables such as carrot sticks, cucumber or tomato: and some fruit such as apple, pear, banana.
- ★ If you send in grapes, please cut them in half, lengthways as whole grapes are a choking risk for young children.
- ★ No nuts or nut products - due to allergies.