



Packed lunch policy

Date issued: 22.10.2025

Next review due: 01.09.2026

1.0 Policy Statement

At Little Learners Nursery Group, we are committed to promoting healthy eating and ensuring food safety for all children.

We aim to support each child's health, development, and wellbeing by encouraging balanced, nutritious meals and maintaining a safe and inclusive environment that meets all dietary needs.

2.0 Aims

This policy is designed to:

- Provide clear guidance for parents and carers on expectations for packed lunches brought from home.
 - Ensure that packed lunches offer healthy, balanced, and nutritious food to help children grow, learn, and stay active.
 - Comply with food hygiene and safety regulations.
 - Meet the EYFS requirements for nutrition, independence, and self-care.
 - Protect children with allergies and specific dietary needs.
 - Align with the *Healthy Early Years London* packed lunch guidance.
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3.0 Packed Lunch Guidelines

Drinks

Water and milk will be available for all children during the day. If providing a drink from home, please ensure it is only water.

Portion Size and Safety

- Please provide food in appropriate portion sizes for your child's age and appetite.
- Cut food into manageable pieces to reduce the risk of choking.

A healthy packed lunch should include items from the four main food groups:

1. Starchy Foods

Include one or two portions such as bread, wraps, chapatti, bagels, pasta, rice, noodles, couscous, or potatoes.

Provide variety across the week, and include at least one wholegrain option weekly.

2. Vegetables and Fruit

Include at least one portion of vegetables and/or one portion of fruit each day, offering a variety throughout the week.

Examples include carrot sticks, cucumber, celery, chopped tomato, or fruit such as apple slices, grapes (halved), or raisins.

(Please note: dried fruit should be part of a meal, not a snack.)

Aim for your child to have at least five different fruit and vegetables across the day.

3. Protein Foods

Include one portion of beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat, or other protein sources.

Options include chickpeas (hummus), lentils (dahl), tofu, Quorn, egg, or sliced meat/poultry.

4. Dairy or Alternatives

Include one portion of dairy or an unsweetened, calcium-enriched alternative such as cheese, milk, yoghurt, or fromage frais.

4.0 Foods and Drinks to Avoid

Parents and carers must not include:

- ✗ Sugary foods (e.g. chocolate bars, sweets, chocolate biscuits, cereal bars, processed fruit snacks).
- ✗ Crisps or processed snacks high in salt or fat (e.g. flavoured vegetable crisps or puffed snacks).

- ✘ Sugary drinks (e.g. fizzy drinks, squash, or energy drinks).
 - ✘ Nuts or nut-based products — these are strictly prohibited due to allergies.
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5.0 Safe Storage and Handling

To maintain food safety standards:

- Packed lunches must be provided in a clearly labelled, insulated lunchbox.
 - Lunchboxes should include ice packs to keep food fresh throughout the day.
 - As refrigeration is not available, please pack foods that remain safe at room temperature.
 - We are unable to heat or reheat food for children. Please do not include items that require heating.
 - All lunches will be stored in a designated area until lunchtime.
 - Staff will monitor lunches for compliance with food hygiene and healthy eating standards.
 - Unsafe or unsuitable items will be returned home, and parents will be informed.
If necessary, the nursery will provide a suitable meal at the parent's expense (£10 per day).
 - Children are only permitted to eat their own food.
 - All children will eat together with their peers, regardless of whether they have a packed lunch or nursery meal.
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6.0 Waste and Disposal

Where possible, uneaten items will be sent home so parents can monitor what their child has eaten and discuss any dietary concerns with the nursery if needed.

7.0 Food Allergies and Dietary Requirements

- Parents and carers must notify the nursery in writing of any food allergies, intolerances, or special dietary requirements.
 - Packed lunches should be handed directly to a staff member at drop-off.
 - Staff may check lunchboxes to ensure compliance with allergy and safety guidelines.
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8.0 Allergy and Food Safety Compliance

- We operate a **strict NO-NUT policy**. Any nut-based products will be removed and returned to parents.
Repeated failure to comply may result in a written warning and could impact your child's nursery placement.
 - Parents must ensure all food is safely prepared and stored following food hygiene standards.
 - All food must be fresh and appropriate for your child's individual dietary needs.
 - Any concerns regarding a child's diet or food safety will be discussed directly with parents or carers.
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9.0 Non-Compliance and Right to Refuse Packed Lunches

To safeguard all children, parents and carers must follow this policy in full.

If a lunch does not meet our safety or nutrition standards, the nursery reserves the right to:

- Provide an appropriate alternative meal and charge parents £10.00.
- Refuse packed lunches until compliance is ensured.

- Record ongoing non-compliance as a safeguarding concern, in line with EYFS regulations.

If a child arrives without a packed lunch, families will be contacted to bring one in or will be charged £10.00 for a nursery meal.

10.0 Support for Parents and Carers

We are happy to support parents in providing healthy, balanced packed lunches.

For more ideas, visit:

- [First Steps Nutrition: Eating Well Early Years](#)
- [Health for Under 5s: Preparing the Perfect Packed Lunch](#)

11.0 Designated Seating for Allergy and Packed Lunch Safety

To further protect children with allergies and ensure food safety:

- Children with allergies will be seated at a **designated allergy-safe table** with an assigned seat to minimise the risk of cross-contact with allergens.
 - Children who bring packed lunches from home will sit at a **separate designated table**, also with assigned seating, to ensure that their food is kept separate from nursery-provided meals and to support monitoring of their food intake.
 - Staff will supervise both tables closely during mealtimes to maintain safety protocols and support children with their individual dietary needs.
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Parental Declaration

I, _____ (Parent/Carer Name), confirm that:

- ☒ I understand and agree to follow the Packed Lunch Policy at Little Learners Nursery Group.
- ☒ I will not include any nut-based or high-risk foods in my child's packed lunch.
- ☒ I will ensure all food is safe, fresh, and suitable for my child.
- ☒ I acknowledge that if I do not comply with this policy, the nursery may refuse the packed lunch, issue a warning, and/or provide an alternative meal at an additional cost of £10.00.

Parent/Carer Signature: _____

Date: _____

Child's Name: _____