

# Locks Heath Infant & Nursery School

## Packed Lunch Policy



Reviewed: Spring 2 2025

Next Review: Spring 2 2026

## Rationale

- The government has placed a duty on nurseries 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 help them regulate their emotions.
- To grow and stay healthy, children need to eat a nutritionally well balanced diet. Nursery is an influential setting and can contribute significantly to improving the health and well-being 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 lack of self-regulation, 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.
- The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) is required to report on how the school promotes the personal development and well-being of all children – this may include food provision, including packed lunches brought into nursery.

## 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 eaten at our Nursery.
- To develop an awareness in children, parents, staff and the wider community that the Nursery adopts a pro-active approach to promoting healthy eating.
- To encourage healthy eating habits in childhood that can influence health and well-being in later life.

## Allergies & Special Diets

The Infant and Nursery School operates a '**no nut policy**', and this includes any foods that may contain nuts or nut products. For packed lunches, Nursery staff understand that some children may have verified medical conditions requiring special diets that do not allow for the standards from this policy to be met exactly. In this case parents are urged to discuss this with Nursery staff and to be responsible in ensuring that packed lunches are as healthy as possible.

## Packed Lunch Facilities

Children will eat their own packed lunch and will not be allowed to swap any food with other children. Nursery staff will eat with the children, modelling what is expected to safely eat a packed lunch. Free, fresh drinking water is available at all times. Nursery staff will work with parents to encourage packed lunches to 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 parents and carers feel it is required. We are NOT allowed to heat up the food you provide.

## The 'Always, Sometimes, Never' approach to Packed Lunches at Locks Heath Infant & Nursery School:

Packed lunches should 'Always' include: (*please see a guide in Appendix 1*)

- At least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables every day. Grapes and cherry tomatoes should be halved lengthways for nursery age children.
- Meat, fish, eggs, or a non-dairy protein (e.g. lentils, kidney beans, chickpeas, houmous, falafel) every day.
- Oily fish, such as salmon or tuna, at least once every three weeks.

- A starchy food such as any type of bread (white or wholegrain rolls, pitta bread or wraps), pasta, rice, couscous, noodles, potatoes or another cereal every day.
- A dairy food such as milk, 'proper' cheese (ie not Dairy Lea lunchables or similar), yoghurt, fromage frais or custard every day.
- Pretzels, crackers and cheese.
- Vegetable sticks and dips.

Packed lunches can '*Sometimes*' include:

- A meat product such as a sausage roll or an individual pie or corned meat.

Packed lunches should '*Never*' include:

- Any confectionery such as chocolate bars, chocolate-coated biscuits and sweets.
- Any crisps.
- Any sugary soft drinks, such as a fizzy drink (even if labelled as 'sugar-free', 'no added sugar' or 'reduced sugar' as these drinks can contribute to tooth decay and provide little nutritional value).

### **Waste and Disposal**

Nursery 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 nursery.

### **For further information**

Further information can be found on the following recommended website and via Appendix 1 should you need more ideas and guidance for healthy packed lunches;

Government Website:

<https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/nutrition/a-healthy-plate>

BBC Good Food:

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/school-lunch-recipes>

NHS Website:

<https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes/>

## Appendix 1 A school Lunchbox Guide



### Portion sizes for children aged 5 and under



Food group	Portion size
<b>A variety of fruit and vegetables (at least 5 portions each day)</b>	
Cooked and raw	40g
<b>Carbohydrates (4 portions each day)</b>	
Cooked rice, pasta and potatoes	80g
Bread	25g
Average sized potato	1
<b>Dairy and alternatives (3 portions each day)</b>	
Milk	150ml
Cheese (sliced or grated)	15g
Cottage cheese	30g
Plain yoghurt	60g
<b>Protein (2 portions each day)</b>	
Baked beans	55g
Egg	55g
Meat, fish and poultry	40g
Most pulses and hummus	40g

# A healthy balanced diet for children

Food group	Examples of food included	Main nutrients provided	Recommended serving
Fruit and vegetables	Fresh, frozen, canned, and dried fruit, vegetables, and pulses	Carotenes (a form of vitamin A), vitamin C, zinc, iron, and fibre	At least 5 portions each day Provide a portion as part of each main meal (breakfast, lunch and tea) and with some snacks
Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates	Bread, potatoes and sweet potatoes, starchy root vegetables, pasta, noodles, rice, other grains, breakfast cereals	Carbohydrate, fibre, B vitamins and iron	4 portions each day Provide a portion as part of each meal (breakfast, lunch and tea) and provide as part of at least one snack each day
Dairy and alternatives	Milk, cheese, yoghurt, fromage frais	Protein, calcium, and vitamin A	3 portions each day Provided as part of meals, snacks and drink
Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins	Meat, poultry, fish, shellfish, eggs, beans, pulses, nuts	Protein, iron, zinc, omega 3 fatty acids, vitamins A and D	2 portions each day Provide a portion as part of lunch and tea (two to three portions for vegetarian children)

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## A healthy plate

To help get the balance of food right for children each day think **5-4-3-2**:

- 5** At least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables
- 4** 4 portions of starchy carbohydrates
- 3** 3 portions of dairy or alternatives
- 2** 2 portions of protein

**This is just a guide. Children should feel able to tell you when they are full or still hungry.**



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