Packed Lunch Policy

Providers are responsible for ensuring they follow the current version of the framework for their provider type.

Aim of this policy

To ensure that all packed lunches brought from home and consumed in nursery (or on trips) provide your child with healthy and nutritious food for their growth and development while keeping all children safe from known food allergies.

At **Nesham private nursery** we are committed to children eating healthy, nutritious and balanced meals and snacks which meet individual needs and requirements, following the Department for Education nutrition guidance.[1]

This policy supports the health, safety and well-being of all children in our care and reflects the requirements of our insurers.

Parents are asked to provide packed lunches that comply fully with this policy. We reserve the right to remove food items that present an allergen or choking risk. Parents who regularly fail to meet the expected standards will be invited to discuss the issues to find joint solutions to ensure our policy is upheld.

We are required to support you with information to help you provide healthy meals for your child to bring to nursery. To meet our statutory welfare requirements, we avoid foods which are high in saturated fat, salt, and sugar as these are proven to negatively affect children's health, development and overall well-being. We wish for food brought from home to align with the healthy and nutritious meals we provide, so children are receiving consistent messages about healthy eating.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Nutrition and mealtimes policy, the Allergies and allergic reactions policy and the Caring for babies and toddlers policy (for babies who are not yet weaned).

Our facilities

- We operate a strict nut free environment
- We provide facilities for children bringing in packed lunches
- We ensure that fresh, plain tap water is always readily available
- We work with parents to ensure that packed lunches abide by the standards listed below

[1] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6839b752210698b3364e86fc/Early_years_foundation_stage_nutrition_guidance.pdf

- We provide parents with guidelines for nutritious content and signpost to the NHS packed lunch guidance:
  NHS Healthier lunchbox recipes -
  https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes/
  Food for Life's packed lunches guidance - https://bit.ly/4t3Jb9d
- We request parents use insulated lunch boxes and ice packs
- We do not provide cooking/ reheating services for children's packed lunches.

Packed lunch guidelines

Home prepared food is not permitted. Please bring all foods (other than raw fruit and vegetables) pre-packaged with allergens clearly labelled.

All food for the day must be brought on a daily basis to ensure freshness and manage storage space.

It is recommended that packed lunches should include the following on a daily basis:

- A minimum of two portions of fruit or vegetables
- A starchy food for energy and concentration, e.g. any bread, wrap, chapatti, pasta, rice, noodles, potatoes
- Meat, fish, eggs or another plant-based source of iron and protein, e.g. lentils, kidney beans, chickpeas, hummus
- Dairy or dairy alternative food, e.g. cheese, plain unsweetened yoghurt or fromage frais.

To reduce risks of allergens or choking, the following items must not be included:

- Nuts – whole nuts, nut products including those which use nuts in preparation (for example, nut oil)
- Any drinks other than plain water. Fresh water is provided for all children and alternative drinks will not be served to the children
- Flavoured dried rice, pasta and noodle products, e.g. packets and pots of instant noodles, pasta or rice
- Popcorn, chewing gum, marshmallows, raw jelly cubes, sweets (boiled, hard, gooey or sticky).

Organisation

- See the Food Standards Agency 'Early years food choking hazards' advice for preparing food for babies and children under five years olds: https://tinyurl.com/EYchokinghazards
- To reduce choking risks, we expect:
  - Hard pips or stones removed from fruit; consider removing the skin for very young children
  - Small round fruits (such as grapes, cherry tomatoes, cherries, berries) cut into quarters lengthways
  - Vegetables such as carrots, cucumber and celery cut into narrow batons
  - Sausages/hot dogs peeled and cut into short thin strips
  - Meat/fish boned and cut into thin strips
  - Cheese grated or cut into short strips.

- Use easy-to-open containers/packaging where possible, to promote your child's independence
- Ensure all food is within the use-by date
- Ensure all lunchboxes/containers/bags are clearly marked with your child's name
- Provide appropriate clean cutlery your child will need, such as spoons and forks/ We keep a small supply of spare cutlery, if required.

Management of food safety, allergies and dietary needs

- All staff are aware of children with food allergies or intolerances and individual dietary requirements are respected. Information from parents is shared with staff involved in preparing and serving food
- Where appropriate, we will carry out a risk assessment in the case of known allergies and work alongside parents to put into place an individual dietary/allergy plan for their child. This will be regularly reviewed and any changes shared with all staff
- Children's lunch boxes will be reviewed prior to giving the contents to the children to manage any risks from potential allergens or choking hazards
- We give careful consideration to seating to avoid cross contamination of food from child to child
- Children will always be within sight and hearing of a member of staff while eating and, where possible, an adult will sit facing children while they eat, to minimise risks from choking and allergic reactions. In addition, a member of staff with a full and valid paediatric first aid certificate will be in the room, where possible
- At each meal and snack time, we ensure a nominated practitioner is responsible for checking that the food being provided meets all the requirements for each child
- Where appropriate, discussions will also take place with children about allergies and potential risks to make them aware of the dangers of sharing certain foods
- Staff show sensitivity towards children's diets and allergies. They do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child, or make a child feel singled out because of their diet or allergy
- Cultural differences in eating habits are respected.

Our policy is developed in partnership with parents, staff and children and reviewed on a regular basis.

This policy was adopted on	**Signed on behalf of the nursery**	**Date for review**
May 2026	A Borthwick	*19/05/2026*