



NORTH STAR NURSERY
EARLY YEARS FUNDED SESSIONS
POLICY AND GUIDELINES FOR HEALTHY PACKED LUNCHES

Aims

- To promote the eating of healthy food at meal times
- To promote a balanced and healthy diet in lunchboxes
- To increase children's knowledge of nutrition and healthy eating
- To encourage children to try a wide variety of foods and to extend their eating experiences
- To work in partnership with parents to promote healthy food choices

Requirements

- A personal water bottle for use during the day at nursery must be provided
- Packed lunches must be in a named lunchbox.
- Any other drinks within the lunchbox must be in a leak proof bottle, flask or carton (no fizzy drinks, hot drinks or cans please).
- One sweet treat may be included but should be limited to one small item e.g. small KitKat, Penguin, flapjack finger or similar.
- Crisps, sweets and large bars of chocolate are not allowed.

Uneaten food is always returned in the lunchbox to enable parents to monitor how much their child eats.

We may not always be able to provide refrigerated storage for lunchboxes, so parents should bear this in mind when preparing their child's food.

Fresh drinking water is available throughout the day.

North Star Nursery aims to have nut free classrooms.

Guidelines on Providing a Nutritionally Balanced Lunchbox

These guidelines are taken from The Children's Food Trust whose website can be found here:

<http://media.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/2016/03/CFT-PackedLunch-FSM.pdf>

A healthy lunchbox is nutritionally balanced and contains food from the first four of the five food groups. The five food groups are:

- **Bread, rice, potatoes and pasta** – these foods provide carbohydrate to give your child energy for the afternoon.
- **Fruit and vegetables** – these foods provide vitamins and minerals to help protect against illness.
- **Milk and dairy foods** – these foods are a good source of calcium, for strong bones and teeth.
- **Meat, fish, eggs and beans** – these foods provide protein, iron and zinc to help your child grow.
- **Foods high in saturated fat, sugar and/or salt** – try to limit these types of food and drink. Too much salt and saturated fat can increase the risk of some illnesses in later life while too much sugar can damage children's teeth.

Follow these guidelines to make the lunch nutritionally balanced:

- Around one-third of the calories in the lunchbox should come from starchy carbohydrates such as bread, rice, potatoes or pasta. This could be the brown bread in a sandwich or roll, or the pasta in a pasta salad.
- A lunchbox should contain a portion of protein from lean meat, fish, eggs, beans or other non-dairy sources of protein. This could be the lean ham or tuna in the sandwich or salad.
- Include at least one portion of fruit and/or vegetables. One portion is an apple, a handful of grapes or a cup of chopped carrot.
- Add a portion of dairy food. This can be a slice of cheese (about the size of a small matchbox) or a pot of yogurt.
- Finally, don't forget a drink. Still water or milk are best.

A sandwich made with wholemeal brown bread, ham and salad is great for a lunchbox. It contains starchy carbohydrates, a portion of protein and a portion of vegetables.

Appropriate portion sizing is very important. For young children, half or even a quarter of a wrap, bagel or pitta will be sufficient. The remainder can be used up the next day. You can check portion sizes by placing all the food on a child-sized plate and making sure they are using a child-sized lunch box (Under 5 Magazine, November 2018).

If your child is getting bored of sandwiches, try the following:

- A salad made with pasta or brown rice, chicken or tuna and vegetables such as carrots, peppers, tomatoes and green beans.
- Vegetable omelette. This includes protein from the eggs and a portion of vegetables if you add some broccoli, courgette or tomato.
- Homemade pizza. Kids love pizza slices and you can add chopped vegetables for a healthy treat.
- Homemade soups. During the winter, homemade vegetable or chicken soup, taken to school in a vacuum flask so it stays hot, is a perfect lunch.

Tips for a Healthy Lunchbox

The NHS Change 4 Life webpages set out tips for healthy lunchboxes as follows and can be found here: <https://www.nhs.uk/change4life-beta/healthier-lunchboxes>

Keep them fuller for longer: Base the lunchbox on foods like bread, rice, pasta and potatoes. Choose wholegrain where you can.

Mix your slices: If your child doesn't like wholegrain, try making a sandwich from one slice of white bread and one slice of wholemeal/brown bread.

Freeze your bread: Keep a small selection of bread in the freezer. Make lunchboxes more interesting by using different shapes, like bagels, pittas and wraps, and different types of bread, such as granary, wholemeal and multi-grain.

DIY lunches: Wraps and pots of fillings can be more exciting for kids when they get to put them together. Dipping foods are also fun and make a change from a sandwich each day.

Less spread: Cut down on the spread used and try to avoid using mayonnaise in sandwiches.

Cut back on fat: Pick lower fat sandwich fillings, such as lean meats (including chicken or turkey), fish (such as tuna or salmon), reduced-fat cream cheese, and reduced-fat hard cheese.

Ever green: Always add salad to sandwiches – it all counts towards your child's 5-a-day.

Always add veg: Cherry tomatoes or sticks of carrot, cucumber, celery and peppers all count towards their 5-a-day. Adding a small pot of reduced-fat hummus or other dips may help with getting kids to eat vegetables.

Cut down on crisps: If your child really likes their crisps try reducing the number of times you include them in their lunchbox and swap for homemade plain popcorn or plain rice cakes instead.

Add bite-size fruit: Try chopped apple, peeled satsuma segments, strawberries, blueberries, halved grapes or melon slices to make it easier for them to eat. Add a squeeze of lemon juice to stop it going brown.

Tinned fruit counts: A small pot of tinned fruit in juice – not syrup – is perfect for their lunchbox and is easily stored in the cupboard.

Swap the fruit bars: Dried fruit such as raisins, sultanas and dried apricots are not only cheaper than processed fruit bars and snacks but can be healthier too. Remember to keep dried fruit to mealtimes as it can be bad for your child's teeth.

Watch the teeth: Dried fruit can get stuck in their teeth so should be only eaten at mealtimes to reduce the risk of tooth decay.

Swap the sweets: Swap cakes, chocolate, cereal bars and biscuits with malt loaf, fruited tea cakes, fruit breads or fruit (fresh, dried or tinned – in juice not syrup).

Go low fat and lower sugar: Go for low-fat and lower sugar yoghurt or fromage frais and add your own fruit.

Check your cheese: Cheese can be high in fat and salt so choose stronger-tasting ones – and use less of it – or try reduced-fat varieties of cheese.

Get them involved: Get your kids involved in preparing and choosing what goes in their lunchbox. They are more likely to eat it if they helped make it.

Variety is the spice of lunchboxes: Be adventurous and get creative to mix up what goes in their lunchbox.

