



Packed Lunch and Lunchtime Supervision Policy

September 2026

Introduction:

At Penguin Preschool, we aim to promote healthy eating habits and provide a safe, supportive environment for children aged 2-4 years to enjoy their packed lunches. Lunchtime is not only an opportunity to refuel but also a chance for children to develop social skills and independence. This policy outlines the guidelines for packed lunches and lunchtime supervision, ensuring that we create a positive, safe, and healthy mealtime experience. It adheres to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements, legal food safety standards, and best practice in promoting healthy eating habits and child safety.

Purpose of This Policy:

This policy is written to:

1. Promote healthy eating among children.
2. Ensure the safety of children by ensuring food is cut and prepared appropriately.
3. Comply with legal food safety standards, including hygiene practices.
4. Support staff in ensuring that children are offered a balanced and safe lunch.
5. Encourage positive food choices and discourage unhealthy snacks and meals.
6. Ensure a nut free environment to protect those children with allergies
7. Ensure the safety and well-being of children through effective lunchtime supervision in accordance with EYFS requirements.

Packed Lunch Guidelines:

1. **Healthy Eating Guidelines:**
 - **Encouraging Balanced Meals:** Packed lunches should include a variety of food from different food groups, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, protein, and dairy. We encourage balanced meals with healthy carbohydrates, proteins, and fats, while limiting sugary or highly processed foods.
 - **Avoiding High-Sugar Foods:** Sweets, sugary snacks, and sugary drinks should be avoided in packed lunches. Specifically, products like Haribo, sugary gummies, and other sweet treats should not be included. Instead, healthier alternatives such as fruit, vegetables, and wholegrain crackers are encouraged.
 - **Hydration:** Children should be provided with water or milk as a drink. Sugary or fizzy drinks are discouraged.
 - **Nut-Free Environment:** Penguin Preschool is a **nut-free** school. As such, packed lunches should not include any nuts or nut-based products, such as peanut butter, nuts, or products containing nuts (e.g., granola bars with nuts), to ensure the safety of children with nut allergies.

2. **Safe Food Preparation:**

- **Cutting Risky Foods:** Foods that may pose a choking hazard, such as grapes, cocktail sausages, cherry tomatoes, or raw vegetables, should be sliced in half lengthways before being packed. This includes other foods that may be round or hard, which can cause choking if not properly cut into manageable pieces.
- **Hygiene Standards:** Parents and staff are expected to ensure that all food provided is prepared safely. This includes washing hands before handling food, using clean containers, and avoiding cross-contamination.
- **No Nut Products:** As part of allergy safety, nuts and nut-based products should not be included in packed lunches to avoid the risk of allergic reactions.

3. **Packaging:**

- **Safe Containers:** Food should be placed in airtight containers to preserve freshness and prevent contamination. Parents are encouraged to use reusable containers to reduce waste.
- **Labelling:** Each packed lunch should be labelled with the child's name to avoid confusion and ensure the correct lunch is given to the right child.

4. **Storage:**

- **Temperature Control:** Children's packed lunches should be kept in cool bags with ice packs during warmer months to maintain food safety. Preschool staff will monitor lunch boxes to ensure food is stored correctly until mealtime.

Role of Parents and Carers:

- Parents are responsible for ensuring their child's packed lunch meets the guidelines provided by the preschool.
- Parents should slice any potentially risky foods (such as grapes, cocktail sausages, cherry tomatoes, or carrots) in half lengthways before packing to prevent choking hazards.
- Parents must ensure no nuts or nut-based products (such as peanut butter, nuts, or products containing nuts) are included in packed lunches due to the preschool's nut-free policy.
- Sweets, such as Haribo and sugary gummy treats, should not be included in packed lunches to encourage healthy eating.
- Parents are encouraged to make healthy food choices and avoid packing high-sugar, high-fat, or processed foods.

Lunchtime Supervision Guidelines:

1. **Supervision and Safety:**

- **Staff to Child Ratio:** We keep to EYFS Requirements regarding staff:child ratio. This ensures adequate supervision and assistance if required.
- **Minimum Staff at Lunch Tables:** In accordance with EYFS requirements, a minimum of two staff members will be present at the lunch tables to supervise children during mealtime. This ensures children receive the necessary support and supervision while eating.

- **Monitoring:** Staff will ensure that all children eat in a calm and safe environment, addressing choking hazards and encouraging children to drink plenty of water.
 - **Emergency Preparedness:** All staff members are trained in first aid procedures to respond to any emergencies, such as choking. Emergency equipment, such as a first aid kit, will be easily accessible.
 - 2. **Encouraging Independence:**
 - **Self-feeding:** Where possible, children will be encouraged to feed themselves. Staff will support children with utensils and offer guidance in using them. Children will also be encouraged to drink water independently.
 - **Social Interaction:** Lunchtime is an opportunity for children to socialise with their peers. Staff will encourage polite table manners and facilitate positive conversation among the children.
 - 3. **Hygiene Standards:**
 - **Handwashing:** Children must wash their hands before eating, and staff will supervise this to ensure it is done thoroughly.
 - **Clean Surfaces:** Staff will ensure that all eating areas and tables are wiped clean before and after lunchtime to maintain high hygiene standards.
 - 4. **Handling Specific Dietary Requirements:**
 - **Allergies:** Staff will be aware of any specific dietary requirements or food allergies for each child. Allergy lists will be displayed in the dining area for staff to check before mealtime.
 - **Food Substitutes:** If a child has a special dietary requirement, staff will ensure that the child is provided with suitable alternatives. Parents will be asked to provide details of their child's dietary needs.
-

Review and Monitoring:

Date created 1st September 2025

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if necessary, to ensure it remains aligned with current guidance and legal requirements. Feedback from staff, parents, and relevant authorities will be considered during the review process.

Reviewed and Updated 17th August 2026 S Fielding