

03 Food safety and nutrition procedures

03.4 Menu planning and nutrition

Snacks supplied for children contribute towards a healthy and balanced diet for healthy growth and development. Foods that contain any of 14 allergens identified by the FSA are identified on snack menus. The setting follows dietary guidance to promote health and reduce risk of disease caused by unhealthy eating. When planning snacks, the setting manager ensures that:

- Parents and staff are able to contribute ideas for snacks which are confirmed each week in advance.
- Snack choices reflect children's cultural backgrounds, religious restrictions and the food preferences of some ethnic groups.
- Snack menus are clearly displayed so that parents and staff know what is being provided.
- Foods that contain any of the 14 major allergens are identified on the menu that is displayed for parents.
- Parents must share information about their children's particular dietary needs with staff when they enrol their children and on an on-going basis with their key person.
- Key persons regularly share information about the children's levels of appetite and enjoyment of food with parents.
- Staff refer to the Eat Better, Start Better (Action for Children 2017).
- The setting manager maintains a record of children's dietary needs in a Food Allergy and Dietary Needs folder.

Packed lunches

- As children at Little Thetford Acorns bring packed lunches, staff promote healthy eating, ensuring that parents are given advice and information about what is appropriate content for a child's lunch box.
- As we do not store packed lunches in the refrigerator, parents are advised to take measures to ensure children's lunch box contents remain cool i.e. use of ice packs or pack lunch in an insulated box. In warmer weather, it is important to avoid foods susceptible to food poisoning, i.e. prawns and poultry.
- When preparing and packing lunchboxes, parents are encouraged to pay attention to food safety and be scrupulous about food hygiene.
- Ideally packed lunches should be healthy and nutritious, fun to eat, acceptable to the child, colourful and occasionally original.
- As a guide, a good lunchbox would aim to include food from the four main food groups:-
 - A starchy food, to provide energy. This could include, bread, rolls, pitta bread, bagel alternatively, pasta, rice or couscous cooked the night before and kept cold.
 - A protein portion e.g. meat, egg, cheese, tuna, humous or pulses.
 - A portion of dairy or dairy alternatives for calcium eg cheese, milk-based smoothie, yoghurt or fromage frais.

- A portion of fruit or vegetables (about the size of a child's hand is equivalent to a portion). Dried or fresh fruit, chopped carrot, cucumber or celery sticks.
 - Small amount of sweet treats is permissible.
- Due to nut allergies the setting has a 'NO NUTS' rule in lunchboxes or snacks. This includes peanut butter or hazelnut spreads.
- Children are encouraged to eat all of their lunchbox contents. Parents are advised to pack lunches wisely and use appropriate portion size or speak to staff if they do not expect their child to eat all of their lunch.
- We discourage sweet drinks and provide children with water or semi-skimmed milk.
- To avoid drink spillages in lunchboxes we encourage the use of well-sealed bottles. We can also provide children with an empty cup, which we can fill with milk or water.
- We discourage packed lunch contents that consist largely of crisps, processed foods, sweets drinks and sweet products such as cakes and biscuits. We reserve the right to return this food to the parent as a last resort.
- Where possible, staff sits with the children so that the mealtime is a social occasion. Staff encourage the children to eat their sandwiches/savoury food first.
- All uneaten food is returned home in the lunchbox to demonstrate to parents what, and how much a child has eaten. Staff will, however, throw empty yoghurt pots in the bin; if yoghurt is opened and not eaten, we inform the parent on collection or a note will be put in the lunchbox/liaison book.
- We recognise that the eating habits of pre-school aged children vary over time. If parents have any concerns or a particular approach they would like us to take with their child, then they are encouraged to speak to their child's key person.
- Children are encouraged to take drinks from the water available or their own named bottle regularly, especially during the summer months. If a parent has any specific medical information relating to fluid intake, or concerns about a child's fluid intake whilst attending, this should be brought to their key person's or setting manager's attention. If deemed necessary, a 'Health Care Plan' can then be set up for this child.