

Healthy Eating Policy

Aims

Busy Otters Pre School aims to adhere to national guidelines on healthy eating. As stated below, our suggestions for a healthy lunchbox are guidelines not rules. At preschool, we will continue to teach and discuss aspects of a healthy lifestyle, of which healthy eating is only one. We hope you will feel able to support our efforts to help our children to make healthy choices.

Food and drink in packed lunches

The preschool will provide a place and adequate time for children to eat a packed lunch and will ensure that fresh drinking water is always readily available. We do not have the space to place all packed lunches in the fridge, so you are kindly requested to send packed lunches with mini ice packs to keep food fresh.

The following are intended as guidelines, not rules.

However, we feel as a preschool, that consideration of these guidelines will support the whole of the preschool community in developing healthy eating habits.

Packed lunches should include:

- At least one portion of fruit each day e.g. small apple or orange (ready peeled if possible), banana, dried fruit, grapes (**cut in half longways**), strawberries, melon cubes, blueberries.
- At least one portion of vegetables each day e.g. **carrot sticks, cucumber sticks**, cherry tomatoes (**cut in half**), sticks of pepper, pot of sweetcorn.
- Foods to be cut in strips, and not round disks, to prevent choking.
- One portion of protein food e.g. chicken, ham, tuna, salmon, turkey, lentils, kidney beans.
- One portion of starchy food (carbohydrates) e.g. a small bread roll, one sandwich thin, a bagel, a small pitta, a mini wrap, crackers, oatcakes, a small scone, hot cross bun, pasta salad.
- One portion of dairy food e.g. cheese cubes, cheese spread triangle, yoghurt, pot of custard, fromage frais.
- A drink – ideally water, diluted juice, milk, or sugar free squash. No fizzy drinks please.

Suitable 'treats' might include malt loaf, flapjack, homemade jam tarts, occasional chocolate biscuits.

Busy Otters Pre School

Policy Name- Healthy Eating Policy

Date Updated- 31/01/25

Please do not include everyday:

- Crisps (a good alternative might be breadsticks, or crackers)
- Processed foods such as cheese-strings, cheese spread dippers, pepperoni, sausage rolls.
- Highly sugary snacks like fruit winders, fruit strings. Dried raisins/banana chips/mango chips might be suitable alternatives, although these too are quite high in sugar.
- Lots of cakes/chocolate biscuits.

Please also remember **no nuts or foods containing nuts** are to be brought into preschool (e.g. peanut butter and Nutella). Any foods containing chocolate spreads cannot be given to your child as it is impossible for us to determine whether it is a nut containing chocolate spread or not. **No seeds are allowed, this includes seeded bread.** This is because we have children and staff with life threatening allergies. Unfortunately, if these foods are put in your child's lunch box we will not be able to let your child eat it. Please check all labels carefully.

We are **unable to heat/reheat food**, so please make sure your child will eat the food that you send as it is.

Please do not send too much food. Only send what you expect your child to eat. We will send home any uneaten food, so that you can see what they have eaten.

Food safety advice for children age 5 and under from the Department of Education

How to reduce the risk of choking

Food preparation:

- remove any stones and pips from fruit before serving
- cut small round foods, like grapes, strawberries and cherry tomatoes, lengthways and into quarters
- cut large fruits like melon, and hard fruit or vegetables like raw apple and carrot into slices instead of small chunks
- do not offer raisins as a snack to children under 12 months – although these can be chopped up as part of a meal
- soften hard fruit and vegetables (such as carrot and apple) and remove the skins when first given to babies from around 6 months

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- sausages should be avoided due to their high salt content, but if offered to children these should be cut into thin strips rather than chunks and remove the skins
- remove bones from meat or fish
- do not give whole nuts to children under five years old
- do not give whole seeds to children under five years old
- cut cheese into strips rather than chunks
- do not give popcorn as a snack
- do not give children marshmallows or jelly cubes from a packet either to eat or as part of messy play activities as they can get stuck in the throat
- do not give children hard sweets