



Packed Lunch Policy

At Little Oaks Nursery, we are committed to promoting healthy eating habits and ensuring children receive balanced, nutritious meals. We provide children with a variety of meals throughout the day to ensure they have access to a range of nutritious foods to support their growth and development. We use the “EYFS Nutrition Guidance for Group and School Based Settings in England (April 2025)” to ensure we provide the correct level of nutrition and promote positive eating habits from a young age. Please refer to our Nutrition, Meal times and Healthy Eating Policy for further information.

This policy has been created to provide the necessary information for parents who have chosen to provide children with their own meals. This policy ensures that we continue to comply with the guidance provided by the EYFS.

Meals times

Children are provided with the following meals throughout the day

- 7.30 am – 8.30 am – breakfast
- 10.00 am – Snack
- 12.00 pm – Lunch
- 2.00 pm – Snack
- 3.45 pm Afternoon tea

Please ensure you provide food to cover every mealtime that falls in with your child’s session times. You can view our menus on our website www.littleoaksnurseryleeds.co.uk to find out what is being provided by nursery each day. You can use this to provide your child with similar snacks or meals if you choose to do so.

What to Include:

We encourage parents to provide healthy, balanced foods that include:

- **Carbohydrates:** Wholemeal bread, pasta, rice, wraps, or crackers for energy.
- **Protein:** Lean meats, fish, eggs, beans, or vegetarian alternatives for growth and development.
- **Dairy:** Milk, cheese, yogurt to support bone health.

- **Fruits & Vegetables:** A variety of fresh, dried, or canned options to promote a love for nutritious foods.

- **Hydration:** Water or milk—avoid sugary or fizzy drinks.

Items to Avoid:

To ensure safety and promote a healthy environment, we kindly ask parents **NOT** to include:

- **Nuts & Nut Products:** Due to allergies.

- **Sweets & Chocolate:** To reduce sugar intake.

- **Fizzy or Sugary Drinks:** Only water or milk is permitted.

- **Highly Processed Foods:** Such as crisps and biscuits—opt for healthier alternatives.

- **Foods that are sensitive to temperature** and could pose a risk to health if left unrefrigerated.

Storage & Safety:

Packed lunches will be stored in your child's room, and we do not have access to chilled storage. Therefore, when providing a packed lunch please be mindful of this and ensure that any foods that require refrigeration are included to cover breakfast or snack times (the meals which are eaten first during your child's session)

Please ensure packed lunches adhere to the following guidelines:

- Please use an insulated lunchbox with an ice pack to keep food fresh.
- Avoid food that needs reheating, as we cannot warm up food brought from home.
- Ensure all containers are clearly labelled with your child's name including containers inside the lunchbox.
- Ensure all foods are prepared to meet the needs and age of your child. This includes preparing foods alongside the choking guidance to minimise the risk of choking hazards. See attached sheet for further guidance.

Allergens and dietary requirements

You will be asked to complete a daily lunch box sheet when dropping your child off in nursery. You will be asked to declare if there are any foods that contain any of the 14 allergens. This information will be used to ensure that we keep any children with allergies who attend nursery safe during mealtimes.

A list of the 14 allergens can be found here: [14-Allergens 16Nov21.pdf](#).

Promoting Independence:

Please ensure children can independently access their own lunch.

- Pack lunch items in easy-to-open containers.
- Ensure children bring their own cutlery
- Encourage your child to eat using cutlery rather than straight from packaging.
- Support a positive attitude toward healthy eating by involving children in choosing their lunches.

Working together

We ask that you ensure all packed lunches are provided for each day that your child attends nursery. If you forget to provide a packed lunch, then we reserve the right to refuse entry to your child until the packed lunch is provided.

If we find a problem with your child's lunch, for example, an item of food has spoiled or contains nuts, we will contact you and ask you to provide an alternative.

Our mealtimes are used as social occasions to promote good early communication skills. The EYFs provide guidance that we follow in nursery to ensure children are well supported throughout mealtimes. The EYFS are updating the guidance from September 2025 to include the following:

- Babies and young children should be seated safely in a highchair or appropriately sized low chair while eating.
- Where possible there should be a designated eating space where distractions are minimised.
- Children must always be within sight and hearing of a member of staff whilst eating. Choking can be completely silent therefore it is important for providers to be alert to when a child may be starting to choke. Where possible, providers should sit facing children whilst they eat so they can make sure children are eating in a way to prevent choking and so they can prevent food sharing and be aware of any unexpected allergic reactions.
- When a child experiences a choking incident that requires intervention, providers should record details of where and how the child choked and parents and/or carers made aware. The records should be reviewed periodically to identify if there are trends or common features of incidents that could be addressed to reduce the risk of choking. Appropriate action should be taken to address any identified concerns.

We appreciate your cooperation in ensuring our nursery environment fosters good nutrition and well-being for all children. If you have any concerns, please speak to a member of staff.