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## Healthy eating, packed lunch and snack policy

**WE ARE AN ABSOLUTELY NO NUTS SETTING – because we accept children with severe nut allergies.**

To grow and stay healthy children need to eat a nutritionally well-balanced diet. Pre-schools are an influential setting and can contribute significantly to improving the health and wellbeing of children. Good nutrition in childhood can help to prevent a variety of health problems, both in the short term and later in life.

**There is increasing concern that many children are consuming too much fat, sugar and salt and too little fiber, fruit and vegetables. Packed lunches and snacks can contribute to almost a third of a child's weekly food intake and therefore need to be balanced and nutritious.**

At Pre-school, we regard snack and lunch times as an important part of the children's day. We organise lunch and snack times so that they are social occasions at which children and staff participate.

Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. To help us comply with recent government initiatives and the general wellbeing of our children, we have decided to set down our own guidelines.

### Procedures

We follow the procedures below to promote healthy eating at Pre-school.

Before a child starts Pre-school, we find out children's dietary needs, including any allergies and food preferences, which we record in each child's registration form and parents sign the record. We also ask parents to advise us of changes to their children's dietary needs - including allergies.

We display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all staff and volunteers are fully informed about them.

We take care to provide children only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and preferences as well as their parents' wishes.

We take care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products. We also require parents not to provide packed lunches that include nuts or nut products (e.g. snack bars, peanut butter, pesto). In order to protect children with food allergies, we strongly discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.

Through discussion with parents and research reading by staff, we obtain information about the dietary rules of the religious groups to which children and their parents belong, and of vegetarians and vegans, and about food allergies. We reflect this information in the provision of food and drinks.

Any practitioners supervising children during mealtimes are required to have completed a valid Food and Safety Awareness course and Allergy Awareness training.

We provide children with utensils that are appropriate for their age and stage of development and that reflect the eating practices in their cultures. We help them to develop the social and feeding skills relating to mealtimes.

We have fresh drinking water constantly available for the children. We inform the children about how to obtain the water and that they can ask for water at any time during the session/day.

## Snack time

For a modest voluntary charge, we provide nutritious food at snack times, avoiding large quantities of fat, sugar, salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings. We also offer parents and guardians the alternative of not paying our charge and providing their own snack for their child.

During snack time children and staff discuss being healthy and its compositions reflecting on our EYFS guidance and home lives. This is also extended into various food activities, story time (tasting) and where possible offsite learning (fruit/veg picking visits to shops).

Snack fees will be invoiced monthly. We offer snacks to all, encouraging children to participate in snack time when they feel ready to. This can work well and is seen to be less disruptive to children's playing and learning. Snack time is not mandatory, and if children do not wish to take part, staff will encourage but never force participation. It is important that children sit down at a table to eat their snacks and are always supervised.

We strongly encourage parents and guardians to pay the modest voluntary charge that allows their child to participate in snack time, because we offer a wide range of snacks which are nutritional, healthy and follow the Early Years nutritional guidance, and because our snacks are incredibly good value for money.

We also know every day the children who are present and their allergies, if any. We ensure that, each day, our snacks do not contain allergens for any of the children present with allergies.

Snack time is different to lunchtime in that we only use one table and staff do not sit with the children at the table. Instead, a staff member closely supervises the table by walking around and supporting independence, like pouring their own drink, and making the decision of what they would like for snack. Children are enabled to enjoy the fun and choice of our snack table.

The children of parents and guardians who do not pay our voluntary charge will not be able to take part in our snack table. They will be invited to eat their snack at the table, before the snack table is served to children who are taking part.

The snacks given to these children to bring in MUST NOT contain any of the Food Standards Agency's 14 allergens – this is to ensure that they cannot contaminate food to be eaten by other children who are allergic to any of these allergens. The 14 allergens are shown below:

- Celery
- Cereals containing gluten (such as wheat, barley, and oats)
- Crustaceans (such as prawns, crabs, and lobsters)
- Eggs
- Fish
- Lupin
- Milk
- Molluscs (such as mussels and oysters)
- Mustard
- Peanuts
- Sesame seeds
- Soybeans
- Sulphur dioxide and sulphites (if the concentration is more than ten parts per million)
- Tree nuts (such as almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, Brazil nuts, cashews, pecans, pistachios, and macadamia nuts)

If a snack given to one of these children to bring in is anything other than, for example, a piece of fruit, the relevant parent or guardian will be required to confirm in writing that it does not contain any of these 14 allergens. This is to ensure that it cannot contaminate food to be eaten by other children who are allergic to any of these allergens.

## Packed Lunch

During Lunch time, practitioners are sitting with children at the tables. We have separate tables so that we can group children together in such a way as to avoid allergen cross contamination. Children are only allowed to eat what is on their plates. Once again children will be encouraged to pour their own drinks.

Parents and Guardians who prepare packed lunches for their children to bring in are reminded that **WE ARE AN ABSOLUTELY NO NUTS SETTING – because we accept children with severe nut allergies.** But these lunches (unlike snacks) do not have to avoid containing any of the other Food Standards Agency's 14 allergens listed above.

Suggestions for lunch:

- Sandwiches - small, and with children's favorite fillings
- Yoghurts
- Small amount of crisps, one normal packet could last all week
- Fresh fruit, apples we will chop up, oranges we will peel
- Other suggestions: dried fruit, cold meats, pasta salads, rice salads, sausage rolls, humus or other dips, cold sausages, jellies, homemade plain cakes, jam tarts, plain biscuits.

We have a fridge and are happy to store any items which need refrigeration. But please label with name, keep the packaging small, and ensure all foods are within eat by date. We will not allow children to eat out of date foods.

## Cooking and special occasions

Special celebrations and festivals such as Pancake Day, Diwali, Chinese New Year or sensory tasting activities in line with current themes may allow for small amounts to be tasted.

Cooking activities will be a mixture of treats which children will have the opportunity to help prepare.

During cooking activities, we would only use ingredients that are safe for all the children.

This policy was adopted by Lavenham Preschool *(name of provider)*

On 4 April 2025 *(date)*

Date to be reviewed 4 April 2026 *(date)*

Signed on behalf of the provider



Name of signatory Roy Mawford

Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner) Chair of Trustees