



ST RICHARD'S NURSERY

Healthy Packed Lunches – A Guide for Parents & Carers

Helping your child enjoy a healthy, balanced lunch

At St Richard's Nursery, we want mealtimes to be positive, relaxed and enjoyable. A healthy, balanced lunch helps children have the energy they need to play, learn, explore and grow. We use the Healthy Plate approach in nursery to help children understand different foods and make healthy choices.

Try to include a variety of foods from different food groups and in small portion pots. A whole bag of crisps is too big for lunch time.

A toddler or young child's empty stomach is roughly the size of their own clenched fist.

What could I put in my child's lunchbox?

 Starchy foods – bread or sandwiches, wraps or pitta, pasta, rice or potatoes. Where possible, choose wholegrain or higher-fibre options.

 Fruit and vegetables – fresh fruit, berries, cucumber, carrot, pepper, cherry tomatoes prepared safely, or other vegetables your child enjoys.

 Protein – egg, chicken or other meat, fish, beans or lentils, hummus or cheese.

 Dairy or alternatives – cheese, plain or lower-sugar yoghurt, or other suitable dairy alternatives.

Please note: St Richard's Nursery is a strictly No Nuts Setting. Nuts of any sort or food containing nuts are strictly forbidden due to allergies

Don't forget a drink

Water is the best choice for everyday hydration. Please provide your child with their **named** water bottle. Water is available throughout the nursery day, and children are encouraged to drink regularly. Milk is also available at nursery at snack times. Please do not send fizzy drinks, squash or other sugary drinks.

Foods to have less often

Foods such as sweets, chocolate, biscuits, cakes, crisps and other foods high in sugar, salt or saturated fat can be included occasionally, but we encourage these not to form a regular part of your child's packed lunch. There is no need for a lunchbox to be completely free from treats — our aim is to encourage balance and healthy habits over time.

Safe eating is important

Young children can be at risk of choking. Please make sure food is prepared in a way that is appropriate for your child's age and stage of development.

- Cut grapes and similar round foods lengthways into quarters.
- Cut cherry tomatoes and other small round foods appropriately.
- Cut sausages into small pieces
- Avoid popcorn or foods that present a choking risk.
- Cut food into manageable pieces.
- Consider the texture and size of foods when preparing your child's lunch.

Children are supervised by staff while eating. Staff sit with the children during mealtimes, supporting safe eating as well as conversation, social interaction and positive relationships.

Keeping food safe

Please use a suitable lunchbox and, where necessary, an insulated bag with a cool pack to keep foods that need to remain chilled at a safe temperature. If you would like your child to have a warm, cooked lunch please bring it contained in a wide neck thermos flask. We are unable to heat food at nursery. Please ensure your child's lunchbox and food containers are clearly named

Every child is different

We understand that children have different appetites, preferences, cultural backgrounds and dietary requirements. Please let us know about any allergies, intolerances, medical or dietary requirements so that we can keep your child safe and support their individual needs. We will always work with families in a supportive and non-judgemental way.

Our aim

Healthy eating isn't about having a perfect lunchbox. It's about helping children develop positive relationships with food and healthy habits that will last a lifetime.

Thank you for working with us to support your child's health, wellbeing and development.