

Packed Lunch & Healthy Eating Policy

Packed Lunches

To maintain healthy development and growth children need to eat a nutritionally well-balanced diet. As an Early Years setting, we are in a prime position to influence and can contribute significantly to improving the health and well-being of your child. Good nutrition in early 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 fibre, fruit and vegetables. Our aim is to share information with parents around the content of a healthy packed lunch and the balance of food groups that should be provided in a packed lunch.

At Moorwell Miracles, we hope to positively promote the health and wellbeing of every child. We aim to support your child to foster a healthy attitude to food and work with you to ensure your child benefits from a balanced diet. Your child requires a balanced diet that includes daily intake of food groups; carbohydrates, fruit and vegetables, protein, dairy and good fats that is low in sugar, salt and excess fat.

Prohibited Items

While we promote a healthy balanced diet, we appreciate that parents know their children best and will pack their lunches around their likes, dislikes and preferences. We understand that a packed lunch is parent choice and will usually always provide what is supplied to the children, with the exception of the following items:

- Sweets
- Carbonated drinks

These products will be sent back home with a child's packed lunch and will **NOT** be given to the child.

Snacks such as crisps, chocolates, biscuits and sugary foods will be limited, and where packed lunches contain more than 1-2 of these items, the rest will be returned home.

The Eat Well Guide

A child's packed lunch should be based on the 'Eatwell Plate' model which shows items the 5 main food groups: (Food Standards Agency 2007).

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/the-eatwell-guide.aspx>



Packed Lunch Recommendations

- Bread, Rice, Potatoes, Pasta - these starchy foods are a healthy source of energy. Packed lunches should include 2 or more portions.
- Fruit and Vegetables - these foods provide vitamins, minerals and fibre. Packed lunches should include at least 1 portion of fruit and vegetables, or more.
- Milk and Dairy foods - these foods provide calcium for healthy bones and teeth. Packed lunches should include 1 portion.
- Meat, Fish, Eggs, Beans, Pulses - these foods provide protein for growth. Packed lunches should include 1 portion.
- Drinks - any drinks provided in lunch boxes should only include either plain water, milk, diluted fresh fruit juice, fruit or dairy based smoothies.

Guidelines recommend it is important not to fill up on too many foods that are high in fat and sugar at the expense of other more nutritious foods. Limiting high fat and sugar foods will help protect your child from becoming overweight as well as helping prevent tooth decay, heart disease, stroke, and diabetes.

Allergens and Safety

To ensure a packed lunch is safe to be provided in our environment, children are not exposed to potential life-threatening allergens and does not pose any choking hazards to your child or any other child, packed lunches must not contain the following:

- Nuts or nut products
- Sweets / confectionary
- Chewing gum
- Sugared / toffee and salted popcorn
- Whole uncut round foods; grapes, cherries, blueberries, strawberries and cherry tomatoes

Cold Food

If you choose to provide a packed lunch for your child, it must contain cold food only, this should be in a suitable packed lunch box or container with a freeze block inside to ensure food stays fresh.

Moorwell Miracles does not have a fridge storage facility for the packed lunches.

It is parents' responsibility to ensure that food is cooked appropriately prior to sending to nursery. Moorwell Miracles are not responsible for reheating food or probing any food.

Breakfast and Snacks

Children are offered healthy breakfast options at Moorwell Miracles such as low sugar cereal and fruit. Parents who have opted out of the snacks, meals and consumable charges would need to ensure their child has had breakfast at home prior to their nursery session time.

Snacks offered by Moorwell Miracles will consist of fruit and vegetables with an alternative choice of low sugar savoury snack such as rice cakes, breadsticks. Parents who have opted out of the snacks, meals and consumable charges would need to ensure their child has snacks which are similar to those offered by the nursery.

Mealtimes

Nursery staff will pro-actively involve children at mealtimes to create a social occasion which provides opportunities to promote children's social and educational development as well as encouraging good eating habits and table manners.

Children are encouraged to serve themselves independently with assistance where required to pour their own drinks, lay the tables etc.

Children will always be supervised whilst eating. Practitioners will sit at the tables with the children so that they can monitor for choking, promote conversation and interact with the children whilst they are eating.

Children will be given the appropriate utensils and crockery according to the meal served. Where it is part of a child's culture, or developmentally appropriate, to eat with their fingers or chopsticks, this will be encouraged and supported.

Fussy/Poor Eaters

Fussy eaters will be encouraged, but not forced, to eat. Praise will be given when the child eats. Food will be removed without judgement if the child refuses their lunch or snack.

If children are persistent poor eaters, then practitioners will discuss the child's meal requirements with the parent/carer. Children will be given as much time as they need to finish meals.

Infant Feeding

Babies will be served food using an appropriate weaning spoon and will be given their own spoon where needed; they will not be discouraged from using their hands to eat their food as this is part of their development.

Where it is part of a child's culture, or developmentally appropriate, to eat with their fingers or chopsticks, this will be encouraged and supported.

Infant Milk

The nursery respects and follows the individual preferences of the families and the choice of whether they use breast milk and/or formula is supported.

Where children require a bottle, a measured amount of milk in an appropriate container and a sterilised bottle should be provided. The feed will be made up as and when needed. Any unused milk will be thrown away after one hour.

The storage of infant milks are as follows:

- For breast milk we follow the Department for Health guidelines of storing the milk under 4 degrees on the day that it is to be used. Moorwell Miracles will store this in the fridge, and it is therefore parents' responsibility to ensure that the milk is provided in a named and dated bag or bottle.
- For formula milk the bottles are prepared as the baby needs them by adding the powder to the boiled water (70 degrees or above) and allowing the water to cool. The bottle will be discarded after a period of one hour.

Storage of Packed Lunches

Children at Moorwell Miracles will have their packed lunches stored on their pegs, out of the reach of the children. Therefore, it is parents' responsibility to ensure that packed lunches are inclusive of freezer blocks to keep their child's food cool.

Hygiene

Children will be asked to wash their hands well before eating any food.

Staff will wash their hands before handling packed lunches and wear a protective apron and gloves for serving or assisting at mealtimes.

Drinking

Part of the new Early Years Framework that came into effect this year specifically states that: *'Water and milk are the only two drinks that should be offered. These are the only drinks that support children's good oral health. Sugary drinks, including fruit juices and smoothies, should not form part of a young child's daily diet.'*

Each room has easy access to fresh drinking water throughout the day. Babies under the age of 12 months will be given breast or formula milk as provided by parents. Children over the age of 12 months will be given whole cow's milk when parents advise they have weaned their baby over. Parents who have opted out of the snacks, meals and consumable charges would need to ensure they provide formula milk and cow's milk for bottles during the day.

While we encourage all children to drink water, we are aware that some children do not like the taste and may become dehydrated if they do not consume enough fluids throughout the day, with specific consideration of the nursery being predominantly outdoors in all weathers. With parental wishes being considered, and in the best interest of those children, weakened squash (no added sugar variety) is offered at mealtimes only *with the aim to wean children off juice and onto water.*

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During mealtimes, including breakfast and snack, children will be encouraged to drink from an open top cup. It is encouraged that children drink from open cups as:

- Drinking from an open cup encourages a sipping action that helps develop the jaw muscles needed for speech and chewing.
- Open cups help prevent liquids from pooling around the upper front teeth, which can reduce the risk of tooth decay.
- Drinking from an open cup helps develop a more mature mouth than drinking from a bottle or sippy cup.
- Open cups help children to develop their fine motor skills, grip and dexterity.

For more information, please visit [Drinks and cups for babies and young children - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk).

Waste and Disposal

Moorwell Miracles will, send any uneaten packed lunch items back home. This is so that parents can also monitor what their child has consumed during the day and then raise any concerns over their child's food intake within nursery.

Monitoring

If children arrive at nursery without a packed lunch, families will be contacted and expected to make arrangements for a healthy packed lunch to be delivered by 12pm or 4pm depending on which mealtime is required. It is not the responsibility of Moorwell Miracles to provide lunch in this instance.

To promote healthy eating, practitioners will monitor the content of packed lunches. Parents and carers who do not adhere to the packed lunch policy will receive a leaflet in their child's packed lunch box informing them of the policy. If a child regularly brings in packed lunches that do not conform to this policy, the Nursery Manager will contact the parents and carers to discuss this further.

Responsibility, Management and Support

The Nursery Manager has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

The whole Moorwell Miracles team will endeavour to raise any concerns with parents in a timely and sensitive way.

Parents are asked to share any worries about their child's eating at home or nursery.

See next page for some packed lunch ideas.



Packed Lunch Ideas



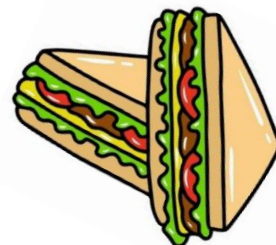
Sandwiches

Try making sandwiches with different types of bread – wholemeal, granary, high-fibre, white, pittas, French bread or bagels.

Have you tried any of these fillings?



Crated cheese and carrot
Salmon
Cheese and cucumber
Tuna and sweetcorn
Hummus
Cottage cheese, grated carrot and grated apple
Mashed banana



Alternatives to sandwiches

Pasta / Rice dishes
Quiche
Wraps
Salad

Fruit and Vegetables

Why not include some of the following?



Seedless grapes (*sliced lengthways into halves, and then cut into quarters*)
Carrot sticks / Celery sticks
Clementines / Cucumber sticks
Bananas / Cherry Tomatoes (*cut the same way as grapes*)
Apples / Plums
Baby sweetcorn / Plums
Raisins / Fruit salad



Other Ideas

Bread sticks / Malt loaf
Teacakes / Cheese and crackers
Scones / Rice cakes
Yoghurts / Fromage Frais
Proteins such as chicken bites
Fruit snack bars



Drinks

Milk / Smoothies
Yoghurt drinks / Water
Fruit juice / Milk drinks



Ensure you keep your child's packed lunch cool by including a freeze block/ice pack inside an insulated lunch bag/box.