



Growing and learning together

## Healthy Packed Lunch and Snacks Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with Little Jesters Healthy Eating Policy

To develop and stay healthy children need a nutritious well-balanced diet and at Little Jesters Pre-school we play a big part in improving the health and well-being of their children.

Good nutrition in the Early Years can help to avert a variety of health problems, both in the short term and later in life. There is increasing concern that children are consuming too much fat, salt and sugar in their diets and too little fruit, fibre and vegetables. Packed lunches can contribute to nearly a third of a child's weekly food consumption and therefore needs to be balanced and wholesome.

### Aim

To make sure that children who eat a packed lunch in pre-school have food which is healthy and nutritious.

Being healthily is important because it will help children to:

- Be fitter and healthier now and later in life.
- Learn more quickly and behave better.

A range of national documents and information regarding food in pre-schools have been considered in drawing up this policy.

Evidence shows that:

- It is important to encourage healthy eating habits from an early age and improve the overall nutrition of children
- The effects of unhealthy packed lunches and food consumption can include poor growth, obesity, tooth decay, anaemia, constipation, poor concentration and behavioural problems which may impact children's learning.
- The long-term effects of a poor diet can include: increased risk of stroke, cancer, heart disease and diabetes in adulthood.

It is our intention that this policy will continue to fit within a wider context of promoting a whole pre-school approach to food and healthy eating.

Children's packed lunches should include items from the 5 main food groups;

### **Bread, Rice, Potatoes, Pasta**

Starchy foods are a healthy source of energy. Packed lunches should include 1 portion e.g. pasta salad, sandwich.

### **Fruit and Vegetables**

These foods provide vitamins, minerals and fibre. Lunches should include at least 1 portion of fruit and 1 portion of vegetables/salad, or carrot/cucumber sticks, cherry tomatoes and a piece of fruit.

### **Milk and Dairy foods**

These foods provide calcium for healthy teeth and bones. Include 1 portion at lunchtime e.g. yoghurt, fromage frais, custard or milk.



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### **Meat, Fish, Eggs, Beans**

These foods provide protein for growth. Packed lunches should include 1 portion of these foods e.g. hummus or mixed bean salad. Meat products such as sausage rolls, individual pies, sausages/chipolatas may be added but only occasionally

Please note that we **do not** have means to heat food for children.

### **Drinks**

Any drinks provided in lunch boxes should only include plain water or milk, unsweetened fresh fruit juice, diluted fresh fruit juice, fruit or dairy based smoothies.

### **Please support us by these things in your child's packed lunch.**

- items such as chocolate bars and sweets.
- we would prefer lunches not to contain processed items such as dippers and cheese strings etc.
- chocolate spread as a filling for sandwiches
- chocolate brioche or pastries
- fizzy/sugary drinks in cartons, bottles or cans

We suggest parents look at the traffic light system on food packets and eliminate any 'red' foods.

### **Food and Drink in Packed Lunches**

- The pre-school will provide adequate time for children to eat their packed lunches.
- Free fresh drinking water will be provided; therefore, parents do not have to provide a drink as part of the packed lunch.
- The pre-school will store all packed lunches in fridges so there is **no** need to put a freezer pack in the lunch box.
- The content of packed lunches **must** follow the guidelines below.

**Snacks** – a healthy snack is provided by the pre-school both mid-morning and mid-afternoon, there is a charge of £10.00 a month to cover cost, if you would prefer not to pay the snack charge then please discuss this with the pre-school manager, so an appropriate alternative can be supplied by the parent.

### **Special Diets and Allergies**

Please ensure that we are made aware of any dietary requirements, due to medical conditions, that may not allow for the guidelines to be followed exactly. In such cases we do ask parents to make sure the packed lunch is as healthy as possible.

**The Pre-school is a nut free zone, therefore no peanut butter/nuts or foods that contain nuts are to be brought on to the premises.**

**Any food items (such as grapes, blueberries etc) that are a choking hazard must be cut up into bite size pieces.** Please note – children are not permitted to swap or share food items.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The pre-school will monitor the children's packed lunch, where there may be concerns over a child's food/nutrition intake and/or content; it will be dealt with timely and sensitively. **All children's lunch boxes must be named.**

This Policy has been adopted by Little Jesters Pre-school



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Signed on behalf of the setting by

Member of Little Jesters Pre-school Committee.....

Pre-school Manager .....

Date.....

Review date September 2026

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