



Meethill
ELCC

Pack Lunch Policy

Created by EYSP
October 2022

Quality Indicators - HGIOELCC

- 1.4 Leadership of management and practitioners
- 2.1 Safeguarding and Child Protection
- 2.4 Personalised support
- 2.7 Partnerships
- 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality, and inclusion

Quality Indicators - Health and Social Care Standards

- 1: I experience high quality care and support that is right for me.
- 3: I have confidence in the people who support and care for me.
- 4: I have confidence in the organisation providing my care and support.

UNCRC Article 3: (Best interests of the child): The best interests of children must be the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them. All adults should do what is best for children. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. This particularly applies to budget, policy and law makers."

The aim of this Pack Lunch Policy is to ensure all children access suitable food to meet their needs during their nursery session. To maintain healthy development and growth, children need to eat a nutritionally well-balanced diet. As an Early Years setting, we are in a strong 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.

All children at Meethill ELC are entitled to snack, milk, lunch and an evening meal which is funded by the Scottish Government and provided by the catering team at Meethill School. Lunch and evening meals are offered within the setting, based on a healthy, balanced menu. Unfortunately, sometimes the food does not suit every child and we do have cases where children refuse to eat the meals provided.

Information will be shared with parents regularly on what their child is eating and what food likes, and dislikes are being displayed in the setting. Information sharing can be vital in letting parents know how much their child is eating and if action needs to be taken to ensure a child's needs are being met. We have introduced a traffic light system on the register to enable the door person at the end of the session to give an indication to parents on how their child has eaten during the day.

Red - Eaten very little

Amber - Eaten some

Green - Eaten a good portion

Pack Lunch

HSCS 1.37: My meals and snacks meet my cultural and dietary needs, beliefs, and preferences

You may decide as a parent you wish to provide a pack lunch instead of the free meals provided and this decision will be respected by the staff team at Meethill ELC.

If your child is consistently showing a pattern of red during nursery meals, a member of staff will discuss this with you and offer you the opportunity to provide a pack lunch for your child. To ensure that your child is following a healthy balance of food, we would like to provide guidance on what a healthy pack lunch looks like.

Setting the table Guidance states: By the age of 5, children should be eating a healthy balanced diet as depicted by The Eatwell Plate (shown below). The Eatwell plate shows the types and proportions of foods required for healthy diet. (Please note this balance of food is not suitable for children under the age of 2 years).

Parents can refer to the guide below to help create healthy pack lunches for your child. It's easy to get stuck in a rut with pack lunches, especially if children insist on having the same sandwich filler day after day. Please also refer to the attached document - **'Eating Well: Packed Lunches for 1-4-year olds' guidance** - this document provides some sample ideas for pack lunches, including portion sizes and recipes. A packed lunch should provide the same amount of energy and nutrients as a main meal for children of this age group.

HSCS 4.11: I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice



Food Group	Examples of foods that can be provided as part of a packed lunch:
Bread, rice potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods	Sandwiches are an easy choice for a packed lunch. To give a little variety, different breads and rolls such as wholemeal, granary, poppy seed, sesame seed, pitta bread, bagels and baps can be tried. Breadsticks or crackers can also be included in this group. Homemade pasta and rice salads are ideal for packed lunches. Fruit scones, pancakes or fruit loaf can be offered as healthier alternatives to confectionery.
Fruit and vegetables	Chopped raw vegetables such as carrots, cucumber, peppers or cherry tomatoes are ideal choices. A wide variety of fruit can be included. Fruits that are in season are often more economical. Include a pot of fruit salad as a change to a whole fruit. Try some dried fruit such as raisins, sultanas, mango or apricots.
Meat, fish, eggs, beans, and other non-dairy sources of protein	For sandwich fillings include ham, turkey, chicken, fish, hummus and egg. Too much mayonnaise or salad cream should be avoided as these are high in fat, salt and sometimes sugar.
Milk and dairy foods	Include a milk-based pudding such as yoghurt, fromage frais, a small pot of custard or mousse. A drink of milk or a small serving of cheese, e.g. cheddar, edam or mozzarella, on a sandwich could also be included as part of this group.
Drinks	Milk or water would be ideal choices. Small cartons of pure fruit juice should be kept to mealtimes only. Fizzy drinks, diet or otherwise, are not suitable for children. Please remember the setting will provide milk and water for your child.

Key principles for eating well for 1-4-year-olds:

- **A good variety of different foods** is important to ensure all the important nutrients (vitamins and minerals) are included in the diet. Make sure the content of packed lunches is varied from day to day.
- **Young children should eat child-sized portions of at least five different fruit and vegetables a day.** Where children are reluctant to eat these foods, they should at least taste five different ones every day and have them served with their meals and snacks so they become familiar with them.
- **Limit sugar intake.** Children do not need sugary foods such as sweets, biscuits, cakes chocolate, soft drinks or sugar for energy. Sugary foods can damage teeth and provide calories but few nutrients. Starchy foods - such as potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and yam - are better sources of energy, as they contain other important nutrients too. Use fruit to sweeten yoghurts and desserts.
- **Choose good-quality food.** Young children need to eat small quantities of good food regularly. The best foods are those that are minimally processed, and which have been made from good-quality ingredients. Avoid foods that are 'diluted' - for example, processed meat or fish covered with breadcrumbs, batter or other coatings (such as sausage rolls, Scotch eggs, chicken nuggets or fish cakes) which make them lower in nutrients.
- **Good sources of iron and zinc** should be served at main meals. This includes meat, fish, eggs, ground nuts and seeds, and soya products such as tofu. (See page 50 of attached guide 'Eating Well: Packed Lunches for 1-4 year olds' guidance for examples of foods that are high in iron and zinc.
- **A good source of calcium, riboflavin and iodine** should be served every day. Whole or semi-skimmed cows' milk, cheeses, and unsweetened yoghurt and fromage frais are good sources of these nutrients. For children who do not have dairy products, an unsweetened fortified milk substitute such as soya milk or unsweetened fortified soya yoghurt can provide these nutrients. (For details of other dairy substitutes for children, see pages 27 and 35. For more examples of foods rich in these nutrients, see page 49 of attached guide 'Eating Well: Packed Lunches for 1-4 year olds'.
- **Make sure food for 1-4 year olds is low in salt.** Avoid foods designed for adults, take-aways and foods that are high in salt such as processed meat, salty snacks and biscuits, sauces and ready-prepared meals.
- **Children can drink water.** Children should be encouraged to drink tap water if they are thirsty, and fresh drinking water should be available at all times. Water quenches thirst does not spoil the appetite, and does not damage teeth.

Top tips for packing a lunch:

- Make sure your child's lunch is packed in a suitable lunch bag with your child's name clearly labelled
- It may be useful to have some small containers within the lunch bag to keep individual items separate. This will help keep food in good condition and presentable.
- You can wrap sandwiches in tinfoil or place in paper bags to keep them whole
- Your child will not require cutlery as we can provide this in the setting
- Think about the food you are packing and if it is easy for your child to eat
- Make sure lids on containers are secure so that food does not leak
- Try to include a variety of small amounts of different food that will tempt small appetites
- Please do not put in lots and lots of food - it can be overwhelming for your child, and they may feel under pressure to eat it all
- Consider packing foods that your child has consumed before at home so the foods will be familiar to them when they open their lunch box
- Remember - your child will not need a drinks container or cup - we will serve water and milk in the nursery setting

Keeping pack lunches cool:

Packed lunches should be kept in the fridge at home after they have been prepared, especially if it has been prepared the night before. Please ensure you place a cold pack in your child's pack lunch box to keep their food cool until lunch time. If your child arrives at the setting with a pack lunch without a cold pack, a staff member will either pop a cold pack in from the setting (if available) or will ensure the appropriate food is stored in the fridge, with your child's name clearly labelled on the food along with the date it arrived. We have limited storage room in our nursery fridge therefore it is preferred that you supply a cold pack.



Things to avoid in a packed lunch:

- Grapes (unless sliced into quarters lengthways) (choke risk)



- Sweets
- Chocolate bars
- Tea, coffee, cola, energy drinks or other drinks that contain caffeine
- Popcorn (choke risk)
- Chewing gum (choke risk)
- Marshmallows (choke risk)
- Raw jelly cubes (choke risk)
- Boiled sweets (choke risk)
- Nuts (choke risk)

We ask that parents refer to the attached guidance from Food Standards Agency on Early Years food choking hazards. This provides guidance on how to safely prepare and chop food for your child to minimise the risk of choking.

Meal Routine

HSCS 1.36: If I wish, I can share snacks and meals alongside other people using and working in the service if appropriate

If you provide your child with a pack lunch, they will still follow the same meal routine as their friends in nursery. Meals are served in the main nursery area and children can choose where they want to sit each day. A staff member supports each small table of children providing a good role model for positive eating behaviours. Staff tend to their designated tables of children and help them with second helpings and encouragement for children to clear away their dishes when they are finished.

Drinks

HSCS 1.39 "I can drink fresh water at all times"

There is a water fountain in the main nursery area and children are encouraged to use it. Children are offered a choice of milk and water during snack times. Water is offered during meals with milk being offered as part of pudding, depending on the menu.

You do not need to provide a separate drink for your child.

Early years food choking hazards

Below is a table of advice on key foods for care givers who are involved with preparing and serving food for babies and young children (under 5 years old)

Vegetable and fruits	Advice
Pips or stones in fruit	Always check beforehand and remove hard pips or stones from fruit.
Small fruits	Cut small round fruits like grapes, cherries, berries, strawberries and cherry tomatoes, into small pieces: cut lengthways and then again cut them in halves (quarters).
Large fruits and firm fruits	Cut large fruits like melon and firm fruits like apple into slices instead of small chunks. For very young children, consider grating or mashing firm fruits, or softening them up by steaming or simmering.
Vegetables	Cut vegetables like carrots, cucumber and celery into narrow batons. For very young children consider grating or mashing firm vegetables and legumes like butter beans, chickpeas and tofu, or softening them up by steaming or simmering.
Skin on fruit and vegetables	Consider removing the skin from fruit and vegetables, especially for very young children. Peeled fruit and vegetables can be swallowed more easily.
Cooking fruit and vegetables	Consider softening firm fruit and vegetables (such as carrots, broccoli, yam and apples) by steaming or simmering until soft. Serve cut into slices or narrow batons.
Meat and fish	Advice
Sausages and hot dogs	Cut sausages and hot dogs into short strips. Cut them in half and then lengthways or as thinly as possible. Peeling the skin off the sausages helps them to be swallowed more easily.
Meat or fish	Remove bones from meat or fish. Cut meat into strips as thinly as possible. Remove skin and fat from meat and fish, it will help the food pass smoothly down the throat.
Cheese	Advice
Grate or cut cheese	Grate or cut cheese into short strips. Cut lumps of cheese as narrow as possible.
Nuts and seeds	Advice
Chop or flake whole nuts	Chop or flake whole nuts, peanuts and seeds. Whole nuts should not be given to children under five years old.
Bread	Advice
White bread and other breads	White bread can form a ball shape with a dough-like texture at the back of a child's throat, if not chewed properly. Brown bread or toasted white bread are good alternatives. Cut bread, chapatis, naan bread and other breads into narrow strips.
Snacks and other foods	Advice
Popcorn	Do not give babies and young children popcorn.
Chewing gum and marshmallows	Do not give babies and young children chewing gum or marshmallows.
Peanut butter	Do not give babies and young children peanut butter on its own, only use as a spread.
Jelly cubes	Do not give babies and young children raw jelly cubes.
Boiled sweets and ice cubes	Do not give babies and young children boiled, hard, gooey, sticky or cough sweets, or ice cubes.
Raisins and other dried fruits	Do not give babies under the age of 1 whole raisins or dried fruits. Cut them into small pieces.

Make sure food is prepared appropriately for children under 5 years old, see: <https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/weaning/>

It is also advisable that care givers are familiar with how to respond to a choking incident, see: How to stop a child from choking: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/first-aid-and-safety/first-aid/how-to-stop-a-child-from-choking/> and How to resuscitate a child: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/first-aid-and-safety/first-aid/how-to-resuscitate-a-child/>

Staff Training

3.14 I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes.

All staff are trained in First Aid. There is a Choking Child Policy in the setting which all staff have read, and the Choking Child Procedure is displayed in the setting for staff to refer to. Staff are trained in Food Hygiene and Infection Prevention and Control.

Staff are aware of the supporting documents in relation to this policy including Setting the Table, Eating Well: Packed lunches for 1-4-year-olds and The Eatwell Plate guidance.

Staff training needs will be monitored by the EYSP.

This policy is written in conjunction with advice and guidance from the following National and Local Guidelines/Policies:

Care Inspectorate - Health and Social Care Standards

UNCRC

Education Scotland - How good is our early learning and childcare?

NHS Setting the table

First Steps Nutrition Trust Eating Well: Packed lunches for 1-4-year-olds

Review

This Pack Lunch Policy will be reviewed annually and updated when required. All staff to read and sign the policy.

Name	Date	Signature
Jacqueline Turner		
Marilyn Gordon		
Kara Hutcheon		
Susan Buchan		
Lisa Eden		
Caroline Weir		
Jessica Brannan		
Nicola Forbes		
Diane Meldrum		
Chelsea Watt		
Leanne Ralston		
Alina Gana		

Date of review: October 2023 (if not required sooner)