

# Little Explorers Preschool

## Healthy Packed Lunch Guidance for Parents

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At Little Explorers Preschool, we work in partnership with parents to support children's health and wellbeing. We ask that packed lunches follow the healthy eating guidelines below to ensure all children receive balanced and nutritious meals.

### What to Include in a Healthy Packed Lunch:

- A portion of starchy food: e.g. wholemeal bread, wraps, pasta, rice, or pitta.
- A source of protein: e.g. lean meats like chicken and turkey as well as tuna, eggs, hummus, beans, tofu or lentils.
- Dairy or dairy alternative: e.g. cheese, plain yoghurt (low sugar), or a dairy-free alternative (not rice based as you shouldn't give rice drinks, or rice-based alternatives, to children under 5 years old because they can contain high levels of arsenic, a toxic substance naturally found in the environment).
- At least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables: e.g. Apple slices, cucumber sticks, cherry tomatoes, grapes, banana, carrot sticks.
- Healthy extras: e.g. Mini oatcakes, boiled egg, homemade savoury muffins, rice cakes, cereal bars (without nuts).
- A healthy drink: e.g. water or milk.
- Pudding: If you wish to include a pudding in your child's packed lunch, we have a "One pudding policy" – This is one pudding which does not include fruit. If you wish to include choice for your child, we will allow the child to pick one pudding and return the other to their lunch bag/box to take home.

### Please Avoid:

- Sweets, chocolate bars, and fizzy/sweet sugary drinks.
- Foods high in sugar, salt, or saturated fats (e.g. crisps, cakes, sugary yoghurts).
- **\*\*Nuts or nut products\*\*** – we are a nut-free setting.
- Items that require reheating or refrigeration beyond a lunchbox with an ice pack.
- Sweets (Sweets/Haribo etc and lollipops) are not permitted.

### Helpful Tips:

- Use a cool bag with an ice pack to keep food fresh.
- Use small, child-friendly containers they can open independently.
- Get your child involved in choosing and preparing lunch items.
- Keep portion sizes small and manageable for your child's age.
- Label all containers, bottles, and lunchboxes clearly.
- Please make sure all foods like grapes, blueberries, sausages are cut up correctly (lengthways and in quarters) to reduce the risk of choking.

Packed lunches will be monitored informally, and any concerns will be discussed with you supportively. Thank you for helping us promote healthy habits and lifelong wellbeing for our Little Explorers!

Please see some examples of healthy lunch boxes below.

## Example Lunchbox Combinations

### Option 1

- Wholemeal sandwich with cheese and cucumber
- Apple slices
- Yoghurt (low sugar)
- Water

### Option 2

- Chicken pasta salad
- Carrot sticks and cherry tomatoes
- Orange segments
- Water

### Option 3

- Hummus with wholemeal pitta strips
- Cucumber sticks and red pepper
- Sliced pear
- Cheese batons
- Water

We understand every child is different, and we're happy to support you in meeting their needs within our healthy eating framework. If you have any questions or require support with lunch ideas for allergies, picky eating, or cultural preferences, please speak to a member of staff.