



## **Packed lunch policy**

At Tandridge Village Pre School we are committed to supporting every child's health, wellbeing, and development. In line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework (updated 2025), we have a duty to promote healthy eating, ensure food is safely prepared, and support good oral hygiene practices in all aspects of our provision, including during mealtimes.

This Packed Lunch Policy aims to guide families in providing healthy, balanced, and safe lunches for their children and to ensure the Pre School is following the statutory requirements surrounding healthy heating and oral hygiene.

The Pre School's Responsibility:

### **EYFS Statutory Requirements**

As outlined in Section 3 of the EYFS Statutory Framework (2025 update), early years providers must:

- Promote the good health of children, including healthy eating (3.45).
- Have regard to the Eat Better, Start Better guidelines developed by Public Health England.
- Ensure food provided is healthy, balanced, and nutritious.
- Promote oral health (3.47), for example by discouraging sugary food and drink and supporting routines that promote good dental care.

### **Oral Health Promotion**

We promote oral hygiene through:

- Discussions and stories about caring for our teeth.
- Limiting sugary foods and drinks.
- Providing fresh milk and water as the only drinks offered.
- Sharing NHS-approved guidance with parents and carers on brushing and dentist visits

The Pre-School will ensure that eating food from home and snack times is a sociable and safe experience. Our policy aims to enhance this by:

- Providing a dining environment that is appropriate and hygienic.
- Staff eating lunch with the children, ensuring staff members are positioned so every child's face can be seen.
- Staff holding a relevant and up-to date Paediatric First Aid Certificate.
- Ensuring good behaviour and consideration for others is maintained.
- Children will not be allowed to share food.
- Allergies and dietary requirements will be shared with parents. For example, we are a nut free setting.



- Providing fresh drinking water at all times. A choice of Milk or water will be provided at snack times.
- Promoting good oral hygiene habits through activities, education, and parental guidance.

**The Pre School is not responsible for providing:**

- Fridge space, so we request that food from home is in insulated bags with freezer blocks.
- The Pre School is not allowed to re-heat meals from home, all packed lunch food must be ready to eat without the need for heating.
- We recognise that some children may require special diets for medical, ethical or religious reasons that do not allow for standards to be met exactly. For example, a diabetic child may need to bring an emergency sweet snack to nursery. In these cases, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring the food from home is specific for the child's needs and a plan will be put in place to support this.

**We would like all Lunch Boxes to include:**

- At least one portion of fruit (e.g., small apple, orange, banana)
- At least one portion of vegetables (e.g., carrot/pepper sticks, cucumber, celery)
- Meat, fish or other source of non-dairy protein (e.g., chicken, turkey, ham, beef, pork, tuna, lentils, kidney beans, chickpeas, hummus and falafel)
- A starchy food such as any type of bread, pasta, rice, couscous, noodles, potatoes or other type of cereals. (For example, pitta bread, tortilla wraps, rice cakes, oat cakes)
- Dairy food such as milk, cheese or yoghurt
- 1 snack item such as crisps OR plain biscuits.

**Lunch Boxes must not include:**

- Confectionery such as chocolate bars, chocolate coated biscuits and sweets (alternatives include small cakes, shortbreads and flapjack or plain biscuits)
- Items that contain Nuts or nut products (i.e., peanut butter) due to allergies
- Fizzy drinks, squash or fresh juices.
- Drinks in glass bottles or ring-pull cans
- Lunch Boxes should not regularly include items that are high in fat or salt. For example: cooked sausages, sausage rolls, chipolatas, corned meat, individual meat pies.
- Foods that may pose a choking hazard, such as whole grapes, cherry tomatoes, popcorn, or hard raw vegetables not cut appropriately. PLEASE ENSURE THAT FOOD IS CUT UP CORRECTLY E.G. GRAPES, BLUEBERRIES, STRAWBERRIES AND CHERRY TOMATOES SHOULD BE CUT INTO QUARTERS NOT HALVES.



## Food Safety for Under 5s

To meet food safety and choking prevention guidance for children under 5 (see below), please ensure that:

- Grapes, cherry tomatoes, and similar foods are cut lengthways into quarters.
- Meat items such as sausages, cooked meat are cut into thin strips not circles.
- Hard foods (e.g. apples, carrots) are grated, thinly sliced, or steamed if needed.
- Food is stored in a clean, insulated lunch box with an ice pack.
- Items requiring refrigeration (e.g. yoghurt, cheese) are packed with appropriate cooling.

## 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.

### Allergies and Special Diets

Please inform us of any dietary requirements or allergies. We are a nut-free setting and take allergies seriously; please read all labels carefully before including items in your child's lunch box.

### Monitoring and Support

Staff have a duty to ensure this policy is being adhered to and this is something that the setting is judged on when inspected. Therefore, staff will check lunch boxes to ensure they meet our policy. If any items are not in line with our guidelines, we will return them with a friendly note and offer support in finding suitable alternatives. Our aim is to work collaboratively with families, not to judge or penalise.

### Working Together

We appreciate your support in helping to give your child the best start in life. Establishing good eating and hygiene habits now lays the foundation for a lifetime of health and wellbeing.

For further guidance, please refer to:

EYFS Statutory Framework (2025 update) – available at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

NHS Start4Life: [www.nhs.uk/start4life](http://www.nhs.uk/start4life)

Food Standards Agency – Advice on feeding children under 5



This policy has been adopted by Tandridge Village Pre-School Committee.

Signed on behalf of the Pre-School:

Date:

This policy will be reviewed: Spring 2027

(Unless there is a change in legislation or with direct guidance from an educational body)

Staff Signatures:

Date: