

What is the Lunch Club and How Does it Work?

Our lunch club runs from 12pm-12.45pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesday and Thursdays throughout the term. You provide your child with a healthy packed lunch, or buy into our hot meals service, and we do the rest. For more information on hot meals, please contact ask a member of staff. The aim of our lunch club is to provide the opportunity for the children to enjoy a healthy packed lunch whilst socialising with their peers. It is also a valuable opportunity to talk to the children about, and model, good table manners and what it means to be healthy and what healthy foods and drinks are.

The children wash their hands and then gather together at the table. We then say a prayer, either child led or through props such as our 'prayer dice'. The children then open up their lunch boxes and lay the contents out onto a plate to see what healthy goodies are inside.

The children all sit round the table together, with an adult, which is laid with a centre piece and tissues for the children to use if needed, independently. There is a separate area to the side of the children where they can help themselves to water if they wish, and there are also two food waste containers for them to use for their waste. This encourages the children to think about non-food and food waste, looking at the different types of packaging. Once the children have finished their lunch they wash up their own plates and put anything back in their lunchbox that they haven't started or any empty containers. If there is time, there is then opportunity for the children to play from a small selection of toys or books.

We do have some lunch club rules that the children will learn as they take part. These are as follows:

- Ⓢ We wash our hands before we eat.
- Ⓢ Sit up straight in your chair
- Ⓢ We eat our own food.
- Ⓢ Try a little bit of everything, even if you don't like it
- Ⓢ We keep our mouths closed when we have food in them.
- Ⓢ If we cannot reach something, we ask someone to pass it to us.
- Ⓢ We say please and thank you.
- Ⓢ We throw our rubbish in the bin.
- Ⓢ We wash up own plates and pack away our things.
- Ⓢ We help the grownups at home to choose healthy foods for our lunch.

Practical Notes for Parents/Carers

Please read the following information carefully and take this into account when sending your child to our lunch club.

- Ⓢ Please ensure your child's lunch box is **clearly labelled**.
- Ⓢ Please provide a **cool block** in your child's lunch everyday - we do not have the facilities to keep them cold in the fridge.

- Ⓢ Please use **little Tupperware containers** for prepared foods. We are trying to encourage the children to think about the rubbish we generate and recycling waste. So please do not use clingfilm, not least because it can be a potential choking hazard.
- Ⓢ We cannot allow the children to share the food they bring in from home due to the number of food allergies that there are. They have plenty of other opportunities to share throughout a pre-school session.
- Ⓢ Staff will encourage your child to try everything that you have provided and will watch that they are eating a sufficient amount. We will inform you if they haven't eaten very much or if we had to throw something away that wasn't actually eaten. That way you will get a true picture of how much they have actually consumed.
- Ⓢ Please send in a **named flannel** so your child can wipe their face after eating.
- Ⓢ Sweets, chocolate, fizzy and squash juice drinks are not permitted.
- Ⓢ Please be mindful of safety when preparing your child's lunch. Foods, such as grapes, are safer cut in half lengthways to minimise choking risks.
- Ⓢ **We are a nut free zone.**



Planning a Healthy Packed Lunch

Why is it important to plan a healthy packed lunch?

Increased energy - When young bodies eat healthy foods, they have increased energy for both mental and physical work and play. This extra energy enables them to cope with life's demands.

Academic performance - You may have heard the caption "healthy body - healthy mind". Well this is certainly true in terms of healthy eating as numerous studies have demonstrated a link between good nutrition and a positive impact on academic performance.

Obesity prevention - The best defence against excessive weight gain is making healthy eating choices and being physically active. Research has shown that children and adolescents that become overweight have a greater tendency to be overweight as adults. This sets them up for a life time struggle both mentally and physically, with excess weight-related health issues.

Enhanced self esteem and confidence - Shopping with your child for the ingredients for their packed lunch includes them in the process right from the start and gives them a sense of responsibility and joint ownership of their health. Children who make healthy food choices and see the benefits of that choice will gain confidence in their decision-making skills. They will also be able to make the right choice for themselves when they are out with their friends and in a social setting. Additionally their self-esteem is raised if they have a positive body image.

How Can I Make it More Interesting for My Child?

When planning your child's packed lunches, and indeed other meals, why not think about the following:

Colour - Bearing in mind that children are visually stimulated it is a good idea to have brightly naturally coloured foods. This could include mixed peppers as garnish or finely diced or cubed as part of a pasta or noodle dish and placed in a small plastic container. A variety of coloured vegetables in small portions can look attractive.

Fruit salads are pleasant on the eyes if you have a variety of their favourite fruits. This could include tangerines, green or red apple, strawberries, peaches, plums or kiwi and other exotic fruits like mango pieces if they have the taste for it. You may include a naturally sweetened yoghurt if this improves the taste or encourages the child to eat the fruits.

Encourage as much fruits and vegetables as possible in a form that is most palatable and attractive for your child. Remember both fruits and vegetables provide vitamins, minerals and fibre. Additionally, eating fruits and vegetables in place of too much starch or sugary foods is healthier for body weight and dental health and can help develop good eating patterns into adult life. Most importantly, a daily intake of fruit and vegetables can reduce the chance of developing coronary disease and many cancers, particularly bowel cancer.

Shape - For younger children it will be exciting to have small triangular sandwiches, star shaped vegetables or carrot sticks, cubed fruits or round melon balls.

Size - Varying the size of food types in the lunch box can add interest. Use both small and large food items in the lunch box. This could include a whole banana or whole apple, half a pear or variety of savouries of different sizes including whole wheat pizza strips alongside a moderate salad. Using thickly sliced bread for sandwiches is quite filling and will reduce the need for snacking.

Texture - Wholewheat bread and savouries are more filling and the additional texture and fibre is good for healthy bowels. Using different textures may be more interesting for the adventurous eater. This could include adding couscous or wheat based croutons to salad.

Choice - Allow your child the flexibility to choose foods that they like within the parameters that you have set until they have the knowledge about wholesome foods and can make healthy choices for themselves.

Rather than choosing what your child will eat for the week, include them in the decision-making. This will enable them to take more interest in their packed lunch and enhance the enjoyment of eating it!



Children bring their own healthy packed lunch or you can sign them up to our hot meals.

We encourage good table manner, independence and social skills.

Gives you an extra 45 minutes at the end of the session, saves you the mess(!) and prevents hungry children on the way home!

