3.12 Packed Lunch Policy

Policy Statement

At Tywardreath Pre-School Playgroup we are committed to promoting healthy eating and ensuring food safety in accordance with:

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework
- Health and Safety regulations including food hygiene regulations and safe storage practices
- The DFE's Help for Early Years
- The NHS Children's food: safety and hygiene

We aim to support children's health, development, and well-being by encouraging balanced, nutritious meals and maintaining a safe and inclusive environment for all dietary needs.

This policy is in place to:

- Provide guidelines for parents/carers on the expectations for packed lunches brought from home
- Ensure packed lunches brought from home provide children with healthy, balanced and nutritious food, which meets their needs to be physically active, to learn, grow well, and be healthy.
- Comply with food hygiene and safety regulations.
- Meet EYFS requirements for nutrition, independence and self-care.
- Protect children with allergies and dietary needs.

Packed Lunch Guidelines

Drink, such as water and milk, will be available for your child during the day. If providing a drink, only water, milk or unsweetened calcium enriched dairy alternative should be given

Children have a small stomach so please make sure that portion sizes are the right size for your child Food in packed lunches should be provided in manageable pieces and is not a choking hazard for your child

A healthier packed lunch contains a portion of one of the four main food groups:

- **One or two portions of starchy foods:** Provide variety across the week and at least one wholegrain starchy food each week. This includes bread, wraps, chapatti, bagels, pasta, rice, noodles, couscous or potatoes. This should form part of the main meal and can be part of the dessert
- **At least one portion of vegetables and/or one portion of fruit:** Provide a variety of different vegetables and fruit each week. This includes carrot, cucumber, celery stick, chopped tomato and fresh, tinned, frozen, dried fruit such as sliced apple, chopped grapes, raisins (but remember, dried fruit is not suitable as a snack). Aim for your child to have 5 different vegetables and fruit across the day

- **One portion of beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins:** Provide a variety of different foods each week. This includes kidney beans, chickpeas (hummus), lentils (dahl), tofu, quorn, egg, sliced meat or poultry in sandwiches
- **One portion of dairy or an unsweetened calcium enriched alternative:** This includes cheese in a sandwich, milk to drink, unsweetened yoghurt or fromage frais, rice or semolina pudding

Items to avoid:
Parents/Carers should avoid:
❌ Sugary foods (chocolate and sweets, such as chocolate buttons, chocolate biscuit, cereal bar, processed dried fruit product).
❌ Crisps and processed snacks which are high in salt or fat (snack items such as crisps, puffs, pulse or grain-based crisps, coated or flavoured dried vegetables).
❌ Sugary drinks (fizzy drinks, squash, energy drinks).
❌ Nuts or nut-based products (strictly prohibited due to allergies).

Safe Storage & Handling of Packed Lunches
To ensure compliance with food safety:

- All packed lunches must be provided in a clearly labelled, insulated lunchbox.
- Parents/Carers are advised to/required to bring packed lunches in suitable lunch boxes which should include ice packs to keep perishable food fresh.
- Refrigeration is not available, therefore parents/carers should pack food that remains safe at room temperature. We will provide a storage area for packed lunch bags.
- We are unable to heat/ re-heat food for food hygiene purposes. However, children can bring hot food in a suitable thermos flask or container.
- Staff will monitor lunches for compliance with food safety and healthy eating standards.
- Any unsafe or unsuitable food will be returned home, and parents/carers will be informed.
- Children are only allowed to eat their OWN food
- We will ensure that even though children have brought in a packed lunch they will eat with their peers

Waste and Disposal
Staff will, within reason, send any uneaten packed lunch food items back home. This is so that parents/carers can also monitor what their child has consumed during the day and then raise any concerns over their child's food intake with us.

Parental Notification (Food Allergies)

- Parents/Carers must notify the setting in writing of any food allergies, intolerances, or dietary requirements. We recognise that some children may require a special diet. In this case, parents/carers should notify the setting.
- Packed lunches should be placed on the lunch trolley at drop-off to ensure compliance with our policy.
- Staff may inspect lunchboxes to ensure adherence to food safety and allergy guidelines

Allergy & Food Safety Policy Compliance

- We operate a **STRICT NO-NUT POLICY**—any nut-based products will be removed and returned to parents.
- All food must be safely prepared and stored at home following food hygiene guidelines.
- Parents/Carers must ensure food is fresh and appropriate for their child's dietary needs.

- Any concerns about a child's diet or food safety will be discussed with parents/carers.

Support for Parent/Carers
If you need support in providing a healthy packed lunch, we are happy to offer guidance and resources. Please speak to a member of staff if you require any assistance.

You can also access guidance and ideas by visiting the following websites:
https://www.firststepsnutrition.org/eating-well-early-years
https://healthforunder5s.co.uk/sections/preschool/preparing-the-perfect-packed-lunch/

Parental Declaration
I, , confirm that:
✓ I understand and agree to follow the Packed Lunch Policy at Tywardreath Pre-School Playgroup.
✓ I will not include any nut-based products or high-risk foods in my child's packed lunch.
✓ I will ensure all food is safe, fresh, and appropriate for my child.

Parent/Carer Signature: _____ Date: _____ Child's Name:_____

Review & Compliance
This policy is reviewed annually or as necessary to ensure that it remains in line with EYFS, Ofsted, and food hygiene requirements and guidance.

Parents/Carers will receive a copy of this policy and reminders as needed.