

Healthy Eating Policy

“Children’s food preferences and eating habits are formed early in life with consequences for a range of health and development outcomes in later life. It is therefore important that the food offered in early years settings provides appropriate amounts of energy and nutrients and encourages the development of healthy eating habits in young children” (Public Health England, 2017).

At Huntington Under 5’s Preschool we are committed to providing healthy, nutritious, tasty food and drinks for all children. The policy applies to all packed lunches and snack consumed within Preschool.

We always practice a policy where all children's dietary needs are catered for and we are sensitive to the dietary requirement for all cultural, religious and individual preferences. Parents/carers provide information as part of the registration process about any special dietary requirements or allergies the child has along with any preferences. This information is shared with the manager and staff to safeguard their health and meet as far as possible their preferences. The special dietary requirements/allergies form is made available to all so all staff who are preparing and serving food have up to date information on the children’s needs.

Huntington Under 5’s Preschool and its staff are committed to embracing the religious and cultural diversity of families who use our preschool and we will work with parents/carers to ensure that any dietary requirements are met at all times. It is our policy to introduce children to different cultural and religious festivals and events through different types of food and drink and discuss these with the children as well as foods so children have a wide knowledge of foods and tastes.

Staff who handle or prepare food will have up to date Food Safety in Catering Certificates and are fully trained in food storage, preparation, and food safety. Staff follow the hygiene procedures laid out in our Health & Safety Policy when preparing food and drink.

Snack menu: At Huntington Under 5’s Preschool we recognise the importance of healthy eating and a balanced and nutritious diet, which is why we endeavour to make a variety of foods available. Snack menus for each half term are shared with parents/carers on our notice board and website, along with allergy information. Milk and water are offered at snack and mealtimes and fresh drinking water is available at all times.

Special Diets and allergies: We ask parents/carers to be aware of nut and other allergies. For this reason pupils are not permitted to swap food items. As some children at Preschool may have nut allergies we ask parents to refrain from including nuts or peanut butter in their children’s lunch boxes.

Packed Lunch Containers: We ask that parents/carers provide a packed lunch container where food items can be stored securely and appropriately until the lunch time period. As fridge space is limited we advise the packed lunches are in insulated bags, preferably with freezer blocks to keep food cool, especially in the summer months.

Birthdays and other celebrations: We welcome cakes and sweets being brought in for the children by their peers to celebrate birthdays or any other celebrations. If these are brought into Preschool to share amongst the children we will give them out at the end of the session, and leave it to the discretion of the parent/carer.

Healthy packed lunches: Packed lunches should follow national guidance for early years' nutrition and health, including guidance on food choices and portion sizes.

Guidance on healthy packed lunches can be found online at:

- NHS: Change4life - "Healthier lunchboxes"
- NHS: Live well – "The Eatwell Guide"
- Children's Food Trust

Packed lunches should include:

- **A portion of starchy carbohydrates** – i.e. bread, wraps, potatoes, rice, pasta, couscous, pitta bread, naan bread, bagels, noodles, rice crackers, breadsticks, savoury crackers.
- **A portion of fruit and/or a vegetable** – can be fresh, frozen, canned or dried.
- **A portion of protein** – i.e. beans, pulses, meat, fish, eggs, tofu, chickpeas, hummus.
- **A portion of dairy or dairy alternative** – i.e. yoghurt, cheese, milk drink.
- **A healthy drink** – water, milk, diluted fruit juice (half juice, half water).

Desserts, cakes, biscuits and crisps are high in saturated fat, sugar and salt. Too much of these can be harmful to health, therefore they should be limited and given in small amounts, with healthier alternatives offered instead. Confectionary, such as chocolate bars and sweets, must not be included. Processed meat and pastry, such as sausages, sausage rolls and pasties, should only be included occasionally. Drinks should be one of the healthy options above. Sugary/fizzy drinks must not be included.

Working with parents and carers: We hope that all parents and carers will support this packed lunch and snack policy. We will offer advice and guidance to parents and carers on packed lunches and snack if required.

Updated April 2018