



## Packed Lunch Guidance

At Clare House Nursery, we work in partnership with families to encourage healthy eating habits and positive relationships with food from an early age. To support children's nutrition, independence and wellbeing, we ask that packed lunches contain a balanced selection of healthy foods.

We recommend your child's lunchbox contains:

A savoury item

- Sandwich, wrap, crackers with a savoury topping or other savoury option.
- Baby food pouches will be decanted into a bowl and babies will be encouraged to self-feed using a spoon where developmentally appropriate.

Fresh fruit or vegetables

- A piece of fresh fruit or a selection of prepared vegetables.

One yoghurt (pot)

- We provide spoons for all children.
- Please provide yoghurts in pots where possible. Squeezy yoghurt tubes will be decanted into a bowl to encourage independent feeding and reduce waste.

Fruit pouch (optional)

- Fresh fruit is always the preferred option.
- If a fruit pouch is provided, it will be served in a bowl with a spoon.
- Research has shown that some fruit pouches contain high levels of naturally occurring sugars. Offering fresh fruit helps children experience a wider variety of textures, flavours and chewing skills.

One packet of crisps (optional)

- Where larger packets are provided (for example Pom Bears, Wotsits or Rabbit crisps), parents may wish to divide them over two days, particularly for younger children.

One small biscuit or cake

- A small treat may be included as part of a balanced lunch.

## Supporting Babies During Weaning

If your child is beginning their weaning journey, we will work closely with you to ensure food is introduced safely and at a pace that meets your child's individual needs.

Our practitioners are happy to offer advice and support. Please speak to a member of the Daisy Room team if you would like guidance.

## Please Do Not Include

For the safety and wellbeing of all children, packed lunches must not contain:

- Nuts or nut products (including peanut butter, other nut butters and hazelnut chocolate spreads)
- Fizzy drinks, sugary drinks or fruit shoots
- Sweets or confectionery
- Chocolate spread sandwiches
- Chewing gum
- Popcorn (sweet, salted or flavoured)
- Whole round foods such as grapes, blueberries, cherries, strawberries or cherry tomatoes that have not been cut appropriately
- Fruit winders or rolled fruit strips, as these present a choking risk
- Hard sweets or marshmallows

## Helping Keep Children Safe

To reduce the risk of choking, we ask families to prepare food in line with Food Standards Agency guidance before bringing it to nursery.

Please remember to:

- Remove stones and pips from fruit.
- Cut grapes, blueberries, strawberries, cherries and cherry tomatoes lengthways into quarters.
- Slice melon, apple and raw carrot into thin slices or batons.
- Soften hard fruit and vegetables for younger babies where appropriate.
- Remove skins from sausages and cut into thin strips rather than chunks.
- Remove all bones from meat and fish.
- Cut cheese into thin strips rather than cubes.
- Do not send whole nuts or whole seeds for children under five years.
- Do not include popcorn, marshmallows or hard sweets.

Thank you for helping us keep every child safe.

## Choosing the Right Lunchbox

Please clearly label your child's lunchbox with their name.

We recommend using a plastic lunchbox with a detachable lid.

This style of lunchbox:

- Supports children's independence by making it easier to open and close independently.
- Fits more efficiently into our limited fridge space.
- Stacks neatly for safe storage.
- Is easier for practitioners to organise and return to children.

Over many years we have found that larger fabric lunch bags and lunchboxes with attached, folding lids can be more difficult for young children to manage independently and take up considerably more space on children's tables.

Thank you for supporting us in creating safe, healthy and enjoyable mealtimes for every child.

