



Ditton Church Pre-School



Food, Nutrition and Healthy Lunchbox Policy

Policy Statement

Ditton Church Pre-School recognises that mealtimes are a vital part of each child's day, providing opportunities for social interaction, learning and the development of lifelong healthy habits. We are committed to providing nutritious, balanced meals, snacks and drinks that support the health and well-being of every child in line with the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework.

Aims

- To ensure all food and drink provided meets the nutritional needs of children.
- To promote positive attitudes towards healthy eating and food choices.
- To accommodate all children's dietary requirements, including allergies, intolerances, religious or cultural preferences and parental wishes.
- To support the development of children's independence, confidence and social skills during mealtimes.

Implementation

We commit to the following actions:

1. Nutritional Quality

- All food and drink provided at the setting is healthy, balanced, and nutritious, in accordance with the EYFS framework and current national nutrition guidelines for early years.
- We avoid foods high in saturated fats, sugars, salt and artificial additives or colourings.
- Snacks and meals are planned in advance and include a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, protein sources and dairy products.



- Fresh drinking water is available and accessible at all times throughout the session.

2. Special Dietary Requirements

- We collect detailed information from parents before a child starts, including any dietary needs, allergies, intolerances or medical conditions.
- Where relevant, parents must complete a care plan outlining specific health or dietary needs.
- All dietary information is recorded in children's files and displayed discreetly in staff-only areas for easy reference.
- We operate a strict no-nut policy and take heightened precautions for children with severe allergies.

3. Inclusion and Cultural Awareness

- We reflect the diverse backgrounds of our children through our menu planning, offering a range of familiar and new foods from different cultures.
- Children's individual diets are respected without drawing undue attention to differences, avoiding the use of labels.
- Children are taught about food by growing food in our Pre-School allotment, which they can help to plant, water, harvest, prepare and taste with their peers. We also talk to the children about oral health and foods that can cause tooth decay and food and drink which helps to protect our teeth.

4. Meal Environment

- Meals and snack times are structured as social learning experiences where children and staff eat together.
- Children are encouraged to develop independence by making food choices, serving themselves and clearing away when finished.
- Staff model good eating habits and engage children in conversations about healthy lifestyles and the importance of nutritious food.

5. Snack Time

Pre-school provide a snack and a drink for children mid-morning. We offer a choice of semi skimmed milk or water to drink. Children are also welcome to bring their own, filled water bottle.

Our snack menu will be displayed for parents to see and the menu will be changed termly. The menu will include items from the four main food groups; starchy carbohydrates, protein, dairy and fruit and vegetables.



6. Preschool Healthy Lunchbox policy

Introduction:

At Ditton Church Preschool, we are committed to promoting healthy eating habits in line with the *Implementing Early Years Menu* guidelines. A well-balanced lunchbox supports children's growth, development and learning. This policy outlines our expectations for packed lunches and provides guidance for parents.

- For children who bring packed lunches, parents are encouraged to provide a healthy, balanced meal and to avoid products containing nuts and yoghurts in 'sucky pouches'. Sucky yoghurts can harm oral health, primarily due to their high sugar content and prolonged contact with teeth, which increases the risk of tooth decay. However, plain, unsweetened yogurt is beneficial for teeth and therefore encouraged with use of a spoon.
- We encourage children's autonomy with eating so that they can choose what foods they eat. For parents providing packed lunch we ask parents to include items from the four food groups: starchy carbohydrates, protein, dairy and fruit and vegetables and to only include one small treat ie: crisps/cake.
 - We provide guidance to parents on nutritious lunchbox ideas.

1. Healthy Lunchbox Guidelines

A healthy lunchbox should include:

- **Fruits and vegetables** – Fresh, dried, or canned in natural juice
- **Starchy carbohydrates** – Wholemeal or white bread, wraps, pasta, or rice
- **Protein sources** – Lean meats, fish, eggs, beans, or dairy
- **Dairy** – Milk, yoghurt, or cheese
- **Water** – The preferred drink choice

2. Foods to Avoid

To support healthy eating, we request that the following items are not included in lunchboxes:

- Sugary drinks
- Sucky yoghurts
- Fruit pouches
- Sweets
- These items can harm oral health, primarily due to their high sugar content and prolonged contact with teeth, which increases the risk of tooth decay. However, plain, unsweetened yogurt is beneficial for teeth and therefore encouraged with use of a spoon.

3. Allergy and Safety Considerations

- We are a **nut-free preschool** to protect children with allergies.
- Food should be cut appropriately to reduce choking risks (e.g., grapes halved lengthways).



- Reusable containers are encouraged to reduce waste.

4. Supporting Parents

- We provide resources and meal ideas to assist parents.
- Staff are available to answer questions about healthy lunch options.

5. Monitoring and Encouragement

- Lunchboxes will be regularly monitored to ensure that they are meeting the guidelines outlined above. This is to support your child's growth and development. Our staff are happy to support any families with lunchbox ideas and resources.
- Staff will sit with children at mealtimes to role model good eating habits and facilitate the social aspect of mealtimes so that children look forward to their meals. Children learn best through observation, so good eaters will be placed next to children who may be more cautious around food, particularly new foods.
- Children will be encouraged to try a variety of healthy foods.

Thank you for supporting our commitment to a healthy preschool environment. If you have any questions, please speak to a member of staff.

7. Allergy and Cross-Contamination Protocol

- We maintain strict procedures to prevent cross-contamination of allergens.
- Children are not allowed to share or swap food.
- Staff are trained in food safety and allergy awareness.

8. Birthdays and Celebrations

We celebrate birthdays in fun, inclusive ways (ie: singing, cards).

To support healthy eating, we encourage families not to send in cakes, sweets or party bags. Families are welcome to contribute non-food items (stickers, a book, bubbles).

If sweets are brought in they will be handed out when children go home so parents can choose whether or not to give them to their child.

Cultural and religious food traditions will be respected and included where safe and appropriate.

9. Staff Training

- All staff involved in food preparation or supervision have completed relevant Local Authority Food Safety Training or equivalent in-house training.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to any updated EYFS nutritional guidance. Feedback from staff, parents and children will inform improvements.



For more information please see links below

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-guidelines-and-food-labels/the-eatwell-guide/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/best-start-in-life/baby/weaning/>

<https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/nutrition/children-aged-one-to-five-guidance>

<https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/>

<https://family.kentcht.nhs.uk>

<https://www.firststepsnutrition.org/packed-lunches-resource>

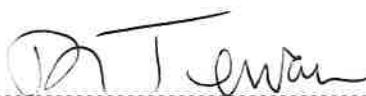
This policy was adopted by the:

Ditton Church Pre-School Management
Committee

Date:

November 2025

**Signed on behalf of the Management
Committee:**


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Role of signatory:

Chair of Management Committee

Next review date:

November 2026