



Packed Lunch Policy

Purpose

At West Green Playgroup, we recognise that mealtimes are important social and developmental opportunities for young children. While we do not prepare or provide cooked meals on-site, we support parents and carers in providing nutritious, balanced packed lunches. This policy outlines our expectations and procedures to promote healthy eating, ensure food safety, and support children's well-being.

Healthy Eating Guidelines

We encourage all families to provide a **healthy and balanced packed lunch**, following NHS guidance. A nutritious lunch may include:

- A **starchy food** (e.g. bread, pasta, rice, or potatoes)
- A source of **protein** (e.g. meat, fish, eggs, beans, or hummus)
- A **dairy item** or suitable alternative (e.g. cheese, yogurt)
- At least **one portion of fruit** and **one portion of vegetables**
- **Water or milk** as the preferred drink

We kindly ask parents to **avoid including**:

- Fizzy drinks, squash, or fruit juices
 - Sweets, chocolate bars, or confectionery
 - Crisps or other high-salt snacks
 - Nuts or nut-containing products (due to allergy risks)
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Allergy Awareness & Food Safety

Food provided from home will be stored, handled and served in line with each child's individual needs, developmental stage and any agreed care or allergy plan. Staff will understand and consistently apply the arrangements for managing allergies, food intolerances, dietary requirements and choking risks.

- **West Green Playgroup is a nut-free setting.** Please ensure packed lunches do not contain nuts or nut-based spreads.
- All packed lunches are **checked upon arrival** for potential allergens or choking risks. If needed, we may return or replace inappropriate items.
- To reduce the risk of choking, please avoid whole grapes, cherry tomatoes, or similar-sized foods unless they are **cut lengthwise** into small pieces. Hard foods like raw carrot sticks should be **thinly sliced**.
- Parents are advised to use **clearly labelled insulated lunch bags** with ice packs to maintain food freshness and safety, as we do not have refrigeration for lunchboxes.
- If you wish to provide your child with a **warm lunch**, please use a **child-safe thermos flask**. We are unable to reheat food on site.
- We gather information on children's **dietary needs and allergies** during registration. Please notify us of any updates promptly.
- Where a child requires support with introducing solid foods because of their age, individual needs or developmental stage, arrangements will be agreed with their parents or carers. We will follow the NHS Best Start in Life weaning guidance where relevant: <https://www.nhs.uk/best-start-in-life/baby/weaning/>

Mealtime Environment

We aim to create a calm, inclusive, and social atmosphere during mealtimes:

- Children are appropriately supervised while eating and drinking, including being within the sight and hearing of staff, and are supported to eat and drink safely to minimise the risk of choking.
- Staff **sit with children**, model positive behaviour, and encourage conversation and good manners.

- Children are encouraged to eat at their own pace and try a variety of foods without pressure.
- Where cultural dietary needs exist, we are respectful and inclusive in our approach.

Celebrations and Treats

We celebrate special occasions (e.g. birthdays) in ways that support our healthy eating ethos. If parents wish to contribute food for celebrations, we ask that:

- All items are **store-bought and labelled** with ingredients.
 - You discuss your plans with us in advance so we can manage allergies and dietary restrictions safely.
 - Non-food celebrations (e.g. favourite songs, special activities, birthday badges) are encouraged as healthy, inclusive alternatives.
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Parental Support

We provide guidance and resources to support parents in making informed lunch choices, including:

- Signposting to NHS advice: [Healthier Lunchboxes – NHS](#)
- Opportunities to discuss concerns or ideas with staff

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the Playgroup	Date for review
<i>September 2026</i>		<i>September 2027</i>