Jellyfish
Packed Lunches

Healthy eating for children under five years old is crucial for their growth and physical development. These early years can also influence their habits and attitudes for later in adult life. As a setting we aim to promote healthy eating and support children to develop positive healthy habits and attitudes from the very beginning.

At Buxton Infant School, we offer the option for children to bring a packed lunch to eat at lunchtime as an alternative to school meals. Reflecting on our aim stated above to promote health eating, please read the information below regarding packed lunches.

What to include in a packed lunch:



A portion of starchy food

e.g. bread, wraps, pitta bread, cooked pasta, naan bread, couscous. Wholemeal (or wholegrain) versions often contain more nutrients and fibre, making them an even healthier option.

White bread is known to be a choking hazard for children under 5.

A portion of protein

e.g. cooked sliced meats, fish, boiled eggs, tofu, chickpeas or other pulses (safe to be consumed cold).





At least one portion of fruit and/or vegetables

e.g. vegetable sticks – carrot, cucumber, pepper, celery, sweetcorn, pulses and beans (safe to be consumed cold), apples, berries, melon, grapes, oranges, the list is endless!

This can be fresh, dried, canned – they all count towards five-a-day!

A portion of milk or dairy foods (or dairy alternatives)

e.g. yoghurts, fromage frais, cheese, or similar dairy alternatives.



At Buxton Infant School Nursery, we provide water to drink at mealtimes and politely request that if you wish to send in a drink from home that you only send water.

This decision is based upon the recommendation from the following guidance:

https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/safeguarding-and-welfare/food-safety#why-is-food-safety-so-important-for-young-children

Within the guidance it states:

"Provide only fresh tap water and plain milk for children to drink. Fruit juice, smoothies, squash, fizzy drinks and flavoured milk, even when diluted, contain lots of sugar and can cause tooth decay. Diet or reduced-sugar drinks are not recommended for babies and toddlers either."

We aim to promote 'enjoying' all foods and of course we all enjoy a sweet treat or a savoury snack from time to time; these just need to be in moderation as often they can contain a high level of unhealthy saturated fats, salts and sugars.

The good food groups suggested earlier don't need to be provided in isolation, get creative – a cheese and cucumber wholemeal bread sandwich helps to provide 3 of the groups. Or some yoghurt and strawberries will provide another two and can also be that sweet treat for afterwards.

Other important packed lunch information:

- Please do not send in juice, fizzy or any carbonated drink.
- Please do not send in sweets, chocolate, or confectionary.
- Please do not send nuts or popcorn.
- Please ensure any grapes, cherry tomatoes and berries are all sliced length ways to reduce choking hazards. We also recommend slicing sausages length ways.
- Please provide an appropriate lunch box/bag; preferably insulated, with an ice pack to keep your child's lunch cold. Don't forget to clearly name it. There's also an image included with top tips for keeping lunchboxes/bags clean and safe.

Portion Size

Portion size is also a very important factor when promoting healthy eating. As we know children are always on the go! To keep up with this they have a high energy requirement for their size.

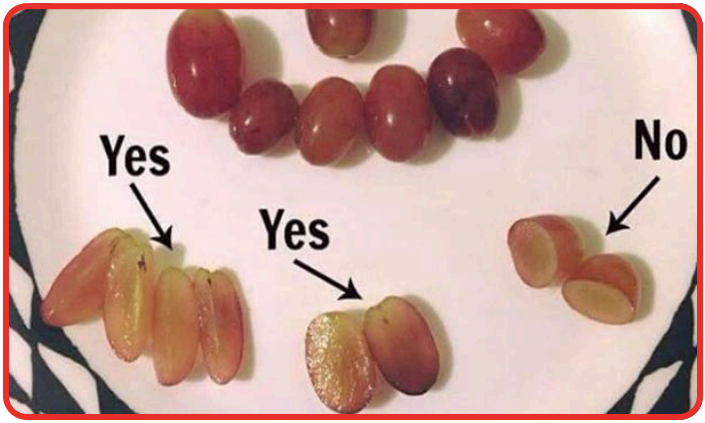
However also due to their size they often will not consume big meals, they have smaller tummies and packed lunches need to be considerate towards this. Large portion sizes and/or excessive choices of what to eat can overwhelm children at mealtimes and this can lead to unhealthy attitudes towards eating and food.



At nursery we provide a snack during mid-morning. It is optional, but they are encouraged to try some, or to at the very least to have a drink. This is alongside meals such as breakfast and lunch, during which children have the opportunity to refuel the energy level they require.

How to Safely Cut Grapes , Berries and Cherry Tomatoes

Please ensure any spherical food such as grapes, berries and cherry tomatoes are sliced length ways to reduce the risk of choking. We would also recommend slicing sausages lengthways.



If you require further advice regarding healthy eating, you can contact your Health Visitor or visit www.henry.org.uk which has lots of useful information such as guidance, recipes and advice on creating healthy attitudes around food.