John Fletcher of Madeley Primary School

EYFS Lunchbox Policy

Approved by:	**Headteacher**	**Stacey Cross**
Adopted by Governors	**October 2025**	
Last reviewed on:	**October 2025**	
Next review due by:	**September 2026**	

Contents:

1. Statement of intent
2. Legal framework
3. Roles and responsibilities
4. What a healthy lunch box should include
5. Foods to avoid
6. Food safety guidelines
7. Dietary needs and inclusion
8. How the setting will support healthy choices
9. Monitoring and review

Statement of intent

At John Fletcher of Madeley Primary School, we are committed to helping you foster a positive approach to health and nutrition from the very beginning of your child's educational journey. This policy has been created with your child's wellbeing at its heart and aims to support you in creating a consistent and nurturing environment that encourages healthy eating.

This policy is here to help you:

- Promote Healthy, Balanced Eating Habits from an Early Age – Early childhood is a vital time for developing lifelong eating habits. Through this policy, we want to support you in helping your child understand what makes a nutritious meal and to enjoy a wide variety of foods. By promoting and modelling healthy choices, we work together to help your child learn to make informed decisions about what they eat.

- Provide Nutritious and Appropriate Food for Your Child – Staff at this setting know how important it is to support every child's nutrition and dietary needs. This policy includes practical guidance to help parents prepare healthy lunch boxes that meet their child's needs throughout the day.

- Stay Aligned with Government Guidance and Safeguarding Practices – This policy reflects current UK government legislation and statutory guidance, including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework and EYFS nutrition guidance. By following these guidelines, the setting ensures that our shared approach to food supports healthy eating and the maintenance of a well-balanced diet.

John Fletcher of Madeley Primary School believes that by working together in a consistent and collaborative way with parents, we can make a lasting difference to every child's wellbeing, learning, and happiness.

If your child is in the Specialist Resource Base, please see the separate policy.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- **The Childcare Act 2006** – Section 39(1)(b) gives legal force to the EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements. [assets.pub...ice.gov.uk]

- **Department for Education (2025) Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework** – Sets out the standards for learning, development, and care, including new **Safer Eating regulations (3.63–3.70)**. [www.thesaf...dgroup.com]

- **Department for Education (2025) Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance** – Must be followed unless there is a good reason not to; supports implementation of healthy, balanced, and nutritious food provision. [assets.pub...ice.gov.uk]

- **Food Safety Act 1990 and Food Hygiene Regulations 2006** – Relevant for safe storage, handling, and preparation of food brought from home. [www.solgrid.org.uk]

- **Allergy and Anaphylaxis Guidance (e.g. FSA and NHS)** – For managing dietary needs, allergy action plans, and choking hazards. [www.thesaf...dgroup.com]

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Early Years Policy

- Specialist Resource Base Food Policy
- First aid policy
- Children with medical needs policy
- Child protection and safeguarding policy

Roles and responsibilities

The Reception Teacher will be responsible for:

- Communicating this policy clearly and consistently to all parents and carers.
- Ensuring all staff are aware of the principles of this policy and understand their responsibilities to promote safe and healthy eating habits.
- Addressing any concerns or non-compliance with sensitivity and in partnership with parents.
- Providing advice and support to parents on healthy lunch box ideas and alternatives to restricted items.
- Keeping records of any allergies or dietary requirements, and ensuring they are up to date and accessible to all relevant staff.
- Liaising with external professionals, e.g. dietitians, health visitors where necessary to support individual dietary needs.
- Leading regular reviews of the policy in collaboration with staff and families to ensure it reflects current guidance and meets the needs of the setting.

All staff members will be responsible for:

- Supervising children whilst they eat to ensure that they are consuming foods safely and only eating and drinking items that are permitted within this policy.
- Monitoring the contents of children's lunch boxes periodically to ensure they align with this policy's guidelines.
- Educating children about healthy eating habits and offering feedback on the nutritional value of the contents of their lunch box.
- Engaging in any training about nutrition and healthy eating in the EYFS.
- Confiscating any prohibited food and drink items.
- Familiarising themselves with allergens and any children that have an allergy.
- Respecting cultural or religious dietary requirements.

Parents will be responsible for:

- Ensuring they have read and understood this policy.
- Packing healthy and nutritious items in their child's lunch box.
- Communicating their child's dietary requirements or allergens to the setting.

- Not allowing their child to bring prohibited or restricted food items to the setting.
- Maintaining their child's healthy eating habits at home and making use of guidance from the setting.

What a healthy lunch box should include

The following is encouraged to include as key components to promote a balanced meal:

- Starchy Food or carbohydrates – Wholemeal bread, wraps, pasta, rice, couscous, potatoes.
- Protein – Chicken, tuna, lentils, beans, hummus, boiled eggs, cheese.
- Vegetables – Grated carrot, cucumber, cut cherry tomatoes (quartered), cooked peas, peppers.
- Fruit – Apple slices, bananas, sliced grapes (lengthwise), melon, dried fruit (small amounts).
- Dairy or Non-Dairy Alternatives – Yogurt, fromage frais, cheese sticks, or fortified plant-based options.
- A Healthy Drink – Water or milk, as per the EYFS requirements. Fresh water will be provided for the children so they do not need a drink in their lunch box.

Foods not to be in lunch boxes

We ask that parents avoid packing the following in their child's packed lunch, in line with healthy eating and food safety guidance:

- Chocolate bars, sweets, or confectionery
- Fizzy, sugary, or artificially sweetened drinks
- Crisps and salty snacks – alternatives like rice cakes are acceptable
- Cereals labelled as high in sugar, e.g. sugar-coated or chocolate-flavoured cereals.
- Flavoured dried rice, pasta and noodle products, e.g. pots of instant noodles.
- Items needing refrigeration or reheating – in accordance with the Food safety guidelines sections of this policy

Staff members may remove and return to parents any food and drink items listed above, particularly in circumstances where it is clear that certain elements of a child's packed lunch do not comply with the national nutritional guidelines. In any case, fizzy, sugary and artificially sweetened drinks will not be permitted and will be taken away from children and returned to parents.

Celebrations

Whilst the setting will welcome gestures to celebrate children's birthdays or special events, we ask that parents avoid allowing their child to bring in food items such as sweets and cakes to share with their peers.

Parents will be advised to ensure any food brought in from home to celebrate a special event is balanced

and meets the setting's food guidelines. Alternatively, children will be permitted to bring in non-edible options to celebrate, e.g. bubbles or stickers. Anything shared will only be given out after school, where parents can make the decision about whether or not the child may have the item.

Any food shared in the setting during school-based special occasions will be checked for potential allergens.

Food safety guidelines

The setting will communicate with parents about best practices for packing lunches and other food brought in from home, including tips on keeping food safe and fresh.

Parents are encouraged to:

- Ensure food is suitable for their child's individual developmental needs and prepared in a way that prevents choking.

  Small fruits: Cut small round fruits like grapes, cherries, berries, strawberries and cherry tomatoes, into small pieces - cut lengthways

  Large fruits and firm fruits: Cut large fruits like melon and firm fruits like apple into slices instead of small chunks.

  Vegetables: Cut vegetables like carrots, cucumber and celery into narrow batons.

- Pack perishable items that should be kept cool in insulated sealed bags.
- Follow the 'four-hour rule' where ice packs are unavailable – only allowing food to be stored outside of chilled conditions for up to four hours.
- Clearly label their child's name on the lunch box and detail the contents.
- Pack foods that can be safely kept at room temperature if cool bags or ice packs cannot be used as the setting cannot guarantee refrigeration space for children's packed lunches.

The setting will be under no obligation to provide refrigeration or re-heating facilities for packed lunches of children, we therefore advise that such items are stored in line with the above and are ready to eat.

Dietary needs and inclusion

The setting will recognise that children's lunch boxes may reflect a variety of dietary requirements and will work closely with families to support these.

In order to ensure inclusivity and safe eating, the setting will:

- Ensure a **paediatric first aid trained staff member** is present during mealtimes.
- Support cultural and religious dietary practices by respecting and accommodating foods brought from home that follow cultural or religious dietary rules.
- Seek information from parents about any specific requirements to be aware of during mealtimes.

- Manage allergies and Intolerances safely by following care plans for children.
- Support vegetarian and vegan diets by respecting food choices brought from home and encouraging positive discussions around diverse types of plant-based food and how to get all the nutrients required via plant-based diets.
- Ensure children follow any medically prescribed diets by following guidance from medical professionals and seeking written confirmation from a health professional regarding this.

The setting asks that parents inform staff of any dietary requirements and allergens so that staff members can monitor what children are consuming and that it is suitable for them. This is particularly important as there is a risk that children may share their food brought from home (all though this is strongly discouraged).

It is essential that parents inform the setting of any known allergies. Staff members will also monitor lunch boxes to ensure they do not contain high-risk items where allergies are present in the setting.

Staff members will be on hand to support children to eat their packed lunches where required.

How the setting will support healthy choices

The setting will continue to uphold its regulatory obligation to provide healthy, balanced and nutritious food to children and encourage healthier food choices for packed lunches. Parents will be encouraged to ensure that food provided from home aligns with the healthy options offered by the setting, so that children receive consistent messages about nutrition.

The setting will support parents in ensuring that children get the right amount of nutrients and energy they need while they are growing rapidly. Any parent who is finding it difficult to incorporate healthy food into their child's diet will be welcome to seek advice from the setting about low-cost alternatives to unhealthy foods.

Whilst children are eating at the setting, they will be supervised and encouraged to eat any elements of their packed lunch they view less favorably, e.g. fruits and vegetables. Staff will support children to develop positive eating habits early on in order to help shape future eating habits.

Our setting promotes healthy eating through:

- Example lunch box menus and advice for parents.
- Child-friendly learning on nutrition through play and stories.
- Using resources from NHS Change4Life and the Eatwell Guide.
- Staff will offer supportive guidance or signposting to families when needed.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier if:

- There are changes to statutory guidance or safeguarding legislation.
- National nutrition standards are updated.

The setting will remain committed to continuous improvement and will share relevant updates with parents on a regular basis.