



GUIDE TO PACKED LUNCHES

Food and eating can be wonderful sources of learning for children and at Parklands we try to make your child's packed lunch time a positive experience. By following our guidelines you will be providing your child with a healthy balanced packed lunch that is enjoyable for your child to eat.

Packing a lunch for our little ones can be a challenge so here are some tips:

Try using left over pasta and rice as the base for a salad. Mix with chopped vegetables or fruit in an air tight container.

Potato salad is great with cheese or chicken cut into small chunks

Try making tuna pasta with macaroni which is really soft and small enough to eat easily. Include favourites like sweetcorn and raisins.

Fruit salad is great with Greek yogurt - strawberries, grapes or kiwi fruit

How about a dip with chopped veggies - carrot sticks, celery, cauliflower, baby sweetcorn or pepper sticks



Finally,

- Always cut grapes in half
- Try to look for alternatives to cakes, biscuits, crisps and other sugary/salty food.
- Don't forget to label your little one's bag or box in a prominent place.



- We will NOT be refrigerating your children's lunch so please think about packing their food in a cooler bag with an icepack if possible.
- We are also NOT able to heat up children's food either.
- Don't forget a spoon for yogurts!
- On a green note, reusable containers are preferable to throw away packets and bags.
- Don't be afraid to put small portions if your child has a small appetite. No need to put huge portions or loads of variety if your child will struggle to eat it all.
- Cereal bars are low in fat and can be a healthier alternative to confectionery. Be aware that these can have high sugar content and are harmful to teeth.
- Dried fruit e.g. raisins and dried apricots, are easily added to lunchboxes and count towards your child's fruit and vegetable intake. However, some dried fruit are sweetened with added sugar and these should be avoided.
- Please do not put sweets or fizzy drinks in your child's lunch box.
- We are a NUT FREE school so please don't send foods containing nuts in your child's lunch box.

HALF EATEN FOODS

We put half-eaten foods back in your child's lunch bag or box. This is so that you can see what they have eaten. If they have eaten everything of course we will simply throw away any empty packaging.

7-POINT CHECKLIST FOR PREPARING A LUNCHBOX

1. HAVE YOU GOT SOMETHING FROM THE BREAD, OTHER CEREALS, POTATOES GROUP?

Ideas at a glance: Bread and bread rolls, bagel, pitta bread, French stick, Scotch pancakes, English muffins, fruit scones, currant buns, fruit bread, malt loaf, Matzo, crisp bread and crackers, pasta and rice salads. Wholegrain breads are fine occasionally, but remember young children have small stomachs and too much fibre can replace energy rich foods needed for growth and interfere with the absorption of minerals. It is best to avoid fibre enriched foods.

2. HAVE YOU GOT SOMETHING FROM THE FRUIT AND VEGETABLE GROUP?

Ideas: Salad in sandwiches and rolls, cherry tomatoes, apples, pears, satsumas, bananas, grapes, melon, kiwi, plums, nectarine, canned fruit pieces, raisins, dried apricots, dish of fruit salad, fruit smoothies and pure fruit juices.

3. HAVE YOU GOT SOMETHING FROM THE MEAT, FISH AND ALTERNATIVES GROUP?

Ideas: Slices of ham, chicken and turkey, boiled eggs, canned tuna and salmon, hummus.

4. HAVE YOU GOT SOMETHING FROM THE MILK AND DAIRY FOOD GROUP?

Ideas: Milk, cheddar, edam, cheese triangle, low fat soft cheese, cottage cheese with pineapple chunks, fruit yoghurt, fromage frais, drinking yoghurt, pots of rice pudding.



5. HAVE YOU GOT A DRINK?

Ideas: Milk, drinking yoghurt, smoothie, fruit juice, sugar-free squash and water.

6. ARE THE PORTIONS THE CORRECT SIZE?

Remember your children only have small hands, mouths and tummies. At school we encourage the children to eat up all their packed lunch. They will bring home what they don't want or can't eat so you can monitor what they have eaten. Please put in the amount of food you would normally expect your child to eat. Cutting up food like sandwiches and fruit into small manageable child size pieces is a good idea because children can be put off if they have to tackle a too large portion.

7. ARE THE FOODS FAMILIAR?

Please put familiar foods prepared in their usual way in the packed lunch, for example if you usually peel the skin off fruit or cut crusts off bread please do so for their packed lunch. School packed lunches are not a good time to introduce new foods for the first time to your child. It may be upsetting for the child if they are hungry and don't like the food they have been given.