



Morning Star Nursery Policy for Healthy Packed Lunches (brought from home)



Setting's Name:

Morning Star Nursery & Morning Star Educational Centre

Date Last Reviewed:

17th September 2026

Date of Next Review:

17th February 2027

Rationale

- The government has placed a duty on nurseries to ensure that every child is healthy. Eating healthily is important because it will help children to:
 - Be fitter and healthier now and later in life
 - Learn at a faster pace and behave better
- To grow and stay healthy, children need to eat a nutritionally well balanced diet. Nursery is an influential setting and can contribute significantly to improving the health and well-being of children.
- Good nutrition in childhood can help to prevent a variety of health problems, both in the short term and later in life. There is increasing concern that many children are consuming too much fat, sugar and salt and too little fibre, fruit and vegetables.
- The short term effects of unhealthy packed lunches and food intake can include poor growth, tooth decay, obesity, anaemia, constipation, poor concentration and behavioural problems, which may have an impact on a child's learning.
- The longer term effects of a poor diet in childhood can be an increased risk of stroke, cancer, heart disease and diabetes in adulthood.
- Packed lunches can contribute to almost a third of a child's weekly food intake and therefore need to be balanced and nutritious.
- The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) is required to report on how the school promotes the personal development and well-being of all children – this may include food provision, including packed lunches brought into nursery.

Aims

- To ensure that the content of packed lunches meet minimum food and nutrition standards for school meals.
- To encourage healthy eating habits from an early age and improve the overall nutrition of children.
- To improve the nutritional quality of packed lunches eaten at Morning Star trips.
- To develop an awareness in children, parents, staff and the wider community that a pro-active approach to promote healthy eating.
- To encourage healthy eating habits in childhood that can influence health and well-being in later life.

Special diets and allergies:

-Please also see the allergy policy and note that NO food that contains nuts or nut products is allowed in your child's packed lunch.

-Morning Star understands that some children may have verified medical conditions requiring special diets that do not allow for the standards to be met exactly. In this case parents are urged to be responsible in ensuring that packed lunches are as healthy as possible. If any of the foods suggested on the not to include list need to be a part of your child's daily diet, please inform your child's key person.

Packed Lunch Facilities

- Morning Star will ensure that even though they have brought in a packed lunch they will eat with their peers.
- Free, fresh drinking water and cold milk is available at all times.
- Morning star will work with parents to encourage packed lunches to meet the standards listed below.
- As fridge space is not available, children are advised to bring packed lunches in insulated bags with freezer blocks where possible.
- Children are only allowed to eat their OWN food.
- We are NOT allowed to heat up the food you provide in case it is heated incorrectly and makes your child ill.

The 'Always, Sometimes, Never' approach to Packed Lunches at Morning Star**Packed lunches should 'Always' include:**

- At least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables every day. Grapes and cherry tomatoes should be halved lengthways for nursery age children.
- Meat, fish, eggs, or a non-dairy protein (e.g. lentils, kidney beans, chickpeas, houmous, falafel) every day.
- Oily fish, such as salmon or tuna, at least once every three weeks.
- A starchy food such as any type of bread (white or wholegrain rolls, pitta bread or wraps), pasta, rice, couscous, noodles, potatoes or another cereal every day.
- A dairy food such as milk, 'proper' cheese (ie not Dairy Lea lunchables or similar), yoghurt, fromage frais or custard every day.
- Pretzels, crackers and cheese.
- Vegetable sticks and dips.

Packed lunches can 'Sometimes' include:

- A meat product such as a sausage roll or an individual pie or corned meat.

Packed lunches should 'Never' include:

- Any confectionery such as chocolate bars, chocolate-coated biscuits and sweets.
- Any crisps.
- Any sugary soft drinks, such as a fizzy drink (even if labelled as 'sugar-free', 'no-added sugar' or 'reduced sugar' as these drinks can contribute to tooth decay and provide little nutritional value).

Waste and Disposal

Morning Star staff will, within reason, send any uneaten packed lunch food items back home. This is so that parents can also monitor what their child has consumed during the day and then raise any concerns over their child's food intake with the nursery.

APPENDIX 1 A SCHOOL LUNCHBOX GUIDE



An example of a healthy lunchbox is pictured above. These should include foods from all food groups. Please note we provide water and milk for all children.



It is our legal responsibility to encourage healthy eating for all children, so please **do not** add any of these processed foods to your child's lunchbox as we **will not** give them. This includes chocolates, chocolate bars, chocolate biscuits, any crisps, any foods containing **Nuts**, drinks high in sugar, fizzy drinks, sweets and cakes. Please **do not** bring takeaway foods such as burgers, chips and kebabs to nursery as we will send them home with you.