**Mucky Pups Preschool**

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**Lunch box policy**

**Aim**

*The aim of this policy is to ensure that all food and drinks brought from home and consumed in the setting are healthy and nutritious, to ensure that food is stored in an appropriate and safe way and that parents and children are helped to understand what foods and drinks to include in a healthy lunch box.*

Mucky Pups will:

Ensure that eating food from home is a sociable experience.

Our policy aims to enhance this by:

* Providing a dining environment that is appropriate, hygienic, and comfortable with a seat for each child and a place to eat.
* Ensuring every child is given appropriate resources to eat their lunch. EG; plates, cups, bowls and cutlery.
* Ensuring children are encouraged to behave appropriately while eating and are considerate of others.
* Providing fresh drinking water at all times throughout the whole day not just during lunch.
* Ensuring children are supported in self-care. EG; cleaning up after themselves, pouring own water and making good choices regarding their lunch.

The setting is not responsible for:

* The setting does not have enough fridge space to store all of the lunch boxes, we advise that parents please send in their child’s lunch in an insulated bag with freezer blocks to keep them cool, appetising and safe to eat.
* We can-not heat food sent from home. All packed lunch food should be ready to eat without the need for re-heating. If you wish for your child to have something warm please heat it at home and send it in stored in an appropriate thermal container such as a flask. We are happy to help your child dish out a warmed meal. (EG; baked beans, pasta or even left overs!)

Guidelines regarding lunchbox contents: (see Food and Healthy Eating Policy)

At Mucky Pups, we work hard to teach the children about making healthy choices and discuss with them often about healthy foods and un-healthy foods. To help the setting promote a culture of healthy eating and a healthy life style we would like your support.

Please could you ensure that your child’s lunch box contains the following:

* First and foremost, please ensure that your child’s lunchbox contains enough food to sustain your child through what can be a very busy day at Mucky Pups.
* At least one portion of fruit or vegetables. Some ideas include, tangerines, a small apple, cucumber/celery/carrot sticks with a healthy dip.
* A carbohydrate based item such as bread, pasta, rice, noodles, potatoes or other types of cereals. (EG; pitta bread, wraps, oat cakes)
* A dairy item such as milk, cheese, yogurt, fromage frais or custard. Please check the labels on these as they can contain a lot of sugar.

Please do not include the following:

* Sugary or fizzy drinks. (EG: Fruit shoots, some cordials, Coke) We provide water and cups for children to access as needed.
* Crisps every day. These are ok occasionally but should be limited due to the high fat content. Alternatives include; savoury crackers, breadsticks or rice cakes.
* Confectionary such as chocolate bars and sweets. An occasional treat of a small chocolate biscuit is fine. Alternatives could include; flapjack or a small cake.
* Please do not include items such as fruit winders and other gum based ‘fruit’ items. These are advertised as low in processed sugar which they are. However, they are very high in natural sugars due to the way they are made, they stick to your child’s teeth and cause them to decay at an alarming rate.
* Please do not regularly include items that are high in fat or salt. For example; cooked sausages, sausage rolls, corned meat, individual meat pies.

Special diets and allergies

* The setting understands that some children have specific dietary needs. (EG; religious requirements, allergies and diabetes) Mucky Pups will work closely with the parent to ensure that the child’s dietary needs are met in a healthy and nutritious way. Diet plans can be devised with parents if needed for while the child is in attendance.
* The setting cannot allow children to swap foods due to children’s differing dietary needs. EG; Religious requirements and allergies.

**Please could all parents please ensure that their child’s lunchbox is clearly labelled with their child’s name.**

**We often have children with the same lunchbox**.

Date policy adopted on: 2nd September 2023 Date for review: 2nd September 2024

Signed: J E Wills Position: Manager