

Sheuchan Nursery

Packed lunch Policy



This policy was adopted at a meeting of:

Sheuchan Nursery

Leswalt High Road

Stranraer

On 21.08.26

Signed: *C Douglas Quinn* Designation: Nursery Manager and Early Years Support Assistant

****Policy Emailed to all staff members and filed within the Policy folder****

Review Date:	By:	Amendments:

Statement of Purpose

At Sheuchan Nursery we believe that mealtimes are an important part of children's health, wellbeing, learning and development. We want every child to enjoy a relaxed and positive lunchtime experience while developing healthy attitudes towards food.

As a Dumfries and Galloway Council nursery, we actively encourage children to take up their **free nursery school meal** when they attend funded ELC during the lunchtime period. Every child attending funded ELC is entitled to a free meal. The current Dumfries and Galloway nursery menu provides a varied selection of main meals and deli options, with meals planned to meet Scottish nutritional guidance.

We recognise, however, that some families may choose to provide a packed lunch from home. Where a packed lunch is provided, we ask families to follow the expectations in this policy.

Information around our preferred option – a free nursery meal

We strongly encourage families to choose the free nursery meal wherever possible.

There are many benefits to choosing the nursery meal:

- It provides a nutritionally planned meal.
- Children can experience a wider variety of foods.
- Children eat the same meal alongside their friends.
- It supports positive social experiences at mealtimes.
- Children can develop confidence trying new foods.
- Families do not need to prepare a separate lunch each day.

Children will always be supported and encouraged to make appropriate choices from the menu and will never be pressured to eat a particular food.

Should you chose to send a packed lunch we have the following expectations:

If a parent/carer chooses to provide a packed lunch, we ask that it is **similar in structure to the nursery meal** and provides a balanced, substantial lunch.

A packed lunch should include:

1. A cold main meal

Please provide **one substantial cold main item**, such as:

- Sandwich
- Wrap
- Pitta
- Bagel

- Pasta salad
- Other similar cold meal

The aim is for the main item to provide a substantial source of carbohydrate and protein, similar to the main/deli choices available through the nursery menu.

2. A low-sugar pudding or dessert

Where a pudding/dessert is included, please choose a lower-sugar option such as:

- Plain or lower-sugar yoghurt with fruit
- Fresh fruit
- Fruit salad
- Other suitable lower-sugar option

This reflects the approach taken within the nursery menu, where yoghurt and fresh fruit are regularly offered.

No drink is required

Please do not send a drink with your child's packed lunch.

Nursery will continue to provide **fresh drinking water and milk** throughout the nursery day, including at lunchtime.

Foods we ask families not to include

To support healthy eating and ensure that packed lunches are broadly comparable with the nursery meal, we ask families **not to include**:

- Sweets or confectionery
- Chocolate bars
- Crisps or similar savoury snack foods as the main accompaniment
- Cakes
- Doughnuts
- Biscuits or chocolate biscuits
- Large portions of highly processed snack foods

These foods are not considered an appropriate everyday nursery lunch.

Why do we have these expectations?

Our packed lunch expectations are not intended to judge families or dictate what children eat at home. They exist because children spend a significant part of their day in nursery and we have a responsibility to promote positive health and wellbeing.

We want children who bring a packed lunch to have a **nutritious, filling and enjoyable lunch that is similar in structure to the food provided by the nursery.**

6. Supporting children and families

We understand that children have different food preferences and that some children may be reluctant to try new foods.

Staff will:

- Promote positive conversations about food.
- Encourage children to explore and try a range of foods.
- Respect children's individual preferences.
- Avoid pressuring children to eat.
- Work sensitively with families.
- Provide advice and ideas where families would find this helpful.
- Take account of individual dietary requirements.

Families will not be made to feel uncomfortable or judged because their child brings a packed lunch.

Where a packed lunch does not meet the expectations within this policy, staff will speak with the parent/carer sensitively and explain the reason for the policy.

Allergies and dietary requirements

We recognise that children may have allergies, intolerances, medical dietary requirements, cultural requirements or religious dietary needs. These will always be considered on an individual basis. Parents/carers should inform the nursery of any dietary requirements and complete the appropriate documentation. Where a child has an identified allergy or medical dietary requirement, this will take priority over the general packed lunch expectations.

Food safety

Families should ensure that food brought from home is:

- Suitable for the child's age and stage of development.
- Stored and transported safely.
- Clearly identifiable as belonging to their child.
- Packed in an appropriate lunchbox.

The nursery will follow appropriate food safety and allergen procedures when handling and supporting children with food brought from home.

10. Partnership with families

We recognise parents and carers as partners in supporting children's health and wellbeing. This policy will be shared with families and reviewed periodically with

consideration given to feedback from children, parents/carers, nursery staff, school leadership and catering colleagues.

Our aim is to create a consistent, positive approach to food across the nursery and wider school community.

Monitoring of this policy

The team will regularly informally and formally evaluate practice using toolkits and guidance such as:

Relevant guidance

This policy should be read alongside:

- Setting the Table - Nutritional Standards and Practical Guidance for ELC Providers in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2024, including 2026 addendum).
- Funding Follows the Child and the National Standard for Early Learning and Childcare Providers - Operating Guidance.
- Dumfries and Galloway Council Nursery School Meals Menu.
- School/Nursery Food and Nutrition Policy.
- Local authority food safety and allergen procedures.

It will be the responsibility of Miss Claire Douglas Nursery Manager to ensure all staff, including new or temporary staff, are familiar with this policy and to monitor that it is being implemented.

