



# BERKHAMPSTEAD SCHOOL AND DAY NURSERIES

## Early Years Packed Food Policy

### Introduction

To maintain healthy development and growth, children need to eat a nutritionally well-balanced diet. As Early Years setting (Berkhampstead School, Pittville Circus Day Nursery and Charlton Kings Day Nursery), we are in a strong position to influence and contribute significantly to improving the health and well-being of your child. Good nutrition in early 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. At Berkhampstead, we take these concerns seriously and are committed to supporting families in creating healthy eating habits from the earliest years. This policy sets out our expectations for food brought from home, in line with health and safety guidance, allergy control, and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework, which places clear emphasis on safeguarding children's health, managing allergies, and promoting positive attitudes towards healthy eating.

### Meal Provision and Fees

Our standard (unfunded) hourly rate includes all snacks and meals throughout the day. For those parents accessing free entitlement hours, food is not included as part of the government-funded EYFS framework. However, all snacks and meals are included in our optional agreed additional services charge, which families can opt into.

Families who have chosen to opt out of the optional agreed additional services charge will not receive breakfast (Day Nursery only), snacks, lunch or tea (Day Nursery only), and must follow the structured arrangements outlined.

**Please note:** Should you opt out of the optional agreed additional services charge and do not provide lunch for your child, you will be charged for food provided by Berkhampstead. If food is provided by the Berkhampstead, parents will incur a charge. If parents continue to not provide satisfactory lunches, this may be considered a safeguarding issue. Children attending full-day sessions must have an appropriate meal as part of their routine to promote positive development and care.

## **Packed Food Planning Arrangements**

To support children's development, families are encouraged to pack a balanced meal that aligns with both the EYFS Nutrition Guidance (April 2025) and the "Healthy Plate" model for young children.

This model promotes a variety of foods from the four main food groups:

1. **Fruits & Vegetables** – e.g., carrot sticks, apple slices, banana
2. **Starchy Foods** – e.g., wholegrain bread, pasta, rice, wraps
3. **Proteins** – e.g., cooked egg, beans, lentils, cheese, lean meats
4. **Dairy or Alternatives** – e.g., plain yogurt, milk-based snacks

We encourage parents to follow the "**Provide, Limit, Avoid**" framework:

- **Provide:**
  - At least one item from each of the 4 food groups listed above
  - Water or milk in a labelled, non-spill bottle
  - Whole fresh fruit (e.g., banana, apple) – no packaging needed
- **Limit:**
  - High-sugar and high-fat processed foods
  - Sweetened yogurts, biscuits, or cereal bars
  - Salty snacks like crackers or breadsticks (check sodium levels)
- **Avoid:**
  - Confectionery (chocolate, sweets, cake bars)
  - Crisps and sugary drinks
  - Any products containing or processed with nuts
  - Homemade or unpackaged food (except clearly identifiable fruit).

All meals must be packed in an insulated lunch bag with an ice pack and will be checked on arrival to ensure food is appropriate, allergy-safe, and nutritionally suitable.

For further guidance, refer to the Department for Education's Nutrition Guidance for Early Years Providers (April 2025).

If a packed lunch does not meet safety or nutritional requirements:

- On the first occasion, the School/Day Nursery will provide a suitable lunch in line with our standard early years menu. This will be charged at the agreed additional services daily rate.
- On a second occasion, parents/carers will be invited to a meeting with the Head of Early Years/Day Nursery Manager to review the importance of compliance. This may include discussion of safeguarding, allergy protocols, and statutory nutrition expectations.

## Packed Food Safety & Nutrition Checklist

**Child:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Week Commencing:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>MON</b>	<b>TUE</b>	<b>WED</b>	<b>THU</b>	<b>FRI</b>
<b>Safety</b>					
Food is in a labelled insulated lunch bag with an ice pack?					
No items contain or are processed with nuts?					
No homemade or home-labelled items, except clearly identifiable fruit?					
All food is pre-packaged with visible ingredient/allergen labels?					
Whole fruits are clearly identifiable (e.g., banana, apple)?					
<b>Nutrition</b>					
Includes at least 1 portion of fruit or vegetables?					
Includes a starchy carbohydrate (e.g., wholegrain bread, pasta)?					
Includes a protein source (e.g., beans, lentils, cheese, lean meat)?					
Includes a dairy or alternative (e.g., plain yogurt, cheese cube)?					
Drink provided is water or milk (no sugary drinks or squash)?					
Meal appears balanced and suitable based on EYFS Nutrition Guidance?					
<b>Signed-off</b>					
Parent has been informed of any non-compliant items (if applicable)?					
Staff member initials					