

- Cheese. Children love lunchbox cheeses – strings, strips, triangles, mini-cheeses or a foil-wrapped finger of ordinary cheese.

DRINKS AND SNACKS

- Water and milk are provided for the children to drink. You may send in 100% fruit juice (not squash or flavoured water). However, bear in mind, that juices are not permitted in lunchboxes at Charlton Primary School.
- As an alternative to crisps, which are very high in salt, try bread sticks, oatcakes or rice cakes.
- Biscuits, cakes etc. Try making your own as this cuts down on the amount of hydrogenated vegetable oils, sugar and additives. Muffins are great as you can add fruit to them. Homemade cakes freeze so you can make a batch and bring them out on the day.

LUNCH BOXES ARE NOT THE PLACE FOR SWEETS AND CHOCOLATE BARS.

FOOD SAFETY

Always wash your hands before preparing lunch box food, and keep work surfaces and chopping boards clean. All cooked foods must be cooled, then chilled, before packing. Make pasta and rice salads the night before, and chill overnight. Use a mini-ice pack to keep perishable items like yogurt, fromage frais and sandwiches at a safe temperature. A well-insulated lunch box or bag will help keep foods cool. Keep lunch boxes clean, wash daily after use.

WE DO NOT HAVE SPACE TO REFRIGERATE LUNCH BOXES SO WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU PUT YOUR CHILD'S LUNCH IN AN INSULATED BAG AND INCLUDE AN ICE PACK.

If you have any questions about lunch boxes or indeed any aspect of your child's diet please come and talk to us.

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'Starting from the child'

**Charlton
Acorns**

PRE-SCHOOL

'Learning through play'

*Healthy Lunch Boxes
for Children*



Food and eating together is a wonderful source of learning for children, and at pre-school we aim to make lunch time a positive experience.

When providing your child with a packed lunch it can be a challenge to keep them interesting and healthy. The key to a healthy lunch box is to provide a balance of appropriate foods from the four main food groups.

- Breads and cereals
- Fruit and vegetables
- Meat or alternatives
- Milk and dairy products or alternatives

Foods in the 5th group containing fats and sugar should be eaten in moderation

STICK TO FAMILIAR FOODS

Pre-school lunch times are not a good time to introduce new foods, best to stick to the familiar ones. It can be upsetting if the child is hungry but does not like the food you have given them.

PORTION SIZES

Put in the amount of food you would normally expect your child to eat, do not put extra in for choice, most children believe that you want them to eat everything you put in.

NUTS

Please do not put nuts, products containing nuts or foods produced in factories where there are nuts in your child's lunch boxes. We have children at pre-school who have nut allergies.

BREADS AND CEREALS

- Sandwiches are top favourite lunch box item. If your children won't eat wholemeal bread, compromise by buying 50/50, or make sandwiches with one slice of white, the other of wholemeal bread or try wholemeal pittas or wraps.
- Rice or pasta salads add plenty of chopped vegetables for fibre.
- A slice of pizza.
- Oatcakes, rice cakes, french sticks, malt loaf, fruit scones, cheese scones, scotch pancakes, crisp breads and crackers.

FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

- Small apple, cut into eighths then put back together and wrap tightly in foil.
- Small soft oranges
- Chopped kiwi, **grapes (but remember to cut them into quarters).**
- A handful of dried fruit such as apricots, raisins, pear, apple or even prunes.
- Bananas are wonderful for an energy boost.
- Cubed melon or watermelon, mixed blueberries and raspberries, stewed apple with cinnamon or stewed dried apricots.
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Try adding vegetables to sandwiches, the obvious is lettuce but also try grated carrot or cabbage, sliced cucumber, finely chopped peppers.

- Carrot sticks, celery, peppers of all colours, sugar snap or snow peas (mangetout), **cherry tomatoes (cut into quarters).** A small pot of dip with these is fun; try hummus or something low fat.

MEAT OR ALTERNATIVES

- Sandwiches are a good way of supplying protein. Ham is the most popular choice, but try chicken or turkey as a change.
- Cheese is another popular source of protein in lunch boxes for kids, but it is high in fat so don't stuff those sandwiches with it too lavishly.
- Fish is a great source of protein, and many children really like tuna, which you can mix with sweetcorn or peppers.
- Pulses are good veggie options for protein. Use chickpeas to make hummus or a mixed bean salad.
- Tofu has plenty of protein, but unless your children are used to a vegetarian diet, they may not fancy it.
- **Mini sausages should be sliced lengthways.**

MILK/DAIRY OR ALTERNATIVES

- Milk – we provide milk at lunchtime so there is no need to send a drink in to school.
- Yogurts and fromage frais are a good thought. However, most are likely to be sugar-laden so you could make them a little container of plain yogurt with stewed or raw fruit stirred through it.