

## Our Approach to Snack and Mealtimes:

In Cawdor Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) we have used the [Scottish Government Setting the Table guidance](#) to support the development of our policy.

We aim to have an approach to snack and lunch that:

- promotes a healthy attitude towards food and eating;
- is in an environment that is positive and safe, supported by caring adults;
- enables children to learn about and through nutrition;
- develops children's independence skills.

## Children's Independence:

We support children to develop independence skills through opportunities to:

- set and clear the table
- plan for and prepare snack
- self-serve.

## Developing Positive Eating Habits:

We will encourage children to enjoy sitting and eating and drinking with others. This will be supported by adults who interact with children during the mealtime experience.

Children will not be expected to finish everything on their plate and will be allowed extra if they are still hungry.

Children who do not eat the food will be offered an acceptable alternative. As well as regular informal contact with families regarding children's eating habits, if there are difficulties or reluctances that are observed, contact will be made with families to discuss a plan to support their child's eating.

## Additional Support Needs, Including Food Allergies:

Our staff team have undertaken food allergy training. As part of our ongoing communication with families, additional support that is identified for an individual child to ensure a positive snack and mealtime experience will be planned for between the child's family and their key worker. This will be noted in the child's Care Plan and shared with members of the team supporting the child. If a child has input from specialist services regarding their eating behaviours, e.g. dietitian, we will work collaboratively with the service, the child's family, and the health visitor (if appropriate) to identify the support required as part of the child's Care Plan.

## Allergy Aware: We are an allergy aware setting

We work together to keep all children safe from allergies. What this means:

- Staff know how to help if a child has an allergic reaction.
- We ask families not to bring food with common allergens (like nuts).
- We keep allergy information up to date.

What parents and carers can do:

- Tell us if your child has any allergies.
- Do not put any nut products in your child's packed lunch, or give a snack containing nuts.
- Check food labels before sending snacks or lunches.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to speak to a member of staff.

**Breakfast:**

Children accessing breakfast provision will have the choice of cereal or toast with spread, alongside fruit.

**Snack:**

We have developed a snack menu to include the standards within [Setting the Table](#). We have a morning and afternoon snack each day.

Morning Snack

Our morning snack will follow a three-weekly cycle. The week numbers will mirror the Highland Council ELC lunch menu.

	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<b>Week 1 &amp; Week 3</b>	Wheat biscuits, milk and fruit	Breadsticks with soft light cheese and fruit or vegetable sticks	Toast with spread and fruit	Plain yoghurt with fruit	Crackers with sardines and vegetable sticks
<b>Week 2 &amp; Week 4</b>	Cous cous with mixed herbs and vegetable sticks	Wheat biscuits, milk and fruit	Breadsticks with soft light cheese and fruit or vegetable sticks	Plain yoghurt with fruit	Toast with spread and fruit

Afternoon Snack

Our afternoon snack each day will include fruit and/ or vegetables.

**Lunch:**

In Cawdor we follow Highland Council's ELC lunch menu. This provides children with three choices each day.

[https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/9/school\\_menus](https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/9/school_menus)

The guidance for families on special diets can be found on the link below:

[https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/9/school\\_meals](https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/9/school_meals)

**Drinks:**

Throughout the day plain, still water is available for children to self-serve. When families provide their child with a water bottle, it is asked that only water is provided.

At snack and at lunch semi-skimmed milk and plain still water are offered for children to self-serve. Unsweetened soya-drinks are offered as an alternative to cow's milk for children who cannot drink dairy milks.

Fruit juice, vegetable juice, smoothies, flavoured milk, fruit juice combinations and diluting juice (including no added sugar or sugar free versions) should not be provided at any time in childcare settings due to their high free sugar content and/ or sweet taste.

If a medical provider has recommended the use of another unsweetened non-dairy alternative drink or sugar free diluting juice due to fluid intake, families can discuss this with their child's key worker as part of their care plan.

## Packed Lunches:

If families make the choice to provide a packed lunch, as we do not have refrigerated storage for packed lunches, it is the responsibility of the family to ensure that lunch is kept at the recommended temperature that will not be a risk to health. This may be through the provision of an ice pack or insulated container.

We ask that families use [The Eatwell Guide](#) if choosing to provide a packed lunch.

### What to include:

- **Include a starchy food for energy.** This is most likely to be some kind of bread or a wrap. Other starchy foods like oatcakes, rice, pasta or potatoes are also fine. Starchy foods are shown on the top right of the Eatwell Guide.
- **Include a protein based food.** This is most likely to be some form of meat, fish or cheese as a sandwich filling. Pulses or foods made with pulses like hummous and falafel are also fine, not just for vegetarians but for meat eaters too. Protein rich foods are shown in the lower left side of the Eatwell Guide.
- **Include one or more fruit, vegetable or salad item.** Examples include satsumas, apples, bananas or cucumber sticks. These foods are shown on the top right of the Eatwell Guide. Most children would benefit from doubling their current intake of foods from this group.
- You might also want to include a calcium rich dairy food or drink. Examples include milk (which is available in the ELC setting), cheese or yoghurt. Calcium rich dairy foods are shown on the bottom right of the Eatwell Guide.
- **Optional extras:** The most appropriate food for dessert is yoghurt and/or fruit. However, you might wish to include something else sweet every so often, as this reflects the dessert that ELC children having a Highland Council meal might have. Something like a plain biscuit or small piece of flapjack is fine. Foods like biscuits or flapjack tend to be quite high in sugar and fat and are shown in the bottom left hand corner of the Eatwell Guide, but not in the main circle, together with the message "*Eat less often and in small amounts*".



## What Not to Include in a Packed Lunch?

- Please **do not** include sweets, chocolate, or crisps. During the day at ELC, the standards within [Setting the Table](#) include:
  - *only the following savoury snacks can be provided: plain oatcakes, plain savoury crackers, plain rice cakes, plain breadsticks (standard 8).*
  - *confectionery should not be provided at any time (standard 13).*
- Please **do not** include soft drinks that are sweetened with added sugar or sweeteners (fizzy or diluting juice). During the day at ELC, the standards within [Setting the Table](#) include:
  - *the only drinks that should be provided are still, plain, water, and plain milk or unsweetened fortified non-dairy alternative (standard 14).*

## Food Safety:

If you are providing your child with a packed lunch, then there are ways in which to prepare food so that it's safe:

- Remove any stones or pips before serving.
- Quarter (length ways) small fruit and vegetables like cherry tomatoes, grapes and blackberries.
- Cut large fruits into slices rather than chunks.
- Think twice before offering very young children hard, slippery or sticky foods. If serving, these should be cut into small pieces.
- Peel the skin off fruit, vegetables, and sausages (although remember that sausages can be high in salt).
- Cook hard or stringy vegetables such as green beans and carrots until they are quite soft for use as finger foods, rather than offering them raw.
- Remove bones from meat or fish.

## Small Round Food Items – Young Children:

Small, round food items are a choking risk for young children. Most of these items are included in the avoid list for ELC, so would not be included in snack and mealtimes. As well as avoiding these in packed lunches, it is recommended that these are avoided at home for young children.

- peanuts
- boiled sweets
- hot dogs
- chocolate eggs with small toys inside
- raw carrots
- popcorn
- nuts
- sweet items such as mini eggs
- raw jelly cubes, they can get stuck in the throat.