

University of Warwick Holiday Scheme

PACKED LUNCH POLICY

Purpose	The purpose of this policy is to ensure that packed lunches brought into the University of Warwick Holiday Scheme are safe and suitable for children , with particular emphasis on reducing the risk of allergic reactions. The Holiday Scheme also encourages parents/carers to provide a varied and reasonably balanced packed lunch to support children throughout an active day.
Review Frequency	Annually or if an incident occurs the policy must be reviewed immediately
Date approved	September 2026
Date of next review	September 2027

The named staff members (at least 2) responsible for the upkeep of the policy are:

Jo Warren, Nursery manager

Rachael Snell, Holiday Scheme Coordinator

It is important to keep children and adults with food allergies safe from contamination during mealtimes and when out and about. Some children and adults can be allergic to certain food items that can give a diverse range of symptoms. These symptoms can range from skin rashes, stomach pain and vomiting to more life-threatening difficulty such as swelling of the mouth and throat, not being able to breathe and in some case, death. A reaction to Food Allergens is called Anaphylaxis and this reaction can be brought on by digesting foods with allergens, having skin contact with food and liquids containing food allergens or through air born particles from certain food allergens.

There are 14 named Allergens that we need to keep under control so that contamination and cross contamination does not occur. These are: Celery, eggs, fish, crustaceans, Lupin flour, milk, cereals containing gluten, Mustard, nuts, peanuts, molluscs, sesame, soya, sulphur dioxide and sulphites.

No Nuts

The University of Warwick Holiday Scheme operates a strict no-nuts rule. Parents/carers must not include nuts or products containing nuts in their child's packed lunch or snacks.

This includes, for example:

- Peanuts and tree nuts.
- Peanut butter and other nut butters.
- Nut bars and cereal bars containing nuts.
- Chocolate, cakes, biscuits or confectionery containing nuts.
- Foods where nuts are a clearly identified ingredient.

Parents/carers should **check food labels carefully before placing items in their child's packed lunch.**

Staff will remain vigilant during lunch and snack times and children will be reminded **not to share or swap food.**

If staff identify a nut product in a child's packed lunch, **it will not be given to the child.** The item will be removed from the eating area and the parent/carer will be informed.

The Holiday Scheme recognises that, despite these precautions, it **cannot guarantee a completely allergen-free environment.** The existing Allergy and Anaphylaxis Policy therefore combines allergy awareness, individual risk assessment and appropriate management arrangements rather than relying solely on a nut restriction.

Allergies and Dietary Requirements

Parents/carers must provide the Holiday Scheme with accurate and up-to-date information about their child's **allergies, intolerances and other medical or dietary requirements.**

Where a child has a known allergy, the procedures contained within the Holiday Scheme's Allergy and Anaphylaxis Policy will be followed. This includes obtaining information about known allergies before admission, sharing necessary information with relevant staff and maintaining appropriate Allergy Action Plans and medication arrangements.

Staff will be made aware of children with relevant allergies or dietary requirements and will take reasonable precautions to reduce the risk of **cross-contamination and accidental exposure.**

Packed Lunch Guidance

As the Holiday Scheme is a holiday club rather than a school or nursery setting, we recognise that packed lunches will vary and **do not expect parents to follow a rigid healthy-eating policy.**

However, children can have busy and active days at the Holiday Scheme, so parents/carers are encouraged to provide a varied packed lunch that may include:

- A sandwich, wrap, pasta, rice or other main item.
- Fruit and/or vegetables.

- A source of protein such as cheese, egg, meat, fish or a suitable nut-free alternative.
- Yoghurt or another suitable dairy/dairy-alternative product.
- A small snack or treat.

Treats such as a biscuit, cake or crisps **do not need to be excluded**, but we encourage these to form part of a varied lunch rather than making up the majority of it.

Children should have enough food for the length of time they will be attending the Holiday Scheme.

Food Sharing

Children must **not share, swap or exchange food or drinks** with other children. This is particularly important because another child may have an allergy, intolerance or dietary requirement that is not immediately obvious.

Staff will reinforce this expectation and supervise children appropriately during lunch and snack periods.

Children Under Five

Where a child aged under five attends the Holiday Scheme, parents/carers must ensure that food is prepared appropriately for their child's age and development to minimise choking risks.

Government early-years food-safety guidance identifies additional precautions for children aged five and under. These include:

- **Whole nuts and whole seeds must not be given to children under five.**
- Grapes, cherry tomatoes and similar small round foods should be **cut lengthways into quarters**.
- Sausages should be cut into **thin strips rather than round pieces**
- Stones and hard pips should be removed from fruit.
- Hard fruit and vegetables should be appropriately prepared, with government guidance recommending slices or narrow batons rather than small hard chunks.
- **Popcorn, marshmallows, raw jelly cubes and hard sweets should not be provided to children under five.**

Young children will also be appropriately seated and supervised while eating. Government early-years guidance states that young children must remain within **sight and hearing of a member of staff while eating**.

Food Storage

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that food brought from home is **fresh, within its use-by date and suitably packaged**.

Lunchboxes and containers should be clearly named so they can be easily identified.

Where food needs to remain chilled, parents/carers should provide it in an appropriate insulated lunch bag with an ice pack. Lunches cannot be refrigerated at the Holiday Scheme.

Staff Responsibilities

Holiday Scheme staff will:

- Be aware of children with known food allergies and relevant dietary requirements.
- Supervise children appropriately during eating periods.
- Reinforce the rule that children must not share or swap food.
- Remain vigilant for nut products.
- Remove identified nut products from the eating area.
- Follow individual Allergy Action Plans and the Holiday Scheme's Allergy and Anaphylaxis Policy where applicable.
- Respond appropriately to any suspected allergic reaction or choking incident.