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## C9. Packed Lunch Policy & Guidance for Parents

At Hillside Gems, we recognise that some families choose to provide a packed lunch for their child. We work in partnership with parents to ensure that all food brought into the setting is safe, healthy and suitable for young children, while maintaining a safe environment for all.

### Our Approach

We aim to:

- Keep all children safe, particularly those with allergies or dietary needs
- Promote healthy eating habits
- Ensure food is stored and handled safely
- Support children to enjoy positive, social mealtimes

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## Allergies & Food Safety

- We are a nut-aware setting. Packed lunches must not contain nuts or nut-based products.
- Additional food restrictions may apply depending on children's allergies within the setting. Parents will be informed of these.
- Children must not share food under any circumstances.
- Staff are aware of all children's dietary needs and supervise meals closely.

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## Food Temperature & Storage

To reduce the risk of food becoming unsafe:

- Please include an ice pack in your child's lunchbox for any perishable items (e.g. dairy, meat, cooked foods).
  - Lunchboxes should be clearly named.
  - We store lunches in a cool, shaded place or fridge where available.
  - We do not reheat food brought from home.
  - Food should be suitable to be eaten safely at lunchtime without further preparation.
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## Healthy Lunch Guidance

We encourage balanced, nutritious lunches to support children's growth and concentration.

A healthy packed lunch might include:

- A sandwich, wrap, pasta or rice dish
- Fruit and/or vegetables
- A dairy item (or dairy alternative)
- Water as the main drink

Please do not include:

- Fizzy drinks or energy drinks
  - Sweets and chocolate
  - Highly processed or high-sugar foods
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## Food Preparation

- All food should be cut into safe, manageable sizes (e.g. grapes cut lengthways, no whole nuts).

- Please ensure food is prepared safely at home and is fresh on the day.
  - Any items that may pose a choking risk should be appropriately prepared.
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## **Working in Partnership**

If we have concerns about the safety or suitability of a packed lunch, we will:

- Speak with parents in a supportive and respectful way
- Offer guidance to help meet our safety requirements

We appreciate your support in helping us create a safe and healthy environment for all children.

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