



FOOD & DRINK POLICY

Policy Statement

We regard snack and lunchtime as an important part of the pre-school day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. We promote healthy eating and at snack and lunchtime, we aim to provide healthy, balanced and nutritious food which meets the children's individual dietary needs.

Safer and Healthy Eating

We follow these procedures to promote safer and healthy eating in our pre-school:

- We ensure that children are supervised whilst eating and that children are within sight and hearing of a member of staff at all times. Where possible staff are sat facing children when eating to ensure they are eating in a way that prevents choking and so they can prevent food sharing and be aware of any unexpected allergic reactions.
- Before a child starts at pre-school, we obtain information from parents about any special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and intolerances their child has, and any special health requirements. (See the Managing Children with Allergies Policy.)
- We share this information with all staff involved in the preparation and handling of food. We display current information about individual children's dietary needs on our "Dietary and Allergy Lists" so that all staff are kept fully informed about them.
- At snack and lunch time, we are clear about who is responsible for checking that food being provided meets all the requirements for each child.
- We ensure that all staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis and the differences between allergies and intolerances which may develop at any time.
- We record information about each child's dietary needs on their Registration Form and parents sign this to signify that it is correct.
- We have ongoing discussions with parents to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs - including any allergies - are up to date. Parents sign the up-dated Registration Form to signify that it is correct. However, it is ultimately the parent's responsibility to inform us if their child's dietary needs have changed since they originally completed the Registration Form.

FOOD & DRINK POLICY (continued)

- We have ongoing discussions with parents and, where appropriate health professionals, to develop action allergy plans for managing any known allergies and intolerances. We share this information with all staff.
- We consider every child's individual development needs and work in partnership with parents/carers to help children to move on to the next stage with regard to introducing solid foods. This includes understanding the textures a child is familiar with and not making assumptions based on age. We prepare food in a suitable way for each child's developmental needs to help the child move on the next stage at a pace that is right for them.
- We implement systems to ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and preferences as well as their parents' wishes.
- Care is taken to ensure that children with food allergies and intolerances do not have contact with food products that they are allergic to. We do not allow children to share or swap their food with one another
- We have regard to the 'Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance' and promote healthy eating. We provide snacks and drinks that are healthy, balanced and nutritious, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings, to promote health and reduce the risk of obesity and heart disease that may begin in childhood.
- We have fresh drinking water available and accessible to children at all times. We inform the children about how to obtain the water and that they can ask for water at any time during the day.
- For children who drink milk, we provide semi skimmed pasteurised milk.
- We follow the main advice on dietary guidelines and the legal requirements for identifying food allergens when providing snacks based on the four food groups:
 - vegetarian protein alternatives
 - milk and dairy products
 - cereals and grains
 - fresh fruit and vegetables.
- We include foods from the diet of each of the children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.
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FOOD & DRINK POLICY (continued)

- We are a permanent “nut-free zone”. No nuts, anything containing nuts or nut products are allowed or used within the setting.
- Parents are made aware of the above so that no nuts, anything containing nuts or nut products are accidentally brought in, for example, for their child’s packed lunch - see our separate “Lunch Club Policy” - or for a birthday.
- We are happy for children’s birthdays to be celebrated and we encourage a healthy sharing option such as fruit or vegetables
- We take account of the Food Standard Agency (FSA) requirement to check whether the snacks we prepare or cooking activities we undertake contain any of the 14 listed allergens below:

Cereals containing gluten, crustaceans, molluscs, soya, milk, celery, mustard, sesame, sulphur dioxide, eggs, fish, lupin, peanuts and other nuts.

- We take account of the Food Standard Agency (FSA) requirement to inform parents that the snacks we provide or cooking activities we undertake may contain the 14 allergens listed above.
- Through discussion with parents and research reading by staff, we obtain information about the dietary rules of the religious groups to which children and their parents belong, and of vegetarians and vegans, and about food allergies. We take account of this information in the provision of food and drinks.
- We are especially vigilant where we have a child who has any known allergy.
- We require staff to show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. Staff do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child or make a child feel ‘singled out’ because of their diet or allergy.
- We organise snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate.
- We use snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.
- We provide children with utensils that are appropriate for their ages and stages of development and that take account of the eating practices in their cultures.

Choking

- We provide a designated eating space for children. This is to ensure that as far as possible, children are focused on the mealtime to prevent children from choking.



FOOD & DRINK POLICY (continued)

- We prepare food in a way to prevent choking, for example we take into consideration the size, shape and texture of food to avoid the risk of choking - we cut it into slices, narrow batons and avoid round shapes.
- We ensure that children are supervised whilst eating and that children are within sight and hearing of a member of staff at all times.
- Choking can be completely silent so we ensure our staff are alert to when a child may be starting to choke. Where possible staff are sat facing children when eating to ensure they are eating in a way that prevents choking.
- When a child experiences a choking incident that requires intervention, we record details of where and how the child choked and ensure that parents/carers are informed.
- We review these records periodically to identify if there are trends or common features of incidents that could be addressed to reduce the risk of choking. Appropriate action would be taken to address any identified concerns.

Food Aversions

- Children who are showing signs of 'strong food preferences, or aversions to food' are not forced to eat anything they do not want to.
- Staff recognise the signs that a child has had enough and remove uneaten food without comment.
- Children are not made to stay at the table after others have left if they refuse to eat certain items of food.
- Staff work in partnership with parents/carers to support them with children who are showing signs of 'food preference or aversion' and signpost them to further advice.

Packed Lunches

Children who attend Lunch Club are required to bring packed lunches. We:

- ask parents to prepare their child's packed lunch freshly on the day of the Lunch Club session to ensure maximum freshness and to comply with food hygiene regulations;
- give parents information about suitable containers for food.
- ask parents to ensure that their child's lunch box contains an ice pack to keep food cool;
- inform parents of our policy on healthy eating;
- inform parents that we are a permanent "nut-free zone";



FOOD & DRINK POLICY (continued)

- inform parents of any other foods that we may not currently allow due to allergies;
- encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk-based deserts such as yoghurt or crème fraîche. We discourage sweet drinks and can provide children with water or milk;
- discourage packed lunch contents that consist largely of crisps, processed foods, sweet drinks and sweet products such as cakes or biscuits. We reserve the right to return this food to the parent as a last resort;
- ensure staff sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.

Please see also our separate "Lunch Club Policy".

Food Poisoning

- We notify Ofsted of any food poisoning affecting two or more children looked after on the premises as soon as is reasonably practicable, but in any event within 14 days of the incident.