

Nutrition, Weaning and Mealtimes

Purpose

Mealtimes should be a happy, social occasion for staff and children alike, promoting 'family style' dining. Positive interactions should be shared at these times and enjoyed. We are committed to offering children healthy, nutritious and balanced meals and snacks which meet individual's needs, allergies and dietary requirements. We will ensure that a balanced and healthy breakfast, midday meal, tea and daily snacks are provided for children attending a full day at the nursery

Policy

- Menus will be planned in advance, rotated regularly and reflect cultural diversity and variation. These will be displayed for parents
- We provide nutritious food at all snack and mealtimes, avoiding large quantities of fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings
- Menus will include servings of fresh fruit and vegetables every day
- Parents and children will be involved in menu planning
- Fresh drinking water will be constantly available and frequently offered to children and babies
- Individual dietary requirements will be respected. We will gather information from parents regarding their children's dietary needs including any allergies. Where appropriate we will carry out a risk assessment in the case of allergies and work alongside parents to put into place an individual diet plan for their child
- The cook and staff are responsible for ensuring children receive the correct meal that meets their dietary requirements. If outside catering is used, then it is the staff's responsibility to provide the caterers with the dietary requirements in order to meet the children's needs.
- A RED plate system is in place to identify High Risk allergies and to safeguard children
- Placemats are used throughout mealtimes to state which children are on different diets
- The cook is responsible for ensuring the Food Safety Management Guidelines are followed when preparing food and maintaining hygiene in the kitchen
- Staff will show sensitivity in providing for diets and allergies. They would not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child, or make a child feel singled out because of diet or allergy
- Staff will set a good example and eat with the children and show good table manners. Meal and snack times will be organised so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate in small groups. During meals and snack times children will be encouraged to use their manners and say 'Please' and 'Thank you' and conversation will be encouraged
- Staff will use meal and snack times to help promote and encourage children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink, and feeding themselves. Staff will support children to make healthy choices and understand the need for healthy eating
- We provide foods from the diet of each of the children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones. Cultural differences in eating habits will be respected

- Any child who shows signs of distress at being faced with a meal he/she does not like will have the food removed without fuss. If a child does not finish his/her first course, he/she will still be given a small helping of dessert. Children not on special diets will be encouraged to eat a small piece of everything
- Children who refuse to eat at the mealtime will be offered food later in the day
- Children who are slow eaters will be given time and not rushed
- Quantities offered will take account of the ages of the children being catered for
- We will promote positive attitudes to healthy eating through play opportunities and discussions
- We will provide parents with daily records of feeding routines for all children under the age of 2
- Menus are based on nutritional guidelines for young children. Menus are rotated frequently and staff, parents and children are asked for comment and suggestions. Where possible children will be involved in preparation of items to eat, e.g. buttering bread.
- Weaning foods and pureed meals will be provided for babies, as their development stage dictates. Organic vegetables will be used in preparation of purees whenever possible and will be widely used throughout nursery meals.
- We encourage children to eat a healthy cooked lunch provided by the nursery (when this is an available option) but if a packed lunch is brought in from home, then parents must be asked to keep this healthy. No crisps, chocolate or carbonated drinks are to be used in packed lunches and foods must not contain any nut products. Staff are to ensure that plates and the necessary cutlery are provided for packed lunches. We will NOT reheat hot food brought in from home.