

Food & Drink Policy

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage states

'Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, these must be healthy, balanced and nutritious. Before a child is admitted to the setting the provider must obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences, and food allergies that the child has, and any special health requirements.' (EYFS: 2024: Section 3: 3.55 p34).

The company regards snack and meal times as an important part of the session/day. Mealtimes are important to children's development. The food they eat at mealtimes gives the vitamins, minerals, and protein they need to grow and stay healthy. It gives them energy and makes them feel good. Eating habits and attitudes learned in childhood can last a lifetime.

Before a child starts to attend the setting, we find out from parents their children's dietary needs, including any allergies and preferences and whether they will be having catered food or a packed lunch.

Fresh drinking water is available and accessible at all times.

0-2 yrs

Most meals can be provided by the company on a daily basis. There is a microwave available for heating meals such as jar food or meals prepared at home. The setting cannot accept any food that is still frozen upon arrival.

Parents should bring in sterilised bottles and a tin of milk, named, to enable staff to make up fresh feeds when required. See Guidance for the Safe Preparation of Milk Feeds (HS6.27).

Temperatures of the heated meals are taken and recorded daily. (see HS6.16a Food Probing Guidelines/HS6.17 Catered Food Temperature Record).

If preferred parents can purchase hot catered food for their child.

2-4+yrs

It is the aim of the setting to provide hot food to allow parents to choose this as an alternative to supplying a packed lunch.

In order to achieve this, we have a catering company deliver freshly prepared healthy and nutritious meals. Weekly menu plans are available on request, or can be seen on the parent's notice board.

Temperatures of the catered meals are taken and recorded daily (see HS6.16a Food Probing Guidelines/HS6.17 Catered Food Temperature Record).

Good Practice

- We follow the Allergens Regulations introduced in 2014
- All staff involved in preparing and handling food must receive food hygiene training.
- We record information about each child's dietary needs in her/his registration form and the About Your Child. Parents sign these records to signify that it is correct.
- We regularly consult with parents to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs - including any allergies - are up-to-date.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs in the kitchen for the preparation of meals (HS6.16g Allergy and Special Dietary Requirement Chart).
- We implement systems to ensure that children receive only food and drink which is consistent with their dietary needs and their parents' wishes (HS6.16g Allergy and Special Dietary Requirement Chart).
- We display the menus of meals/snacks for the information of parents.
- We provide nutritious food at all meals and snacks, avoiding large quantities of fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- 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.
- 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 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 her/his diet or allergy.
- We organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate. (HS6.16e Food and Drink Procedure)
- We use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving their own food and drink and feeding themselves.

- We provide children with utensils which are appropriate for their ages and stages of development and which take account of the eating practices in their cultures.
- We have fresh drinking water constantly available for the children. We inform the children about how to obtain the water and that they can ask for water at any time during the session/day.
- In accordance with parents' wishes, we offer children arriving early in the morning - and/or staying late - an appropriate meal or snack.
- For children who drink milk, we provide whole and semi skimmed pasteurised milk.
- For each child, we provide parents with daily written information about feeding routines, intake and preferences. (EYLog)

Review of Policy

This policy is reviewed every 12 months

Review date – December 2025