Nutrition and Mealtimes Policy

We regard snack and mealtimes as an important part of the nursery's day. Mealtimes should be a happy, social occasion for children and staff alike. Positive interactions should be shared at these times and enjoyed. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. We are committed to offering children healthy, nutritious and balanced meals and snacks which meet individual needs and requirements and following the Department for Education nutrition guidance.

We ensure that children's food is prepared and provided in line with children's individual needs, developmental stage and any agreed care or allergy plans and that staff are able to understand and consistently apply arrangements for managing allergies, food intolerances, dietary requirements and choking risks.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Allergies and allergic reactions policy.

At mealtimes, we aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs, and the full requirements of The EYFS Statutory Framework to promote the good health of children.

- We have a four week rolling menu and we display this on the notice board for the information of parents. Parents also receive a copy of the menu in their parent information pack.
- We provide nutritious food at all meals and we include a variety of foods from the four main food groups:
  - ✓ Meat, fish and protein alternatives;
  - ✓ Dairy foods;
  - ✓ Grains, cereals and starch vegetables;
  - ✓ Fruit and vegetables.
- We organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate and we use these times to help children to develop independence through learning to use cutlery and feeding themselves. Staff set a good example and encourage good table manners. During meals and snack times children are encouraged to use their manners and say 'please' and 'thank you' and conversation is encouraged.
- Children are supervised appropriately while eating, including being within sight and hearing of staff, and supported to eat safely
- No child is ever left alone when eating or drinking to minimise the risk of choking, and a qualified paediatric first aider is always present during meal and snack times
- If a child does not finish his/her first course, he/she will still be given one small helping of dessert.
- Children are given time to eat at their own pace and not rushed.
- Quantities offered take account of the ages of the children being catered.
- We provide vegetarian and vegan alternatives for children who require them.
- Only milk and water are provided as drinks to promote oral health. Fresh drinking water is always available and accessible. It is frequently offered to children and babies and intake is monitored. In hot weather staff will encourage children to drink more water to keep them hydrated
- The nursery cook is responsible for the planning of all menus, and for the hygiene of the kitchen area, including all environmental health regulations. All staff members hold the basic food hygiene certificate.
- Liz Miller is responsible for all food ordering, purchasing of fresh or frozen items and all hygiene products, as requested by the nursery cook and staff members. All our fresh meat is supplied by Clive Lancaster

Butchers in Bingham who provide high quality produce from our local area. All other food products are delivered by Tesco and Ocado and Hygiene items are purchased from Notts County Council Supplies.

Baby feeding and weaning

- We follow babies' individual feeding patterns following conversations with parents. We regularly review these to ensure they continue to meet the baby's needs
- We feed babies responsively according to their needs and support mothers with breast feeding and making provision for expressed breastmilk
- We prepare infant formula milk if required, following NHS guidelines
- Weaning is introduced in collaboration with parents, including discussions about the stage their baby is at, the types of foods and textures their baby is eating at home and how these are presented to the baby; no assumptions are made based on the age of the baby
- The nursery provides parents with daily written records of feeding routines for children in Millfield Babies who are under two.

Management of food allergies and dietary needs

- Individual dietary requirements are respected. Before a child joins the nursery, we gather information from parents regarding their children's dietary needs, including any special dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies that a child has, and any special health requirements. All information is shared with staff involved in preparing and handling food
- Where appropriate, we will carry out a risk assessment in the case of allergies and work alongside parents to put into place an individual dietary/allergy plan for their child. This will be regularly reviewed and any changes shared with all staff
- We give careful consideration to seating to avoid cross contamination of food from child to child. Where appropriate, an adult will sit with children during meals to ensure safety and minimise risks. Children with food allergies and dietary needs have a place mat detailing their specific needs
- At each meal and snack time, we ensure a nominated practitioner is responsible for checking that the food being provided meets all the requirements for each child
- Where appropriate, discussions will also take place with children about allergies and potential risks to make them aware of the dangers of sharing certain foods
- Staff show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. They 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.

Food safety and hygiene

- All staff who prepare and handle food are competent to do so and receive training in food hygiene which is updated every three years
- All staff are trained in preparing foods safely to avoid the risk of choking, following the Foods Standards Agency guidelines
- All staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis
- All staff are aware of the differences between allergies and intolerances, including that they need to maintain vigilance as children can develop allergies at any time
- In the very unlikely event of any food poisoning affecting two or more children on the premises, whether or not this may arise from food offered at the nursery, we will inform Ofsted as soon as reasonably practical and in all cases within 14 days. We will also inform the relevant health agencies and follow any advice given.
- We do allow parents to bring in cakes on special occasions. We ensure that all food brought in from parents meets the above and health and safety requirements and ingredients that are listed within the Food Information for Consumers (FIR) 2014. All food will be carefully checked for allergens.

Packed lunches

- We do not allow children to bring packed lunches into the setting. We have several children with allergies and intolerances and all food will be provided by the nursery to ensure their safety.

Policy Reviewed

August 2026