

Early Years Food, Food Hygiene and Handling Policy 2024-25



SNACK TIME

In the Early Years, we aim to provide children with healthy, balanced and nutritious snacks and drinks. We try to make sure there is an element of choice (eg children can choose milk or water to drink). A list of the typical snacks served is on display in the foyer area. Some examples of the sort of food on offer are:

- Bread sticks, rice cakes, cereal (Rice Krispies), wholemeal pitta bread
- Apples, bananas
- Cucumber, carrots, peppers
- Cheese batons
- Cakes as a very occasional treat when celebrating a child's birthday (parents are also given the option of providing an alternative sugar-friendly way of celebrating their child's birthday). Birthdays are celebrated within Nursery, or within Reception, to limit the number of times a year this happens for each child.

FOOD STORAGE

All perishable items are stored in a fridge that is checked daily. The use by date on food is checked carefully before any food is served in the setting. Non-perishable items for snack are stored in suitable containers or the original packaging in the kitchen cupboards or snack drawers. Allergens stored in the fridge will be kept in separate container and labelled with use by date. Open packets are labelled with the date opened.

FOOD PREPARATION

- Staff preparing food receive regular training. Staff undertaking level 2 food hygiene training cascade any amendments to practice needed in staff meetings. Staff training will be spread out where possible, to enable regular access to food handling and hygiene updates.
- Staff must wash hands thoroughly before preparing food, using the sink in the disabled toilet where possible, and wear disposable gloves.
- Staff must cover any cuts with a plaster.
- Staff should clean the designated work surface before and after food preparation.
- Staff should wear the apron provided when preparing snacks or handling food (which should be wiped clean on a daily basis using an anti-bacterial spray) or a disposable apron.
- Care must be taken when using knives and these should be kept out of the reach of children.
- Separate chopping boards are to be used. A sign with the colour code is displayed on wall next to sink.
- Care should be taken with round food items (eg grapes, cherry tomatoes etc) which should be quartered. Cheese, cucumber and carrot similarly should be cut into strips or batons rather than chunks or rounds.
- If children assist in preparing snack or food a staff member will supervise them to make sure that they follow similar guidelines to ensure safe and hygienic food preparation.
- Tables used by the children for snack-time are cleaned before and after snack and after lunch floors are swept or wiped clean of spilt food or drinks.
- All dirty dishes, plates, cutlery and cups are washed in hot water and detergent, then rinsed at a high temperature and left to drain where possible.
- Staff wear their own rubber gloves when washing dishes etc.
- Cloths (3 types) and tea towels are replaced daily (see daily checks list). These are washed at 90°C.

- Separate cloths are used for dishes, tables/surfaces and cleaning up after messy play. These are identifiable using a colour code system (see chart by the sink).
- The food/snack preparation area is separate from the area used for art and craft preparation. These areas are labelled accordingly.
- Different washing up bowls and draining racks are used for washing dishes and cleaning up paints and messy play resources.
- The washing up bowl and draining rack used for washing dishes should be sprayed with anti-bac spray on a daily basis.
- Regular deep cleans to be carried out on washing up bowls and draining racks, and all crockery etc used.

PACKED LUNCHES

Parents are encouraged to provide their child with a healthy packed lunch. Advice on lunch box contents is given in the parent information on the school website. Parents are encouraged to limit the number of sugary foods in packed lunches. Children are encouraged to take any food they have not eaten home in their lunch boxes for their parents to check and dispose of. School meals are not prepared on site.

SUPERVISION WHILST EATING

Children will be closely supervised whilst eating during the session, for example, at snack time or during the lunch period. Where possible, staff should sit facing children and ensure children are within view as well as hearing (as choking can be completely silent). When children are eating, there will always be a member of staff present with a valid paediatric first aid certificate.

CHOKING

If there has been a choking incident that requires intervention, staff should record details of where and how the child choked and parents and/or carers should be made aware.

DRINKING WATER

Parents are requested to provide their child with a named water bottle to ensure they have constant access to drinking water. This should be taken home each day at the end of the session. Children are encouraged to drink regularly and the importance of drinking plenty is stressed during periods of hot weather.

FOOD POISONING

Every care will be taken to minimise the risk of food poisoning to children in the setting and to serve healthy food prepared following the hygiene guidelines outlined in this policy. If there are any cases of food poisoning resulting from food prepared and/or served in the setting affecting 2 or more children Ofsted must be informed within 14 days of the incident.

DIETARY REQUIREMENTS, FOOD PREFERENCES, ALLERGIES AND ALLERGENS

Parents must inform Early Years staff if their child has any food allergies, specific dietary requirements or food preferences before they start at the setting and there is a section on the registration form for this information to be recorded. A record is kept in the register folder and this information is reviewed 3 times a year with parents. With food allergies and where any intervention could be required by staff, parents are requested to fill out a health care plan and provide details of symptoms to look out for and action to take. All staff are made aware of this information to ensure that children are not given food to which they may have an allergy. The member of staff serving the snack is responsible for making sure the food being served meets the requirements of each child. If children have specific food preferences, we will try to ensure children have an alternative choice of food and/or drink to meet their preferences as far as is possible.

Parents are given the option to send in cakes or biscuits to celebrate their child's birthday, or to provide an alternative sugar-free way of celebrating. Staff will check the ingredients of any cakes to make sure they

meet the dietary requirements of children in the setting. Parents can request that their child/children do not consume food sent in by other parents on the home-school agreement form.

Parents are informed of any allergens in food regularly served by the setting for snacks and a list is available in the foyer area. A notice is also displayed in the foyer to inform parents/carers of allergens contained in any occasional food served in the setting, such as birthday cake.

The Early Years area is a 'nut-free zone' and parents are requested in the parent information on the school website (and via email) to avoid nuts in packed lunches.

Reviewed and approved November 2024

Next review November 2025