



## Food & drink

This policy has been revised to include the updated nutrition guidance released in May 2025, stating that Early Years providers from September 2025 MUST have regard to the guidance and where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, they must be healthy, balanced and nutritious.

We provide healthy, balanced and nutritious snacks and meals, catering for individual needs of all our families. Mealtimes provide opportunities for socialisation, communication and a chance to model healthy eating. We have created a menu based on nutritional value and seasonal fruits and vegetables.

Some of the ways in which we promote healthy eating in our setting are:

- 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. We cater for all dietary needs both cultural and religious.
- Our rolling 2 week menus are shared on our family app at the beginning of winter and summer and are printed when requested.
- We provide nutritious food for snacks. We avoid large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives, and colourings.
- We include foods through cooking/snack activities from the diets 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 organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate.
- We use meal and 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.
- Fresh drinking water and milk are provided 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 day.
- Breakfast is readily available for all children until 930am. This which includes cereal and fresh fruit.

### Babies

- Baby led weaning is supported and we work with parents to provide support and advice on weaning. Our weaning forms are to be completed with the child's key person and updated regularly throughout their weaning process.
- Food can be blended, pureed, mashed or chopped if required and this needs to be communicated with your child's key person and signed off on the weaning form.
- We support and encourage mothers who breast feed. If you need to breast feed your child whilst collecting or dropping off, please speak to the nursery manager who can arrange for a private place to feed your child, if you wish. A fridge is available to store breast milk. If you would like to bring in breast milk for your child, please ensure it is labelled and dated with the child's name, date expressed, and date frozen/defrosted (if applicable)
- Formula milk needs to be provided, and if not in original packaging needs to be potted and labelled with the child's name and number of ounces the formula powder will make.

- Please ensure you provide enough sterilised bottles for your child's session.
- Babies feeding routines change rapidly. Parents are responsible for communicating changes in their child's feeding routines via Family.
- We provide daily information via our Family app about feeding routines and intake.

### **Managing allergies**

As part of every child's enrolment process there is a section to discuss allergies. If it is brought to our attention that a child has an allergy, an allergy plan needs to be created and kept on the child's file. This will also be kept up to date on family for all staff to view. It is the parent's responsibility to inform management and update these forms if any changes are required. These changes must be added to the form and signed and dated by the parent.

Children's individual allergies are displayed in the kitchen and each room. Using a picture of the child, the days they attend and the symbol to represent the allergy. Staff in rooms are knowledgeable of dietary requirements and check these requirements each day. Allergies are discussed at each termly staff meeting and staff are updated via the staff messaging group when new children enrol with allergies.

All children with allergies are risk assessed on their reactions from mild to severe. Children with severe reactions who require an EpiPen will have an individual risk assessment and a healthcare plan in place. EpiPens will be labelled and kept in our locked medication cabinets within the rooms. A bottle of Priton is always kept onsite.

Children with allergies will continue to eat with every other child during lunchtime, however they will have their own red plates, cups and cutlery. This is to prevent cross contamination. We currently have made the decision to become a nut free nursery due to current parent allergies. We also ask that packed lunches do not contain nuts.

All staff have Level 2 food hygiene. Our nursery chef and management all have Level 3 food hygiene and participated in an Allergy awareness course on our online training system.

If we suspect a child has had a reaction, parents will be contacted immediately and the appropriate treatment will be given.

### **Bottles & Dummies**

"Providers must promote the good health, including the oral health, of the children they look after" EYFS Statutory Framework 2025.

With the continuing research into bottles and dummies we do not allow children to bring in drinks bottles from home. Milk and water are provided daily as well as open top cups or tommie tippee cups. Research shows that dummies and bottles can have an impact on a child's oral health and can later lead to speech and language difficulties.

Dummies and bottles with teats are provided by parents in our Blossom room and are used for milk and water only.

Dummies are used to comfort a child and will be placed in the child's individual basket once settled.

### **Celebrations**

Celebrations will continue to play a big part in our nursery life; each child gets the choice to wear the birthday crown and gets to read their birthday book. If parents would like to bring in a food item to celebrate, we ask that a healthier option is considered, however we will still be allowing birthday cakes as our birthday tradition.

### **Baking Activities**

Baking provides children with so many different opportunities to learn and develop. Such as building on listening skills, working within a group, mathematics and communication skills. We will ensure that we look at healthy alternatives and use savoury recipes where we can.

### **Packed Lunches**

Parents who choose to provide their child with a packed lunch must adhere to the guidance followed by the setting. We do not allow children to bring in items such as crisps, chocolate bars, sweets or fizzy drinks. All high risk food items such as whole grapes and cherry tomatoes must be chopped appropriately. Packed lunches are not stored in fridges; it is the parent's responsibility to provide ice packs in their child's lunch box.

We strive to meet the needs of ALL children whether this be a part of their religion, disability or parent preference. Please speak to your child's key person or a member of the senior team if you wish to discuss any matter in this policy further.

Attached to this policy is guidance regarding a healthy balanced diet for children and support and ideas for creating children's packed lunches inline with our policy and guidance. You can also visit for tips and ideas <https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes/#tips>

Signed By Nursery Manager

1<sup>st</sup> September 2025