



Food and Drink Policy

Snack and meal times are an important part of the day at Preschool. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps the children learn about healthy eating and oral health. We aim to promote healthy eating by providing a choice of fresh, nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs and to educate children of the effects that foods and drinks have on our bodies and support them in making healthy choices.

We provide all snacks, lunches and drinks to every child. We follow the Children Food Trust guidance, Food Standard Agency guidance and Public Health England guidance for information on appropriate child portion sizes and healthy food suggestions. We are inspected regularly by the Food Standards Agency and currently hold a rating of '5'. (Updated January 2023) which means hygiene standards in the preschool are very good.

A healthy, balanced diet and regular physical activity are essential for children's health and wellbeing. Good nutrition is important for children to:

- Ensure they get the right amount of energy and nutrients needed to support growth, development, health and well-being
- Encourage children to eat a wide range of foods and develop healthy eating habits to take with them into later childhood and beyond.

A healthy balanced diet for children aged from one to four years is based on the four food groups listed below, which provide a range of essential nutrients that children need to grow and develop:

- Bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates
- Fruit and vegetables
- Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins
- Dairy and alternatives

One of the basic principles of healthy eating is variety, as eating a wider range of different foods provides a better balance of nutrients. Planning meals and snacks to include a variety of food and drinks from the four food groups listed above each day provides children with a good balance of nutrients and helps ensure their nutritional needs are met. Young children are growing quickly and have high energy and nutrient requirements for their size

Food storage

When the food arrives, it is checked by the Management team for freshness, spoilage, open packets and tinned cans are checked for damages. Food that is found to be spoiled/damaged is not accepted and is returned to the delivery driver. All food is also checked for 'use by' and 'best before' dates. A record of the food delivered is kept by the Management team. Fresh food, dried food and tinned food are rotated ensuring old food is used before new foods, following the FIFO rule – first in, first out.

We have food management procedures in place to control any hazards that could arise when providing food & drink. These procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure they are effective.

All food, is stored in refrigerators at a temperature below 5°C

Food Handling & Preparation

The Preschool insists that food handling & preparation may only be undertaken by employees sufficiently and suitably trained in the safe handling of food. (Level 2 Food Safety)

All staff follow the guidelines of Safer Food Better Business.

As a setting we display the Allergens Poster on the notice board and record all foods provided for the children during lunch logging the main allergy groups on a chart.

- Before children attend the setting, parents are asked to provide details of their children's dietary needs, including any cultural and religious requirements and allergies. This information is requested on the children's registration forms.
- Parents are asked to keep the Preschool updated with any changes in their children's dietary requirements and allergies. Parents will be asked to sign the updated record to signify that this is correct.
- Current information about individual children's dietary needs will be clearly displayed so that all staff and volunteers are aware of these needs. We will have a photographic display for children with dietary needs, which parents will have given written permission for.
- Menus will be displayed for the information of parents.
- We are to provide healthy and nutritious food at all meals and snacks, which will avoid large quantities of fat, sugar, and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- Members of staff are encouraged to show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies, and not use their diet or allergy as a label for the child, or make them feel singled out.
- Meal and snack times are social occasions in which children and staff participate. We encourage children to develop independence through making

choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves. We provide children with utensils which are appropriate for their ages and stages of development.

- Food hygiene is included in induction and on the job training is available to all staff involved in the preparation and handling of food.
- If parents provide food for their children to eat at Preschool we will share information about healthy food options and suitable containers for food.
- Parents are made aware when signing the Terms and Conditions that we operate a Nut Free Policy.
- Children with food allergies will have their own, labelled lunchbox and will be served first.
- We will notify Ofsted within 14 days if any food poisoning affecting two or more children looked after on the premises.

Food Preparation

When preparing food and planning daily menus, the staff team follows the guidance of the Food Standard Agency to reduce the risk of children choking on food provided.

- Remove any stones and pips from fruit before serving.
- All fruit and vegetables should be washed thoroughly before being eaten or cooked for children.
- Cut small round foods, like grapes, strawberries and cherry tomatoes, lengthways and into quarters. Blueberries to be cut in half.
- Cut large fruits like melon, and hard fruit or vegetables like raw apple and carrot into slices instead of small chunks.
- Sausages should be cut into thin strips rather than chunks and remove the skins.
- No nuts at preschool
- Do not give whole seeds to children under five years old.
- Cut cheese into strips rather than chunks.
- Known choking hazards such as boiled sweets, popcorn, tortilla chips, marshmallows and jelly cubes will not be given to children at preschool.
- Choking hazard and food preparation posters are displayed in the kitchen for the staff to refer to when preparing food.

When children take part in cooking activities, they:

- are supervised at all times;
- understand the importance of hand washing and simple hygiene rules
- are kept away from hot surfaces and hot water; and
- do not have unsupervised access to electrical equipment such as blenders etc

Snack

Children will be offered a variety of fruit, veg and breadsticks /crackers for their morning snack which we will provide. There will be a £0.50 per day charge for this

Children will be able to choose what they like for snack, but we do encourage them to try a variety of foods with different flavours and textures. Milk will be on offer at snack time, and children will have free access to their water bottles throughout the day. We provide oat or coconut milk for children who cannot drink dairy milk.

We will generally offer morning snack from 10.00-11.00am. This is a flexible arrangement which might change depending on the activities that are on offer that day. Children that stay on until 4.00pm are offered an additional snack at 3.30pm.

Lunch

For children who stay with us for lunch we offer a healthy, balanced meal served 'bento box' style, which is ideal for preschoolers. Lunches are freshly made, use minimum packaging and less food waste. We are happy to take into account dietary requirements and preferences, please speak to us in advance so that we can tailor a menu around your child's needs. We charge £2.00 per lunch.

If your child attended a fully funded session parents can provide their own packed lunch if they prefer but parents will need to follow our lunch guidance.

For example, a selection of the following:

- **Starchy foods** – baguette, breadsticks, rice crackers, cheese crackers, pasta, cous-cous, tortilla wraps, flatbreads, bagels, tiger bread, ciabatta, brioche, cheese scones. We also offer the children small portions of the following snack type items – Hula Hoops, Quavers, Veggie straws, pea snacks, chickpea puffs, carrot puffs, lentil curls.
- **Protein** - ham, houmous, cheese (Cheddar, Emmental, Gouda, Mozzarella etc) roast chicken breast, veggie sausages, houmous, Quorn, vegetarian sausage rolls, eggs
- **Veggies** (two different veggies offered per day) - carrots, cucumber, sweetcorn, peas, peppers, edamame beans, cherry tomatoes, broccoli
- **Fruit** (two different fruits offered per day) - seasonal fresh fruit and small portions of dried fruit such as raisins, cranberries, mango and papaya
- **Pudding** – home made fruit and veg based cakes, flavoured rice cakes, frozen fruit smoothies and frozen yoghurt 'lollies', carrot muffins, banana bread, Greek yoghurt and honey.

Please let us know if there is anything you would prefer your child not to have and we are happy to provide an alternative.

The lunch menu for the day will be written up on the notice board. We will always let you know if children have not eaten much for whatever reason.

Drinks

The Preschool will provide suitable and sufficient drinks for children throughout the day, these will include:

- Water
- Semi skimmed milk or dairy free alternative at snack time

Children and staff will have access to drinking water at all times throughout the day. Children's bottles will be filled up in the morning and placed in their drawers for easy access. They will be monitored during the session and refilled if required

At the end of the day all water bottles will be put in the dishwasher.