

Food and drinks Policy

Aim

Overall aim of this policy is to promote children's health and well-being and to outline everyone's rights and responsibilities.

Mission statement

This policy has been created and implemented following an advice from Worcestershire Local Authority and the Voluntary Food and Drink Guidelines for Early Years Settings in England.

"Fresh drinking water must be available at all times" EYFS 2012

Drinks

- We provide fresh drinking water throughout the day, children can help themselves to water at anytime
- Children need six to eight (100 – 150ml) drinks each day to make sure they stay hydrated, more if they are engaging in an extra physical activity and during hot weather, children can dehydrate very quickly
- We recognize that dehydration causes children to be tired and irritable, this will have a negative effect on their behaviour, learning and overall health and well-being
- We provide a choice of water or milk during morning snack time and in the afternoon, water is provided at lunchtime, parents can provide their child with another drink in their lunchbox if they wish

Food

- Parents currently provide morning snack and a packed lunch for their children, parents are encouraged to provide healthy and balanced meals for their children, advice will be given to parents who are unsure about what to put in their child's lunchbox
- Lunchboxes are kept in the fridge until lunchtime, however morning snack stays on a snack tray and should therefore be non-dairy
- All grapes, cherry tomatoes, etc should be cut up to prevent choking hazard
- We provide afternoon snack (3.30pm) and a light tea (between 4.30 and 5pm) for children who stay with us after 3 pm. A choice of milk or water is always available for all nursery children who stay after 3 pm

The eating environment and social aspects of mealtimes

- We recognize that mealtime is a social occasion, children sit at the table with a member of staff, we use this as an opportunity to encourage good manners and develop healthy eating habits

- Children unpack all their lunch and put their lunch box back on the trolley
- Children are encouraged to eat their healthy options first, followed by their dessert
- Children should always have a drink with every meal
- Children will have to be seated at all times whilst drinking and eating
- Uneaten food will be sent back home whenever possible, so that parents can monitor the amount their child has eaten
- Children are expected to tidy up after themselves when finished
- We understand that parents have different expectations and beliefs about what their children should eat, parents are welcome to come and talk to us at any time if they have any concerns about mealtimes at nursery
- We believe that children should have a little drink with every meal, children choose whether to drink milk or water at snack time and pour their drink themselves, this gives them control about how much they are drinking, if parents are concerned about the amount of drink their child is receiving, they are welcome to come and talk to us
- Children who finish their lunch early (fast eaters) have a choice of remaining at the table with their friends or going to sit and read a book in the quiet corner, this gives children a chance to sit quietly for a while after they've just finished eating and slower eaters have the opportunity to finish their meal without any distractions
- Most of the time children sit at the table with their key person whenever possible, however there are times when children might be seated in certain order, for example putting a fussy eater next to a child who eats well is a tried and tested strategy that usually encourages children to eat better; on some occasions children might not be able to sit next to a child of their choice due to food allergies etc.
- We recognize that fussy eating is a part of children's development and affects about 10 – 20% of young children, parents experiencing problems with their children during mealtimes are welcome to come to us for advice
- We encourage parents to provide food their children like and will eat, sometimes parents might like to introduce new food or encourage children to try something different, this is fine as long as parents let a member of staff know in the morning that their child has not eaten this particular food before and might not like it
- We believe that the food parents sent to nursery is there for their child to eat, we will therefore encourage children to eat their dinner, parents should think carefully about the amount they provide as seeing too much food can discourage some children, if you are worried about the amount of food your child is bringing back home, please come and talk to us
- We talk to children about healthy lifestyle and promote healthy eating habits as a part of our curriculum through the following activities – cooking, gardening and growing vegetables, food tasting activities, exercise and physical activities.