

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Senior Leadership Team on an annual basis.

Date the policy was last reviewed and agreed	SLT		SLT	
	Name	Signature	Name	Signature
February 2026	Natasha			

This policy is due for review up to 12 months from the above date

Food and Drink at Preschool Policy

Legal Basis: Related Sub Section in The Statutory Framework for The Early Years Foundation Stage (March 2021)

Food and Drink

3.48. Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, they must be healthy, balanced and nutritious. Before a child is admitted to the setting the provider must also obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies that the child has, and any special health requirements. Fresh drinking water must be available and accessible to children at all times. Providers must record and act on information from parents and carers about a child's dietary needs.

3.49. There must be an area which is adequately equipped to provide healthy meals, snacks and drinks for children as necessary. There must be suitable facilities for the hygienic preparation of food for children, if necessary including suitable sterilisation equipment for babies' food. Providers must be confident that those responsible for preparing and handling food are competent to do so. In group provision, all staff involved in preparing and handling food must receive training in food hygiene. In addition, section 4 of 'Example menus for early years settings in England' includes guidance on menu planning, food safety, managing food allergies and reading food labels, which staff preparing food will find helpful in ensuring that children are kept safe.

3.50. Registered providers must notify Ofsted or the childminder agency with which they are registered of any food poisoning affecting two or more children cared for on the premises. Notification must be made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but in any event within 14 days of the incident. A registered provider, who, without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with this requirement, commits an offence.

1 INTRODUCTION

We offer breakfast and lunch sessions and run a rolling snack. All children are asked to sit at a table when eating food, whether they arrived at the preschool with food or were provided food by an adult at the preschool. All staff are paediatric first aid trained which includes dealing with choking and allergic reactions. Children all have their own personalised place mat for meal times. Placemats indicate any allergies or specific requirements that a child may have. A list of specific dietary requirements or allergies are also listed next to the snack table or where food is prepared, along with a list of children who bring in their own snack from home. Children bring water bottles everyday or are provided with a cup of water if they forget, both are available all day.

2 BREAKFAST PROCEDURE

Breakfast is provided by the preschool.

- As the children attending Breakfast Club arrive, children wash their hands and put their placemat on the table.
- Children sit at the snack table with an adult and are offered a healthy breakfast and a drink of milk or water.
- An adult will sit with the children while they eat their breakfast and engage them in conversation
- Children clear away their own bowls, cups and placemats

- Adults will ensure the table and floor are cleaned and ready for the start of the day

3 SNACK PROCEDURE

We run a rolling snack mid-way through the morning and afternoon sessions. Rolling snack means that children are not interrupted during play, but can finish their game or activity then stop to have snack. The adult running the snack activity will announce to the children that snack has started then sit at the snack table so that children can join them for snack. It will run until all the children have had (or been offered) a snack. We use snack time to encourage independence, social, and communication skills

- Children put their placemat/name card on an empty spot at the table and then go and wash their hands.
- Children help themselves to a cup and a plate then sit in their seat.
- Children who have our snack are offered fruit/vegetables and another savoury item such as crackers/breadsticks/rice cakes etc
- Children who bring their own snack collect their own lunch box or snack pot and choose something suitable for snack
- All children are offered a drink of milk (semi-skimmed) or water
- Children are encouraged to pour their own milk or water and to drink from an open cup
- Where appropriate, children are encouraged to be independent with their snack, such as peeling their own satsumas, opening their own yoghurts etc
- When they are finished, children are expected to put their own cup, plate, and placemat into the washing up bowl or specified area

During snack, adults will engage the children in conversation and encourage good table manners such as sitting, drinking and eating nicely, remembering pleases and thank yous etc.

If the snack table is full when a child wants to have snack, they will have to sit on the carpet with a book and wait for their turn or come back in a few minutes.

Once most of the children have had their snack, any children who have not had theirs will be reminded that snack is available but finishing soon. Before finishing snack, any children who still have not had any will be asked individually if they want to have snack. When all have been asked or have had snack, the adult will announce that snack is finished for today.

4 LUNCH PROCEDURE

Lunch Club starts after the morning session. A packed lunch must be provided by the parents.

- The children line up then go and wash their hands, supervised by an adult, and lining up sensibly and safely while waiting for their turn
- Meanwhile the tables are cleaned with disinfectant spray or wipes
- Children collect their own lunch box and choose a place at a table to sit and eat their lunch
- Where appropriate, children are encouraged to be independent with their lunch, such as peeling their own satsumas, opening their own yoghurts, choosing what to eat etc

- Parents are to provide cutlery as appropriate and prepare food according to safety guidelines where necessary e.g. cutting food that present a choking hazard
- Generally, staff will not prepare food for children, any unsuitable or unsafe items will be returned to parents with an explanation (See Appendix 1).
- Staff will not reheat food due to the risk of food poisoning.
- Staff will place items into the fridge in the morning only if asked to do so by parents.
- Children must not be allowed to share food
- Adults position themselves around the room so that all tables are suitably supervised (ideally one adult per table, or where this is not possible, one adult between two tables)
- Children are encouraged to eat as much as they can, uneaten food will be left in lunch boxes so that parents are aware of what has been eaten.
- Children clear away their own rubbish and return lunch boxes to the trolley
- Parents are asked to name all belongings, including any Tupperware pots etc.

5 TREATS

Some children choose to bring in treats to share with their friends on their birthdays, staff are happy to share these out at an appropriate time.

- There is no requirement to provide treats on a child's birthday, parents are never asked to do so
- Parents are asked on the Registration Form if they are happy for their own child to have a treat brought in by another child.
- Ingredients are checked before treats are given to children with allergies or dietary preferences.
- Where items are home made and ingredients can not be verified, children with specific dietary needs are not given the treat.
- Children who cannot have the treat may be offered an alternative if there is something suitable available at the preschool, however we do not routinely have alternative treats available.

6 CHILDREN WITH ALLERGIES

We take care that children with specific dietary needs (such as allergies or food preferences due to religious or moral beliefs) have those needs met.

- All children have their own place mat which indicates allergies or preferences,
- There is a list of children with allergies or preferences displayed in the preschool.
- Staff are made aware of specific needs when a child starts with us.
- Staff have a specific day on which they run the rolling snack so that they get to know the individual needs of the children who attend on that day.
- New foods are checked for allergens before serving them to children
- Parents are responsible for providing lunch for their child if they attend lunch club
- Children are not allowed to share food
- Milk is provided for all children at snack time, paid for using the Governments Nursery Milk Scheme, dairy free alternatives are not provided as part of this scheme, therefore parents are asked to provide their own non-dairy alternative if needed. We will provide water.

7 WATER

Parents are asked to provide a filled water bottle each day. These are kept where children can easily access them as and when they like.

Children are encouraged to have a drink regularly throughout the day, particularly during the summer months when the weather is hot.

We encourage parents to put only water in the bottles, and will only refill them with water. Where parents insist their child won't drink water, we will allow squash and recommend a sugar free variety.

Children are provided with an open cup during breakfast and snack times, they can choose milk or water.

8 MILK

Cow's milk is provided under the Nursery Milk Scheme funded by the NMRU.

Each child is entitled to a 1/3 pint semi-skimmed milk per day. We offer milk at breakfast club, and both morning and afternoon snack times.

Milk alternatives are not provided under the scheme as they do not have the same nutritional value as cow's milk. Children who have milk allergies or who do not drink cow's milk are offered water. Parents can provide an alternative if they so wish.

STAFF DECLARATION

I agree that I have read and understood the information set out in this policy, and will abide by it.

I understand that if I have any questions about this policy, I will raise them with my manager prior to signing my agreement below.

Staff Name	Staff Signature	Date

APPENDIX 1

UNSAFE OR HIGH RISK FOODS

Foods that pose a choking hazard or which may trigger an allergic reaction in a child or adult at the preschool are considered unsafe.

Where children have an allergy to a food, a health care plan and risk assessment will be completed as necessary. The preschool will advise parents if there is someone at the preschool who is known to have allergic reactions from exposure to airborne food allergens. A risk assessment will be done should we have an adult or child regularly at the preschool with such a need.

Parents are asked either not to provide foods that pose a choking hazard or to prepare them so that the risk is reduced. Food that staff consider have not been made safe will be returned to the parents. These are foods that are the same size and shape as a child's airway and can easily block it.

Foods that pose a choking hazard and how to make them safe, this list is not exhaustive:

Food	How to make them safe
Whole Grapes	Cut in half LENGTHWAYS
Whole Olives	Cut in half LENGTHWAYS and pips removed
Hotdogs	Cut in half LENGTHWAYS and into smaller chunks
Cocktail Sausages	Cut in half LENGTHWAYS
Whole Nuts and Seeds	Unsuitable for children under the age of 5 who do not yet have Molars and cannot grind these foods
Popcorn	Unsuitable for children under the age of 4
Parma Ham	Ensure that Parma ham or equivalent is cut into smaller pieces, particularly across the fat which children cannot chew
Cherry Tomatoes	Cut in Half
Marshmallows	Unsuitable for children under the age of 5, marshmallows can swell in the mouth and slip down to block airways