



## **LITTLE FIRS DAY NURSERY.**

### **46. Nutrition and Mealtimes Policy**



At Little Firs we believe that mealtimes should be happy, social occasions for children and staff alike. We promote shared, enjoyable positive interactions at these times. We are committed to offering children healthy, nutritious, and balanced meals and snacks, which meet individual needs and requirements.

We ensure that:

- A balanced and healthy breakfast, midday meal, tea and two daily snacks are provided for children attending a full day at the nursery.
- Menus are planned and in line with example menu and guidance produced by the Department for Education. These are rotated regularly, reflect cultural diversity and variation, and are displayed for children and parents to view.
- All allergens are displayed alongside the menus to show the ingredients of each meal.
- We provide nutritious food at all snack and mealtimes, avoiding large quantities of fat, sugar, salt and artificial additives, preservatives, and colourings.
- Menus include servings of fresh fruit and vegetables per day.
- Parents and children are involved in menu planning.
- Only milk and water are provided as drinks to promote oral health. Fresh drinking water is always available and accessible. It is frequently offered to children and babies and intake is monitored. In hot weather staff will encourage children to drink more water to keep them hydrated
- Individual dietary requirements are respected. We gather information from parents regarding their children's dietary needs, including any special dietary requirements, preferences, and food allergies that a child has and any special health requirements before a child starts or joins the nursery. Where appropriate, we will carry out a risk assessment in the case of allergies and work alongside parents to put into place an individual dietary plan for their child.
- We consider seating to avoid cross contamination of food from child to child. Where appropriate, an adult will sit with children during meals to ensure safety and minimise risks. Where appropriate, discussions will also take place with children about allergies and potential risks to make them aware of the dangers of sharing certain foods.
- Staff show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. They do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child, or make a child feel singled out because of their diet or allergy.
- Staff set a good example and eat with the children and show good table manners. Meal and snack times are organised so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate in small groups. During meals and snack times children are encouraged to use their manners and conversation is encouraged
- Staff use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drinks, and feeding themselves.
- Staff support children to make healthy choices and understand the need for healthy eating.
- Cultural differences in eating habits are respected.
- We do not allow children to bring packed lunches into the setting.

- Any child who shows signs of distress at being faced with a meal they do not like will have their food removed without any fuss. If a child does not finish their first course, they will still be given a yoghurt/fruit.
- Children not on special diets are encouraged to eat a small piece of everything.
- Children who refuse to eat at the mealtime are offered fruit later in the day.
- Children are given time to eat at their own pace and not rushed.
- Quantities offered take account of the ages of the children being catered for in line with recommended portion sizes for babies and young children.
- We promote positive attitudes to healthy eating through play opportunities and discussions.
- The nursery provides parents with daily written records of feeding routines for all children under three or by request for older children.
- No child is ever left alone when eating or drinking to minimise the risk of choking.
- We will sometimes celebrate special occasions such as birthdays with the occasional treat of foods such as cake, sweets, or biscuits. These will be given at mealtimes to help tooth decay and not spoil the child's appetite. Where we have frequent birthdays and celebrations, we consider other alternatives such as celebrating through smiles and praise, stickers, and badges, choosing a favourite story, becoming a special helper, playing a party game, dancing and/or singing their favourite song.
- We do allow parents to bring in cakes on special occasions. We ensure that all food brought in from parents meets the above and health and safety requirements and ingredients that are listed within the Food Information for Consumers (FIR) 2014 and detailed in the allergens policy and procedure.
- All staff who prepare and handle food are competent to do so and receive training in food hygiene which is updated every three years.
- In the very unlikely event of any food poisoning affecting two or more children on the premises, whether or not this may arise from food offered at the nursery, we will inform Ofsted as soon as reasonably practical and in all cases within 14 days. We will also inform the relevant health agencies and follow any advice given.
- OfSTED will report on how the nursery promotes the personal development and wellbeing of all children – this will include food provision including packed lunches brought into nursery.

### **Packed Lunches**

- Parents/Carers can choose to provide their child with healthy food for their meals.
- We can provide parents with guidelines for nutritious content and signpost them to the NHS packed lunch guidance (<https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes/>).
- All home provided food must be healthy and follow the Food Standards Agency 'Eatwell Guide' and must ensure other children are not exposed to potential life-threatening allergens or choking hazards to your child or any other child. Children's lunch boxes are checked prior to giving the contents to the children to ensure any risks from potential allergens or choking hazards are managed.
- If a child is opted out of breakfast, then breakfast must be given to your child before they come to nursery.
- **Home provided food must not contain the following:**
  1. Nuts or nut products.
  2. Fizzy or sugary drinks
  3. Sweets or confectionary

4. Chocolate spread as a filling for sandwiches.
  5. Chewing gum
  6. Sugared/toffee or salted popcorn.
  7. **Whole uncut round foods:** sausages, grapes, cherries, blueberries, strawberries, or cherry tomatoes as these are choking hazards.
- We provide milk and water to drink so there is no need to provided drinks for your child and they have access to clean drinking water throughout the day. Babies that are having formula/breast milk this must still be provided.
  - It is your responsibility to provide an appropriate food container so food items are stored securely and appropriately until the lunchtime and these must be clearly labelled.
  - The nursery will provide facilities in the most convenient and appropriate place possible for home provided food. However, the nursery cannot provide cooled storage areas and therefore cannot take legal responsibility for foods prepared at home and then brought into nursery.
  - The nursery will, within reason, send any uneaten packed food items back home. The rationale for this is that parents can monitor what their child has consumed during the day and then raise any concerns over their child’s food intake with the nursery.  
If uneaten home provided food is left at nursery, they will be disposed of due to hygiene reasons.
  - We are unable to heat/ re-heat food at nursery for food hygiene purposes.
  - Staff will encourage the children to eat their sandwiches etc first and food will not be used as a behaviour management tool, either as punishment or reward
  - If you have worries or concerns around what your child will eat or would like advice, please speak to a member of staff.

<b>Date of Review:</b>	<b>This Policy was adopted on:</b>	<b>Signed on behalf of the Nursery committee:</b>	<b>Date of Next Review:</b>
<b>April 2025.</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> April 2025.</b>		<b>April 2026..</b>