



At Early Days Nursery School Ltd, 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, in advance and in line with example menu and guidance produced by the department for education, these are rotated regularly and reflect cultural diversity and variation. These are displayed for children and parents to view.
- 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.
- 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, age/stage discussions will also take place with all 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 her/his diet or allergy.
- 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 say 'please' and 'thank you' and conversation is encouraged. Staff sometimes eat with the children modelling use of cutlery, healthy eating and manners.
- Staff use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink, and feeding themselves.

- Staff support children to make healthy choices and understand the need for healthy eating through practical activities like fruit tasting, games, stories, and the healthy eating bag.
- Cultural differences in eating habits are respected.
- Any child who shows signs of distress at being faced with a meal he/she does not like will have his/her food removed without any fuss. If a child does not finish his/her first course, he/she will still be given a helping of dessert.
- Children not on special diets are encouraged to eat a small piece of everything.
- Children who refuse to eat at the mealtime are offered food 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 the age of three.
- No child is ever left alone when eating/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 or biscuits. These will be given at mealtimes to prevent 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, dancing and/or singing their favourite song and asking parents to bring alternatives to cake like smoothies or fruit platters.
- We do allow parents to bring in cakes on special occasions, but we encourage parents to choose healthier alternatives. 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 food are competent to do so and receive training in food hygiene which is updated every three years. A number of other staff who give out food also have Food Hygiene training.
- 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.
- Children learn about good dental health through stories about teeth and smiles and the toothcare bag, brush dolls/teddies teeth, dentist visits, looking at their own teeth in mirrors and talk about healthy eating.
- At Early Days we promote being in the outdoor environment, supporting children's well-being and allowing children opportunities for exercise and physical play.
- We share information with parents about dental care, healthy diet, and exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
<i>31st October 2024</i>	<i>Gina Chamberlain and Tracey Webb</i>	<i>October 2025</i>

