



6.5 FOOD AND DRINK

POLICY STATEMENT

Meadow Nursery regards snack and mealtimes as an important part of the day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. The nursery promotes healthy eating. At snack times, the nursery aims to provide health and nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs.

The nursery does not provide lunches for children attending sessions. However, this policy outlines how the nursery encourages parents to provide healthy, balanced and nutritious packed lunches for their children.

Procedures

The nursery follows these procedures;

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, the parents are asked about dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies. (See the Managing Children who are Sick, Infectious or with Allergies Policy.)
- Information about each child's dietary needs is recorded in the Registration Form and parents sign the form to signify that it is correct.
- Parents are consulted regularly to ensure that the nursery's records of their children's dietary needs – including any allergies - are up-to-date. Parents sign the up-dated record to signify that it is correct.
- The nursery displays current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all staff and volunteers are fully informed about them.
- A member of staff with a valid paediatric first aid certificate is always present at mealtimes

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- If a child chokes at mealtime and intervention is given. We record details of the incident and ensure that parents/carers are informed.
- The nursery aims to ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and preferences, as well as their parents' wishes.
- The staff are required to show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. Staff 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.
- Fresh drinking water is constantly available for the children. Children are told how to obtain the water and that they can ask for water at any time during the day.
- In order to protect children with food allergies, the nursery discourages children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- Children wash their hands before and after eating
- Fruit or raw vegetables, such as carrot or tomato, are offered in batons. Bananas and other foods are not cut as rounds but are sliced to minimise a choking hazard.

Snacks

- The nursery provides nutritious food for all snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- The nursery takes care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products and is especially vigilant when we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts.
- Through discussion with parents and research reading by staff, the nursery aims to obtain information about the dietary rules of the religious groups to which children and their parents belong, and of vegetarians and vegans, as well as about food allergies. This is taken into account where possible in the provision of food and drinks.

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- The nursery provides vegetarian snacks as an alternative.
- Snack times are social occasions in which children and staff participate.
- Snack times are used to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.

Special occasions or marking festivals

- Foods from the diet of each of the children's cultural backgrounds are included, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.

Packed lunches at Lunch Club

The nursery has a daily lunch club where children may bring a packed lunch to eat at the nursery. Children stay for an extra hour at the beginning or end of their session on the day that they attend lunch club.

The nursery believes that the lunch club helps with transition to school lunch times and gives children an opportunity to share a mealtime with their peers. It also provides a time limit in which children need to finish their meal.

The nursery:

- informs parents of our policy on healthy eating and no nuts.
- encourages parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and healthy desserts, such as yoghurt or crème fraîche. We discourage sweet drinks and can provide children with water or diluted fresh fruit juice
- discourages packed lunch contents that consist largely of crisps, processed foods, sweet drinks and sweet products such as cakes or biscuits. The nursery reserves the right to return this food to the parent as a last resort.
- provides children bringing packed lunches with plates, cups and cutlery if needed

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- asks parents to use ice packs in packed lunches to keep food cool
- ensures staff sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion
- stores packed lunch boxes in a cool place and serves them to children within 4 hours.
- ensures that children are supervised at mealtimes and that children are within sight and hearing of a member of staff at all times and where possible staff are sat facing children when eating to ensure they are eating in a way that prevents choking and so they can prevent food sharing and be aware of any unexpected allergic reactions.
- ensures that all staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis and the differences between allergies and intolerances which may develop at any time.

Legal framework

Regulation (EC) 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the hygiene of foodstuffs.

Food Information Regulations 2014

The Childcare Act 2006

Further guidance

<https://www.foodforlife.org.uk/media/3brhywix/eat-better-start-better.pdf>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/example-menus-for-early-years-settings-in-england>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/healthy-eating-guidance-published-for-the-early-years-sector>

Safer Food, Better Business (Food Standards Agency 2011)

[Paediatric Allergy Action Plans - BSACI](#)

[Food allergy - NHS](#)

[Anaphylaxis - NHS](#)

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[Help for early years providers : Food safety](#)

Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance (2025)

This policy was adopted at a meeting of the Meadow Nursery School Parents' Association Committee	
Held on	31 st March 2014
Policy reviewed	August 2025
Date to be reviewed	August 2027
Signed by Chair	
Name	Samantha Foster-Kennedy
Signed by Nursery Manager	
Name	Debbie Hill

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