

Favours Day Nursery Ltd Policy and Procedure

Nutrition and Mealtimes

At Favours Day Nursery 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, following the Department for Education nutrition guidance¹.

Our approach to food and healthy eating

- The nursery provides parents with daily written records of feeding routines for all children
- A balanced and healthy midday meal 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 (copies can be provided on request). These are rotated regularly, reflect cultural diversity and variation and are displayed for children and parents to view
- A child's nutrient intake is broken down as follows: 20% breakfast, 10% morning snack, 30% lunch, 10% afternoon snack, 20% tea
- Menus include at least 3 servings of fresh fruit and vegetables per day
- We provide nutritious food at all snack and mealtimes, avoiding large quantities of fat, sugar, salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings
- Quantities offered take account of the ages of the children being catered for, in line with recommended portion sizes for babies and young children.

Sustainability

- To provide cost-effective foods, we purchase staple long-life ingredients in bulk, use frozen or tinned fruit and vegetables if appropriate, prepare home-made sauces using raw ingredients, and use left-over foods where possible
- We plan menus to ensure that fruits and vegetables are seasonal and at their cheapest, we use a variety of meat, fish and vegetable alternatives
- We grow and use our own herbs.

Mealtimes environment

- No child is ever left alone when eating or drinking to minimise the risk of choking, and a qualified paediatric first aider is always present during meal and snack times
- Staff set a good example, eat with the children, and demonstrate good table manners. Mealtimes are organised so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate in small groups. During meal and snack times children are encouraged to use appropriate table manners and staff promote conversation to support social development
- Staff use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drinks, and feeding themselves
- 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 helping of any second dish to ensure they are meeting their nutrient requirements for the day
- Children not on special diets are encouraged to eat a small piece of everything as they need to try something 10-15 times to decide if they like it. Their palette will only develop when introduced to a wide range of food
- Children are given time to eat at their own pace and are not rushed.

Drinks

- Only milk and water are provided as drinks to promote oral health

¹ https://bit.ly/EYFS_nutrition_guidance

- 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.

Commercial baby food and drink

- We provide fresh food for babies and do not use pre-made commercial baby food or drinks
- We do not permit parents to provide commercial baby food or drinks.

Management of food allergies and dietary needs

- All allergens are displayed alongside the menus to show the ingredients of each meal
- Before a child joins the nursery, we gather information from parents regarding their children's dietary needs, including any food allergies or intolerances that a child has, and any special health requirements. All information is shared with staff involved in preparing and handling food
- 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/allergy plan for their child. This will be regularly reviewed and any changes shared with all staff
- We give careful consideration to 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
- At each meal and snack time, we ensure a nominated practitioner is responsible for checking that the food being provided meets all the requirements for each child
- 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
- All allergen-containing food for children with allergies or dietary requirements will be served in red plates, bowls or cups. These will be clearly labeled
- All children with food allergies will have their photo displayed with the requirement. This will be displayed in the room where the children eat
- If in doubt with any food, staff must ask the chef or someone in the office before giving it to the child
- Cultural differences in eating habits are respected.

Learning about food and cooking with children

- Staff support children to make healthy choices and understand the need for healthy eating
- We promote positive attitudes to healthy eating through play, growing, shopping and cooking opportunities and discussions.

Celebrations and special occasions

- We will sometimes celebrate special occasions with treats such as cake or biscuits. These will be given at mealtimes to help prevent tooth decay and not spoil the child's appetite
- We do not allow parents to bring in food from home due to hygiene and safety reasons
- We consider celebrating with alternatives such as stickers and badges, bubbles, fruit platters, choosing a favourite story, becoming a special helper, playing a party game, dancing and/or singing their favourite song, and so on.

Food safety and hygiene

- All staff who prepare and handle food are competent to do so and receive training in food hygiene which is updated at least every three years
- All staff are trained in preparing foods safely to avoid the risk of choking, following the Foods Standards Agency guidelines
- All staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis

- All staff are aware of the differences between allergies and intolerances, including that they need to maintain vigilance as children can develop allergies at any time
- 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.

Our policy is developed in partnership with parents, staff and children and reviewed on a regular basis.

FUSSY EATERS

Children often go through phases of refusing to eat particular foods. This can be a worrying and upsetting time for parents, and it is therefore reassuring to know that fussy eating is very common and if the correct techniques are used, and may only last a few weeks. A healthy child rarely causes themselves any long-term problems if they don't eat enough for a short while. If the problem persists or your child is not growing well, seek advice from a healthcare professional. We do not offer alternatives as we feel that the children are offered enough healthy food during their day with us and soon get into the habit of trying new foods. We have found in the past by offering an alternative to one child usually equates to more children not eating what they are offered so that they can have the alternative and we feel children should have variety and consistency at meal times.

Fussy eating in children can be for the following reasons:

- Showing a sign of independence
- Demand for attention
- After an illness or infection

What you should do.....

- ✓ Keep meal times short – half an hour is enough for most children.
- ✓ Have regular meals and try to avoid snacks and drinks too close to meal times
- ✓ Eat the same meals at the same time as your children. Remember children learn from you – let them see you eat and enjoy a wide variety of foods.
- ✓ Ensure main meals involve sitting at a table.
- ✓ Make meal times fun and sociable; discuss events that have happened during the day.
- ✓ Involve children in meal selection, preparation and cooking.
- ✓ Offer small colourful portions at meal times. If these are finished more can be offered.
- ✓ Avoid distractions such as television, music and toys. Meals should be calm and relaxing.
- ✓ If your child refuses a food at first, leave it a few days and try again – it may take 10–15 times
- ✓ Offer a new food with a familiar food or in a different way e.g. chopped, mashed, roasted.

What you shouldn't do.....

- Do not let young children fill up on drinks before a meal. If a child wants a drink before a meal, only offer a small amount and always offer water first.
- Do not let your child drink milk throughout the day. Healthy children over the age of 1 need no more than three dairy servings each day. One portion of milk is 100–150ml.
- Never coax, force or bribe a child to eat.
- When offering a new food do not remind your child that they have refused the food in the past.
- Never offer alternative food or drinks; if a meal is refused this may be seen as a reward and therefore prolong the food refusal.
- Do not try to hide refused food in another familiar food, the child may refuse all of it.

November 2004

Updated January 2026

A. Cooke

Written with guidance from the National Day Nurseries Association & NHS