

Food Policy

Aims

- Ensuring that all aspects of food and nutrition in the nursery work to promote the health and wellbeing of children, staff, and visitors to the setting
- Promoting healthy eating habits that will lead to lifelong health and well being
- A recognition of the fact that healthier children learn more effectively
- A desire to impact on health-related issues relating to children, for example childhood obesity
- Ensuring that adults are good role models to children about all aspects of healthy eating
- To promote healthy eating in conjunction with other areas of the curriculum for example physical development and understanding of the world

Little Footsteps sites are equipped with an onsite chef who prepares all their meals. Little Footsteps continue to provide breakfast, lunch, tea and morning snack. Milk is provided at every mealtime and snack for all children.

Please refer to 'Under 1's Policy' if your child is between 3 – 12months old.

Provision of food

At all mealtimes children sit at tables to eat the food provided. Depending on the setting, children either sit in their rooms or where the setting is open plan, then the children of mixed ages will sit together. The whole eating experience is seen as a very social occasion with the older children serving others and themselves and adults eating and talking with the children at the table, to learn about healthy food and to model good eating habits. Children help to set up the tables and help to clear away the tables at the end of the meal. Where it may be appropriate children can get involved with preparing the food and occasionally going out to buy some food from the shops. We are also a healthy eating company and do not provide juice for our children as milk and water are the best drinks to keep your children hydrated and support development.

The nurseries display posters of healthy and attractive foods to encourage eating healthy foods and for children to learn about food and nutrition. Tables are washed and wiped down with antibacterial spray before and after eating.

Children are encouraged to self-serve themselves and their peers with adult support where necessary. Servings are portion controlled by the kitchen.

Table manners are learnt but we respect cultural norms, children's experiences, and their developmental stage.

Meals

Breakfast is provided every day. All children can choose from a variety of low sugar cereals or toast.

Please note – Breakfast is charged at an additional cost.

At snack time (9.30-10am) children are offered a range of fruits, of which they can help themselves.

For families who have opted into our consumable fee, snack is provided. Families who have **opted out** of the consumable fee, are expected to provide a piece of fruit for snack their snack time. If this has not been provided, we will provide this snack at an additional cost. *Please see charge policy for further information*.

At lunch and teatime, children are served food off the set menu. Children are given a starter, main course and desert every day and a selection of tea items such as soup or sandwiches (see menus). Tea is designed to be a smaller light meal, prior to children receiving their dinner at home. It is important to note that children are encouraged to eat small portions up to six times/meals a day.

Please note – Mattishall's site do not provide tea. All parents are to provide a packed tea.

Children are encouraged to try different foods but are never forced to eat. Staff eat with the children and act as role models to promote good eating habits, table manners and to learn about health and nutrition. Children are encouraged through staff and being educated to choose healthy options such as vegetables and salad. Children are encouraged to eat all their food but again are not forced. Second helpings are usually available if children ask. Lunch and teatime can last as long as it takes for children to finish their meal. There is no rush for them to finish.

Parents/carers are informed daily about how much food their child has eaten and staff advise parents/carers if they have any concerns about their child's eating habits. Staff also advise parents/carers of outside agencies or courses parents/carers can attend if they have any need for help.

All menus are monitored and designed in consultation with Government guidelines on healthy eating to ensure that children receive a balanced meal and the correct proportions of nutrients.

Upon registration, parents/carers complete a form detailing their child's dietary requirements. They are also requested through newsfeed posts to update these requirements on a regular basis to the nursery manager in writing. Please refer to the food allergy policy for further information. At every setting, photos of the children with information of their special dietary requirement are displayed where the food is served in a variety of ways e.g., snack apples, posters ect. The chef is updated when new children join the nursery informing them of special diets or food allergies. The meals are then adapted accordingly to ensure that the meal is still balanced, and that the child does not miss out on any food group. Halal meat is not served.

Celebratory Occasions

We understand that birthdays are a very special occasion in a child's life and at Little Footsteps we like to celebrate this occasion with the children. We sing happy birthday, and the parents/carers are free to bring in a treat for their child/friends. Please note an allergen card must be provided and in its original packaging, and this will be served as a replacement for snack or lunch time/tea time desert.

Curriculum

Healthy eating, personal, social, and emotional well-being is taught within the EYFS curriculum through all mealtimes, cooking sessions, circle time, trips to the shops and certain topics.

WE DO NOT USE FOOD AS A REWARD FOR GOOD BEHAVIOUR.

Provision for staff

All settings have staff rooms where staff can eat and prepare their own food. At least one member of staff eats with the children every mealtime and acts as a role model. Drinking water is accessible to children and staff continually throughout the day and staff act as role models to encourage the children to drink enough water.

Parents/carers

We share information to parents/carers through parent's evenings, newsletters, recipes, and menus being always made available and upon request. Parents/carers can interact and contact the company directly regarding menus and recipes. Parents/carers are informed of what their child has eaten throughout the day. At parents' evenings and open days, the refreshments can be supplied by our catering company, which is a combination of samples from the children's menu and healthy refreshments to reinforce our healthy eating message. Parents/carers are made aware of external agencies whom they can contact directly over any issues with our menu or regarding any difficulties they may have regarding their child's eating. Staff are also aware of how to refer families for one-on-one advice and support. Managers regularly obtain the views of parents/carers with regards to the menus, and these are then passed onto the catering company.

Training

Staff attend courses regularly such as healthy eating study days. We also provide in house training on healthy eating.

What if my child doesn't eat at nursery?

It's natural for parents to worry about whether their child is getting enough food, especially if they refuse to eat sometimes.

The trick is not to worry about what your child eats in a day, or if they don't eat everything at mealtimes. It's more important to think about what they eat over a week.

If your child is active and gaining weight, and it's obvious they're not ill, then they're getting enough to eat, even if it may not seem like it to you.

It's perfectly normal for toddlers to refuse to eat or even taste new foods.

Providing your child eats some food from the four main food groups (milk and dairy products, starchy foods, fruit and vegetables, protein), even if it's always the same favorites, you don't need to worry. Gradually introduce other foods or go back to the foods your child didn't like before and try them again.

The best way for your child to learn to eat and enjoy new foods is to copy you. Try to eat with them as often as you can so that you can set a good example.

Encourage your child to participate in preparing the foods with you, exploring textures and new food items can open a child's interest to liking new food items.

Tips for parents/carers

- Give your child the same food as the rest of the family but remember not to add salt to your child's food.
- Check the label of any food product you use to make family meals.
- Do not talk about your child's lack of eating negatively in front of them. Do not label them as a fussy eater as they will see this as who they are.
- Eat your meals together if possible.
- Give small portions and praise your child for eating, even if they only manage a little.
- If your child rejects the food, don't force them to eat it. Just take the food away without comment. Try to stay calm even if it's very frustrating.
- Don't leave meals until your child is too hungry or tried to eat.
- Your child may be a slow eater so be patient.
- Don't give too many snacks between meals. Limit them to a milk drink and some fruit slices or a small cracker with a slice of cheese, for example.
- It's best not to use food as a reward. Your child may start to think of sweets as nice and vegetables as nasty. Instead, reward them with a trip to the park or promise to play a game with them.
- Children sometimes get thirst and hunger mixed up. They might say they're thirsty when really, they're hungry.
- Make mealtimes enjoyable and not just about eating. Sit down and chat about other things.
- If you know any other children of the same age who are good eaters, ask them round for tea. A good example can work well, if you don't talk too much about how good the other children are.
- Ask an adult that your child likes and looks up to eat with you. Sometimes a child will eat for someone else, such as a grandparent, without any fuss.
- Children's tastes change. One day they'll hate something, but a month later they may love it.
- Changing the form a food comes in may make it more acceptable. For example, a child might refuse cooked carrots but enjoy raw, grated carrot.
- Create a shopping trip where you and your child purchase food items for mealtimes together.
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Packed Lunches

For all aged children we offer a choice of bringing in a packed lunch or tea from home. We have very strict guidelines on NO nuts to ensure we are safeguarding all our children. We are also a healthy eating nursery so packed lunches/teas need to follow the guidance.

Within our baby rooms (Pips and Seeds and Caterpillars) we have the facility to heat food from home, however this is not possible in Shoots, Buds, Butterflies and Orchard. We encourage the use of thermal food flasks if you wish to provide a hot meal for your child.

Milk and water are served for drinking at all mealtimes and snack times for all children, even those having a home packed meal. Milk alternative (soya milk) is provided to those children with intolerances or allergies.

Due to legislation on food waste disposal and our aim for sustainability, all food and packaging waste for home packed meals will be sent home.

Children should be introduced to a wide range of foods, flavours and textures. Wherever possible, you should prepare food yourself from scratch and not provide pre made foods from shops such as puree pouches. Due to their sugar content.



LITTLE FOOTSTEPS CHILDCARE

Please note – your child's packed lunch and snack will be checked before serving and must comply with this policy. If we deem the meal to not meet our policy (below guidance), we will return it to you uneaten with an explanation. Your child will then be served a nursery meal at an additional cost. This cost of £2.80 will then be added to your invoice.

These meals must be paid for in full before your child attends their next session.

Packed Lunch/Tea Mandatory Guidance



A healthier lunchbox should contain:

- be based on starchy carbohydrates (bread, potatoes, rice, pasta)
- sandwiches which contain cheese spreads, pâté or other sandwich fillers
- include fresh fruit and vegetables/salad (Grapes, blueberries, and blackberries must be cut, see image).
- include a source of protein such as beans and pulses, eggs, fish, meat, cheese (or dairy alternative)
- include a side dish such as a low-fat and lower-sugar yoghurt (or dairy alternative), tea cake (similar to a hot cross bun), fruit bread, plain rice/corn cakes, sugar-free jelly

Added extras may include one of the following: (please note these should be in moderation).

- A small chocolate/biscuit bar such as animal biscuit or penguin.
- Crisps/rice cakes (reduced sugar and salt)

Items which should **NOT** be in your child's packed lunches

- Chips/wedges
- Pouches/store bought puree jars (please note – these are high in sugar)
- Smoothie drinks
- sweets/lollypops
- Sandwiches which contain chocolate spread/Jam/Peanut Butter or a substitute.
- High in sugar drink such as juice box
- High in sugar pastries like cakes/doughnuts/chocolate brioche buns
- Nuts. We are a nut free nursery



Please see website for more information on a healthier lifestyle - [What to feed young children - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)