

## Provision of Food Policy

### All-Inclusive Meal Package

We offer an all-inclusive meal package where all meals are provided by our **caterers**. These meals are **nutritionally balanced**, **cooked fresh daily**, and cater to a variety of dietary needs. We can also **supply alternatives to cow's milk** for children who require them. This package offers **great value for money** and ensures that children receive well-prepared, healthy meals without the need for parents to supply food from home.

When children attend school they will typically be receiving **hot meals** as part of their daily routine. Our nursery meals follow a similar structure to help children feel comfortable and confident when transitioning to school settings.

### Mealtime Experience and Child Development

Mealtimes are important to children's development. The food they eat at mealtimes gives the vitamins, minerals, and protein they need to grow and stay healthy. It gives them energy and makes them feel good. Eating habits and attitudes learned in childhood can last a lifetime.

We aim to make eating enjoyable and to create a complete dining experience that appeals to the children and encourages them to appreciate the food. Children are encouraged to make a positive contribution by helping to lay the table with placemats, plates, cups, and cutlery, as soon as they are able. Children also learn important **self-serve skills**, which are essential for building independence and preparing them for the routines and expectations of school.

Children can also contribute by creating their own centrepieces or laying the table with flowers.

Our mealtime routines are designed to encourage children's self-help, independence, and choice. Equipment used must be appropriate to the age and stage of development and designed to promote children's independence.

The opportunity for personal, social and emotional skills to be developed and the opportunities to provide dialogue to support language and communication skills is also very valuable.

### Home-Packed Food

At our nursery, we aim to ensure that all children receive nutritious, safe, and appropriate meals while in our care. Parents who wish to provide their child with their own food must adhere to the following policy guidelines to promote health, safety, and inclusivity.

## General Guidelines

All provided food will need to be checked by a member of staff before it can come onto the premises, so please be aware that this may delay your drop off.

1. **Healthy and Nutritious:** Parents must provide food that supports a balanced diet and is suitable for their child's age and stage of development.
2. **Packaging and Allergen Safety:** All food provided **must be shop bought, unopened, and in its original packaging** so that allergen information can be clearly checked by staff.
3. **Choking Hazards:** Natural foods such as fruit must be cut into age-appropriate sizes to minimize choking risks (see info attached).
4. **Airborne Allergies:** Children with packed meals will sit at a designated table with other children who have also brought their own food to reduce airborne allergen exposure.
5. **Restricted Items:** Parents must not send in **chocolate, crisps, or any other unhealthy snacks** as part of their child's packed food.
6. **Nut-Free Policy:** As part of our allergy management plan, **no nuts or nut-based products** should be included in packed meals.

## Breakfast Provision

- We can only serve cold breakfast food, in the form of pre-packed and unopened cereals. For breakfast provided by yourselves the nursery can supply **only cow's milk**.
- We will not heat up bread from home e.g. to make toast
- If a child requires an alternative milk or milk substitute, **parents must provide this daily**.

## Snack Provision

Snacks must be healthy and able to be stored in your child's bag until needed. Two snacks per day should be supplied. If you provide fruit, as above this must be pre-cut into age appropriate sized pieces to minimise choking (see info attached)

## Food Preparation and Storage

1. **No Refrigeration:** We are **unable to refrigerate** any food provided by parents. Therefore, parents must include **ice packs** in their child's lunch box if food is needed to be kept at a safe temperature.
2. **No Heating:** We are **unable to heat** any food provided by parents.
3. **Ready-to-Eat Format:** All meals and snacks must be sent in a **ready-to-eat format**, suitable for the child's age.
4. **Utensils & Containers:**
  - The nursery **will not wash or clean** any containers or lunchboxes.

- The nursery **will not provide** utensils; parents must include necessary cutlery in their child's lunchbox.

## Food Tasting

When we have food tasting we will try to advise you beforehand so that you may purchase suitable foods for your child to try.

Should you not be able to supply food or we have not advised you in enough time then your child will be excluded from the food tasting session and provided with a suitable alternative activity.

## Liability & Responsibility

- The nursery **accepts no responsibility** for the quality, safety, or temperature of any of the food provided by parents.
- Parents are responsible for ensuring that the food remains fresh and suitable for consumption throughout the day.
- **Failure to Provide Food:** If parents fail to provide suitable pre-packed food for the day:
  - They will be required to either **collect their child and take them off the premises** so they can source food, or
  - The nursery will **supply food and invoice the parent** at the **non-booked rate of £20 for a full day and £15 for a half day**, as opposed to the pre-booked or all-inclusive rate.

## Additional Considerations

- **Food Sharing:** Children are **not permitted** to share food to prevent cross-contamination and allergic reactions.
- **Healthy Drinks:** Only water or milk is permitted in nursery; no fizzy drinks, fruit juice, or flavoured milk. Nursery will provide water and milk to all children.
- **Monitoring & Compliance:** Nursery staff reserve the right to discuss concerns with parents if food provided does not comply with these guidelines.

By following this policy, we aim to create a safe and inclusive dining environment for all children. Thank you for your cooperation in supporting the health and well-being of our nursery community.

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak with a member of staff.

**Policy review: Annually**