



Food and Mealtimes Policy 2024-2025 (to be read in addition to the Healthy Eating Policy and Infant Feeding Policy)

At **Little School** 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.

The majority of food is prepared by CH&Co, the catering team, at Greenfield School. This policy outlines the procedures followed when food is prepared by Little School Staff.

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.
- We provide nutritious food at all snack and mealtimes, avoiding large quantities of fat, sugar, salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- 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 carefully 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.
- Children are encouraged to wash their hands before handling food. Owls and Robins children are supervised to ensure hand washing is thorough and Fledglings children are supported to use clean damp flannels to wash their hands.

- Staff support and encourage good manners. 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 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.
- 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 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 are 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 via Tapestry.
- No child is ever left alone when eating/drinking to minimise the risk of choking. All staff are trained to deal with a choking incident during Paediatric First Aid training.
- All staff who prepare and handle food are competent to do so and receive training in food hygiene which is updated every three years.
- Details of allergies and dietary preferences are clearly displayed in the kitchen of all Little School rooms and all staff check which children are eating before food is served to ensure they are served correctly.
- Food that needs to be reheated will be microwaved (covered) and stirred thoroughly before a food probe is inserted to check the temperature, which should be over 75°C. A record of this will be listed on the Food Temperature Form which is kept on a clip board in the Fledglings kitchen (next to the microwave).
- The kitchen in the Fledglings room is adequately equipped for food preparation and hygienic preparation of food including sterilisation equipment for babies' food.
- Food should be served to children warm but not hot.

Prepared by: Julie Swords, Nursery Manager, January 2024

To be reviewed: January 2025