

Food and Drink

Policy statement

Little Learners nurseries regard 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. At snack and mealtimes, we aim to provide healthy, balanced and nutritious food, which meets children's individual dietary needs.

How we organise food and drink in our nurseries

- We provide facilities for the hygienic preparation of food for children.
- Our premises are inspected periodically by local Environmental Health Officers who award a food hygiene rating (Scores on Doors).
- We ensure that staff involved in preparing and handling food receive training in food hygiene.
- We use the Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance to provide healthy nutritional meals suitable for all children

We have implemented the following to promote healthy eating at Little Learners:

1. At registration:

- Before a child starts, we ask their parents about their child's dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies (also see the Children's Health Policy).
- We ask parents to record information about their child's dietary needs in the Registration Form. Parents are required to sign the form to confirm that information provided is correct.
- Where a child has an allergy, intolerance or medical dietary requirement, an individual care plan will be completed in partnership with parents/carers before the child starts nursery and reviewed regularly thereafter.
- We regularly consult with parents to ensure that our records about children's dietary needs, including allergy information, is up to date.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs in the nursery so that all staff are fully informed about them.
- We have systems in place to ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with dietary needs and preferences.

2. Menu planning:

- We plan menus in advance, involving children and parents in the planning wherever possible.
- We display the menus of meals/snacks for parents to view.

3. Healthy eating

- Food will be prepared and served in a manner appropriate to each child's age, stage of development and individual needs.



- Staff will take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of choking, including preparing food safely and supervising children while eating.
- Children will be encouraged to sit whilst eating and food will be presented in a way that supports safe eating practices.
- A member of staff will be seated with children at the table during all meal and snack times. Children will remain within sight and hearing of staff whilst eating, and mealtimes will be appropriately supervised to promote safe eating practices and reduce choking risks.
- We aim, to the best of our ability, to maintain a nut-free environment and do not knowingly provide food containing nuts or nut products. We are especially vigilant where we have a child with a known nut allergy.
- We provide nutritious food for all meals and snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar, salt, artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- We include a variety of foods from the four main food groups:
 - meat, fish and protein alternatives
 - dairy foods
 - grains, cereals and starch vegetables
 - fruit and vegetables.
- Fresh drinking water is always available and accessible to children both indoors and outdoors.
- We let children know how to access water and let them know that they can ask for water at any time during the day.
- Fresh drinking water is always available and accessible to all children throughout the day, both indoors and outdoors. Water containers and beakers are kept at children's levels wherever appropriate to support independent access to drinking water.
- For young children who drink milk, we provide whole pasteurised milk.
- So the transition from whole pasteurised milk to semi-skimmed is gradual, we slowly introduce semi-skimmed milk from the age of two years, firstly into meals and dishes, such as on cereal or in white sauces. We then offer semi-skimmed milk as a drink.
- We provide children with utensils that are appropriate to their age and stage of development and, where relevant, eating practices in their culture.
- In order to protect children with food allergies, we do not allow children to share or swap food with one another. Individual placemats are displayed during mealtimes to help staff identify and manage children's dietary requirements safely.
- Children with allergies or dietary requirements will have food served on a red (Allergy) or a yellow (Dietary/Preference) plate.
- Allergy information and dietary requirements will be reviewed regularly with parents/carers and updated immediately where changes occur.
- Individual allergy action plans will be developed, where required, and shared with all relevant staff
- Staff will be aware of the signs and symptoms of allergic reactions and anaphylaxis and will know how to respond appropriately in the event of an emergency.
- At each meal and snack time, staff will be clear about who is responsible for checking that food and drink provided meets each child's dietary requirements, allergies and preferences.
- We provide parents/carers with daily information about their child's meals, snacks, intake and preferences. This information is routinely shared for all children.



- We will work in partnership with parents/carers to understand each child's stage of weaning and food development. Food textures and portion sizes will be appropriate to the child's age, experience and developmental stage.
- Any choking incident requiring intervention will be recorded and parents/carers informed. Records will be reviewed periodically to identify patterns and reduce future risks.

4. Culture

- We include foods from children's cultural backgrounds.
- We provide a vegetarian alternative on days when meat or fish are offered.
- We require staff 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.

5. Social mealtimes

- We organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate. Our staff sit and eat with children during mealtimes to role model positive eating habits and encourage a healthy relationship with food.
- We use meal and snack times to help children develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink, and feeding themselves.

6. Packed meals

Parents who provide packed meals for their child must be aware of the following:

- All meals must be provided for cover the hours the child attends nursery - this includes where relevant, breakfast cereal (milk will be supplied by nursery), a mid-morning snack, lunch, an afternoon snack and tea.
- Due to our limited storage, we do not have the facilities to store any items in our fridge. Therefore, all foods brought in must not require refrigeration. Tea is served between 3pm and 4pm so this needs to be considered when planning what to supply as food will be out of the fridge for some time.
- We are unable to reheat or cook any foods brought in from home due to food safety and hygiene regulations. Food provided must not be hot or kept in thermos flask to keep hot.
- We request that parents do not provide food containing nuts or nut products as we aim, to the best of our ability, to maintain a nut-free environment.
- The food we offer at nursery is very important to us and supplying high-quality healthy food is a vital part of our ethos. We check food brought into the nursery to ensure food provided meets the health eating requirements detailed in this policy.
- If food brought in isn't in accordance with this policy, we will provide the child with nursery food.
- Nursery food is chargeable, and we will apply a charge for any food supplied.



This policy meets the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework effective from 1 September 2026.

Date policy last reviewed/updated	17 th August 2026	Reviewed by	Terri Noone - Interim Regional Nursery Manager Charlie Walton – Nursery Manager Jodie Richards – Nursery Manager
Date of next review/update	August 2027		