

Food & Drink Policy & Procedure

Policy Statement

We regard snack and meal times as an important part of our day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults, and helps children to learn about healthy eating. We have developed our policy to promote healthy eating through our partnership with children, parents/carers, staff and using various resources and materials including Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance by the DFE, EYFS and Food Standards Agency. At snack and meal times, we aim to provide healthy, balanced nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs so they are able to develop positive eating habits early on.

Procedures

We follow these procedures to promote healthy eating in our setting.

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we ask their parents about their dietary needs and what stage of weaning they are at including food they find difficult or have never tried and any allergies. (Proof from a health practitioner will need to be submitted to the nursery Manager with regards to any allergies, please also refer to the **Allergies Policy**.)
- Unfortunately, we do not cater for preferences
- We record information about each child's dietary needs in the Registration Form and parents sign the form to signify that it is correct.
- We regularly consult with parents to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs and weaning stage - including any allergies - are up-to-date. Parents sign the updated record to signify that it is correct.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all our staff and volunteers are fully informed about them.
- We implement systems to ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs.
- We plan menus in advance, involving children and parents in the planning.
- We display the menus of meals/snacks for parents to view.
- We provide nutritious food for all meals and snacks (Some of our settings are packed lunch only and only provide breakfast and snack, please check with each individual setting of what we have on offer), avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings. Food is either cooked or prepared on site or outsourced from Zebedees Nursery Caterers which also follow the same principles of a balanced diet for children (www.zebedees.co.uk).
- We include a variety of foods from the four main food groups:
 - ⇒ meat, fish and protein alternatives;
 - ⇒ dairy foods;
 - ⇒ grains, cereals and starch vegetables; and
 - ⇒ fruit and vegetables.
- We try and include foods from the diet of each of the children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.
- We take care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products and we are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts. We are a nut free nursery.

- We try and gain further knowledge through discussion with parents and research reading, to obtain information about the dietary rules of the religious groups to which children and their parents belong, and of vegetarians and vegans, as well as about food allergies. We take account of this information in the provision of food and drinks.
- We provide an alternative food option for children on specific diets
- We show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. We 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 (we will always do our upmost best to provide an alternative food that will visually resemble the meal for the day)
- We organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and adults participate.
- We use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.
- We provide children with utensils that are appropriate for their ages and stages of development and that take account of the eating practices in their cultures.
- We have fresh drinking water constantly available for the children. We inform the children about how to obtain the water and that they can ask for water at any time during the day.
- In accordance with parents' wishes, we offer children arriving early in the morning, and/or staying late, an appropriate meal or snack.
- In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- For young children who drink milk, we provide whole pasteurised milk. Although 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, before offering it as a drink, so that the transition is gradual.
- For each child under two, we provide parents with daily written information about feeding routines, intake and preferences.
- We encourage children to adopt healthy eating habits from a young age through varies activities (e.g. cooking, supermarket visits and discussing good choices) and the benefits it can make on our diets and teeth.
- We encourage a sustainable environment by educating the children the importance to recycle within the nursery and how we can make changes to our world though our own personal adaptations.

Packed Lunches

Children have a choice to bring in a packed lunch to Nursery, however we require a 4 weeks' notice if children would like to change from nursery hot meals (please refer to Terms and Conditions).

- We ensure children bringing food from home are treated in exactly the same as children who are having a hot meal and are provided with the appropriate utensils.
- Unfortunately, we do not have storage facilities for packed lunches and therefore packed lunches **MUST** be packaged in appropriate Tupperware that would prevent food from spoiling i.e flask, cold packs and insulated boxes
- The Nursery does not reheat food as we're not able to determine when food was prior cooked to enable us to follow Food Safety Guidelines, all food from home must be ready to eat without re heating.
- Children are prevented from sharing or swapping food from their lunch boxes to prevent any adverse reactions
- Food in Packed lunches must also abide by our policy, the DFE and EYFS guidelines, please see below food and drinks that the nursery does not allow and Healthy Eating ideas leaflet below for options and ideas.
- Packed Lunches are thoroughly inspected to make sure food is cut up according to guidelines and items which do not abide by our healthy eating guidelines are removed and alternatives are offered to the children.

- We will speak to parents in regards to items that have been placed in boxes that we do not allow in the nursery, unfortunately if our policy is persistently not adhered to, the nursery will have no choice but to add a charge of cost on parents account for the alternative meals given by the nursery (Please see Terms and Conditions)

Food and Drinks we avoid and do not allow at our settings

We follow DFE's Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance, in summary we follow the healthy traffic light system on food being in the green band mainly and amber if unavoidable. We avoid red food bands.

Drinks

We Provide only fresh tap water and fresh milk for children to drink (whole milk for under 2s and semi for over 2s). Fruit juice, smoothies, squash, fizzy drinks and flavoured milk, even when diluted, contain lots of sugar and can cause tooth decay. Diet or reduced-sugar drinks are not recommended for babies and toddlers either. For older children, these drinks can fill children up so they're not hungry for healthier food.

When offering dairy alternatives to cow's milk:

- Unsweetened calcium-fortified, plant-based drinks (such as soya, oat drinks) should be avoided before 12 months, however small amounts can be used in cooking. These drinks can be given from 12 months as part of a healthy balanced diet.
- We Do not give children under 5 rice drinks, because of the level of arsenic they contain and almond drinks due to us being a nut free nursery.

Baby Feeding

We continuously work with parents establishing feeding patterns during the weaning stage and consult with parents in identifying signs when young babies are ready to wean after they turn 6months. Parents are constantly consulted on where we think a baby's weaning stage is with a plan signed off by parents at each stage achieved.

We encourage and work with parents who are still breastfeeding providing support, information and appropriate space, we can store breastmilk at the nursery and follow strict sterilising routines according to the NHS guidelines.

Parents can provide their babies First Infant formula and the nursery will follow the relevant guideline in preparation of the formula.

We discourage shop bought pouches/jars/snacks(babies under the age of 12months do not need a snack however we may offer small amounts at snack time to prevent a baby feeling singled out) and inform parents of the benefits of home prepared weaning foods and the importance of introducing different textures and flavours, we work together with parents establishing a strong bond to help babies further develop.

Foods we avoid before around 6 months of age

Ideally, babies should be introduced to solid foods from around 6 months of age. If parents or carers have decided to introduce solid foods to their child before 6 months of age, we will need to work closely with them to ensure a consistent and safe approach.

It is important to remember that there are some foods which should not be given before 6 months of age:

- cow's milk
- eggs
- foods containing wheat or gluten, including wheat, barley and rye (for example bread, pasta)

- nuts, peanuts and peanut products
- seeds
- fish and shellfish
- honey – avoid honey until 12 months old
- if a baby is less than 6 months old, sterilise water by boiling it first and then letting it cool right down - once a baby is 6 months old, this is no longer necessary

Foods we avoid up to 12 months

- honey for infants under 1 year, as it occasionally contains bacteria which can make them ill

Foods we avoid up to 5 years

- **Nuts** whole nuts and peanuts, should not be given to children under 5 years old as they pose a choking risk. Babies can be given nuts from around 6 months old as long as they are crushed, ground or a smooth peanut butter, **however in order to prevent any subsequent allergies we have decided that we are a nut free nursery and do not allow any products containing nuts at our settings**
- **Raw eggs**, or food containing partially cooked eggs, for example uncooked cake mixture and runny boiled eggs (unless they have the red lion stamp or you see the words “British Lion quality”).
- **Foods high in salt** such as, sausages, bacon, crackers, crisps, ready meals, takeaways, tinned vegetables with added salt, packets of flavoured rice/pasta/noodle products
- **Sugar** both in sugary snacks and by not adding sugar to food including cakes, sweets, chocolates, tinned fruit in syrup, sweetened yogurts and fromage frais
- **Foods high in saturated fat** such as biscuits, crisps, pasties, sausage rolls and cakes.
- **Fresh pate** (meat, fish or vegetable-based) to reduce the risk of food poisoning.
- **Unpasteurised milk, milk drinks and cheese**, mould-ripened cheeses and soft blue-veined cheese, to reduce the risk of food poisoning. However, these cheeses can be used as part of a cooked recipe as listeria is killed by cooking.
- **Shark, swordfish and marlin** as the levels of mercury in these fish can affect a child’s developing nervous system.
- **Raw shellfish** to reduce the risk of food poisoning, and make sure any shellfish you use is thoroughly cooked.
- **Raw jelly cubes** these are a choking hazard.
- **Slush ice drinks** sometimes known as slushies, as they may contain too much glycerol

Foods we serve occasionally from 6 months to 4 years

- Although it is recommended to provide oily fish in early years settings at least once every 3 weeks, do not provide it more than twice a week, as it can contain low levels of pollutants.

Children with additional needs and requirements

Some children may have specific dietary requirements because of physical or developmental needs which may affect their ability to eat certain foods due to sensitivity to texture, preference and smells amongst varies other aversions, in these circumstances we work with parents/carers and other external agencies(dieticians and health practitioners) to cater for these children, adapting meals (making exceptions where appropriate), environments to support the child through agreed healthcare plans.

Safety and prevention of choking

We follow strict guidelines at meal and snack time:

- All children are required to be seated whilst consuming any food

- Food must be prepared in accordance with food standards agency advice and be cut/chopped/steamed stage appropriate (not necessarily by age)
- Preparing guidelines are displayed in every room and kitchen and must be adhered to at all times
- Formula milk is prepared according to guidelines and bottles are either sterilised by parents or the nursery with agreement
- Children's Weaning Stage must be clearly displayed in their room (Baby room, if there is a child who is not competent with their eating in older rooms this must also be displayed) with new staff (and covering staff) being briefed on every child in their room
- Children must be supervised at all times, Staff (in ratio) must be observant and seated with the children while eating is taking place avoiding social conversations with other adults in order prevent distraction. (failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in a disciplinary)(First Aid Policy must be read as a reminder of signs of choking)
- 2 members of staff who are First Aid trained must be present
- Life Vac must only be used as a last resort (Please see Life Vac Policy)
- First Aid Policy must also be read



Early years food choking hazards

Below is a table of advice on key foods for care givers who are involved with preparing and serving food for babies and young children (under 5 years old)

Pips or stones in fruit	Always check beforehand and remove hard pips or stones from fruit.
Small fruits	Cut small round fruits like grapes, cherries, berries, strawberries and cherry tomatoes, into small pieces: cut lengthways and then again cut them in halves (quarters).
Large fruits and firm fruits	Cut large fruits like melon and firm fruits like apple into slices instead of small chunks. For very young children, consider grating or mashing firm fruits, or softening them up by steaming or simmering.
Vegetables	Cut vegetables like carrots, cucumber and celery into narrow batons. For very young children consider grating or mashing firm vegetables and legumes like butter beans, chickpeas and tofu, or softening them up by steaming or simmering.
Skin on fruit and vegetables	Consider removing the skin from fruit and vegetables, especially for very young children. Peeled fruit and vegetables can be swallowed more easily.
Cooking fruit and vegetables	Consider softening firm fruit and vegetables (such as carrots, broccoli, yam and apples) by steaming or simmering until soft. Serve cut into slices or narrow batons.
Sausages and hot dogs	Cut sausages and hot dogs into short strips. Cut them in half and then lengthways or as thinly as possible. Peeling the skin off the sausages helps them to be swallowed more easily.
Meat or fish	Remove bones from meat or fish. Cut meat into strips as thinly as possible. Remove skin and fat from meat and fish, it will help the food pass smoothly down the throat.

Cheese Advice

Grate or cut cheese Grate or cut cheese into short strips. Cut lumps of cheese as narrow as possible.

Chop or flake whole nuts	Chop or flake whole nuts, peanuts and seeds. Whole nuts should not be given to children under five years old.
White bread and other breads	White bread can form a ball shape with a dough-like texture at the back of a child's throat, if not chewed properly. Brown bread or toasted white bread are good alternatives. Cut bread, chapatis, naan bread and other breads into narrow strips.
Popcorn	Do not give babies and young children popcorn.
Chewing gum and marshmallows	Do not give babies and young children chewing gum or marshmallows.
Peanut butter	Do not give babies and young children peanut butter on its own, only use as a spread.
Jelly cubes	Do not give babies and young children raw jelly cubes.
Boiled sweets and ice cubes	Do not give babies and young children boiled, hard, gooey, sticky or cough sweets, or ice cubes.
Raisins and other dried fruits	Do not give babies under the age of 1 whole raisins or dried fruits. Cut them into small pieces.

Make sure food is prepared appropriately for children under 5 years old, see: <https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/weaning/>
It is also advisable that care givers are familiar with how to respond to a choking incident, see: How to stop a child from choking: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/first-aid-and-safety/first-aid/how-to-stop-a-child-from-choking/>
and How to resuscitate a child: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/first-aid-and-safety/first-aid/how-to-resuscitate-a-child/>

Celebrations

At Goldilocks Nurseries we believe that celebrating events should be a joyous and special time for children to celebrate their or others birthdays, we believe that educating children that sweet treats in moderation on special events is ok.

We allow celebration cakes at the nursery however this would need to be prior agreed with the nursery manager to prevent multiple cakes during the week (we try and aim for limiting a maximum of 1 cake per week),

We do not allow cakes with nuts, and any cake bought in would need to have a full ingredient list.

Parents are still encouraged to consider a healthier alternative such as a fruit platter cake or non-edible items such as bubbles and stickers to celebrate.

Food Hygiene

We maintain the highest possible food hygiene standards with regard to the purchase, storage, preparation and serving of food. We are registered as a food provider with the local authority Environmental Health Department

- Our staff with responsibility for food preparation understands the principles of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) as it applies to our setting. This is set out in Safer Food Better Business (Food Standards Agency 2011). The basis for this is risk assessment of the purchase, storage, preparation and serving of food to prevent growth of bacteria and food contamination.
 - ⇒ All our staff follow the guidelines of Safer Food Better Business.
 - ⇒ All our staff that are involved in the preparation and handling of food have received training in food hygiene.
 - ⇒ The person responsible for food preparation and serving carries out daily opening and closing checks on the kitchen to ensure standards are met consistently. (See Safer Food Better Business)

- ⇒ We use reliable suppliers for the food we purchase.
- ⇒ Food is stored at correct temperatures and is checked to ensure it is in-date and not subject to contamination by pests, rodents or mould.
- ⇒ Food preparation areas are cleaned before and after use.
- ⇒ There are separate facilities for hand washing and for washing-up.
- ⇒ All surfaces are clean and non-porous.
- ⇒ All utensils, crockery etc. are clean and stored appropriately.
- ⇒ Waste food is disposed of daily.
- Cleaning materials and other dangerous materials are stored out of children's reach.
- Children do not have unsupervised access to the kitchen.
- When children take part in cooking activities, they:
 - ⇒ Are supervised at all times;
 - ⇒ Understand the importance of hand-washing and simple hygiene rules;
 - ⇒ Are kept away from hot surfaces and hot water; and
 - ⇒ Do not have unsupervised access to electrical equipment, such as blenders etc.

Reporting of food poisoning

Food poisoning can occur for a number of reasons; not all cases of sickness or diarrhoea are as a result of food poisoning and not all cases of sickness or diarrhoea are reportable.

- Where children and/or adults have been diagnosed by a GP or hospital doctor to be suffering from food poisoning and where it seems possible that the source of the outbreak is within our setting, the manager will contact the Environmental Health Department to report the outbreak and will comply with any investigation.
- We notify Ofsted as soon as reasonably practicable of any confirmed cases of food poisoning affecting two or more children looked after on the premises, and always within 14 days of the incident.

Legal framework and further guidance

- Regulation (EC) 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Hygiene of Foodstuffs.
- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6839b752210698b3364e86fc/Early_years_foundation_stage_nutrition_guidance.pdf
- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/670fa42a30536cb92748328f/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_group_and_school-based_providers.pdf
- <https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/food-safety>
- Safer Food, Better Business (Food Standards Agency 2011)