

Nutrition and Mealtimes

At **Little Pearls Nursery** we believe that mealtimes should be happy, social occasions for children and staff alike. We promote shared, enjoyable positive interactions at these times. We also keep the children's safety in mind at all times; ensuring practitioners constantly supervise the children whilst they are eating.

We are committed to ensure that every child is provided with healthy, nutritious and balanced meals and snacks which meet the nutritional guidelines and individual needs and requirements.

We will ensure that:

- All breakfasts, snacks, lunches and teas are balanced, healthy and nutritious.
- As a setting we are nut-free, we do not provide nuts in our meals or snacks and ask all parents to not pack any nut products in their child's lunch boxes.
- Each child is offered at least half a piece of fresh fruit or vegetable for morning and afternoon snack. This can be accompanied by a yogurt or cracker if needed but the fruit will always be offered first.
- When preparing snacks, staff will ensure that the size of each piece of fruit/ vegetable is appropriately cut to minimise the risk of choking. We also ask that parents are mindful of this when preparing their lunches
- As we don't provide lunches, we try our best to encourage all parents to avoid food with large quantities of fat, sugar, salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings
- Milk is offered to the children at every snack time (Dairy & non Dairy substitute)
- Fresh drinking water is always available and staff have the duty to ensure that every child has a drink at all times. 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 give careful consideration to 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

- Staff show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. They do not make a child feel singled out because of their diet or allergy. They also have a duty to label food correctly and provide the food on a separate tray to prevent cross-contamination
- Staff set a good example to the children and promote good table 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
- Cultural differences in eating habits are respected
- Children who refuse to eat at mealtime are offered food later in the day
- Children are given time to eat at their own pace and not rushed
- Children are given a portion size which is appropriate to their age following guidance from the Children's Food Trust
- We promote positive attitudes to healthy eating through play opportunities and discussions
- The nursery provides parents with daily written records of every mealtime for children less than three years. Parents of children over three years are given verbal feedback on meals if required
- No child is ever left alone when eating/drinking to minimise the risk of choking
- You are welcome to bring food in from home to share with the other children for a special celebration (e.g. a birthday) but we will be unable to give it to other children during their nursery day. Instead products given to share will be sent home and therefore under each parents discretion.
- All our staff who prepare and handle food are competent to do so and receive training in food hygiene which is updated every three years
- In the very unlikely event of any food poisoning affecting two or more children on the premises, whether or not this may arise from food offered at the nursery, we will inform Ofsted as soon as reasonably practical and in all cases within 14 days. We will also inform the relevant health agencies and follow any advice given.

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