

## 7 I) Nutrition and Mealtimes Policy

**OFSTED GUIDANCE:** Providing healthy, balanced and nutritious food ensures that all children:

- Get the right amount of nutrients and energy they need while they are growing rapidly, which is especially important for children who might not have access to healthy food at home. This can help prevent children from becoming overweight or obese.
- Children develop positive eating habits early on
- Children's early experiences with food can shape future eating habits. This can impact children's long-term health including maintaining a healthy weight, and good oral health.
- The Early Years are a crucial time to reduce health inequalities and set the foundations for a lifetime of good health.

At Hickory Dickorys Day nursery we believe that mealtimes should be happy, social occasions for children and staff alike, we have a designated dining room which promotes a shared and enjoyable positive interactions during mealtimes.

We are committed to offering children healthy, nutritious and balanced meals and snacks, which meet individual needs and requirements.

### **We Ensure that:**

- Balanced and healthy meals and snacks are provided for children attending the setting.
- Our menus are planned in advance. We follow the EYFS Guidelines (Sept 25) for the nutritional content of each meal.
- Before each Term's menu is selected, we have 2 'Taster Weeks' where we introduce new and exciting dishes for children to vote on, these are then included in the following Term's Menu. These reflect cultural diversity and variation, and these are shared with the parents.
- We avoid large quantities of fat, sugar, salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- Our meals include at least 3 servings of fresh fruit and vegetables per day.
- Only milk and water are provided as drinks to promote oral health. Fresh drinking water is always available and accessible.

### **Management of Food Allergies and Dietary Needs**

- Before a child joins the nursery, we gather all the 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. All information is shared with staff involved in preparing and handling food.
- Where necessary we carry out a Risk Assessment in case of allergies and work alongside parents and staff to put into place any individual dietary plan for their child.
- All staff delivering meals are qualified in First Aid.

- Any child who has an allergy or dietary requirement are given the following-coloured plates and utensils: GREEN = Vegan & Vegetarian      PURPLE = Allergy
- All allergens are displayed alongside the menus, to show the contents of each meal.
- An adult will sit alongside the children during mealtimes to ensure safety and to always minimise risks. We will also discuss with children about Allergies and potential risks to make them aware of the dangers of sharing certain foods.
- All staff respect cultural differences and eating practices.
- Staff will set a good example and may eat a small portion of the nursery food with the children to show good table manners, whilst ensuring all children's needs are met.
- Staff do not eat their own personal meals or snacks in front of the children.
- Any child who shows signs of distress at the meal presented will be offered an alternative.
- Children are never rushed and are given time to eat their food.
- Portion sizes of food consider the ages and stages of children.
- No child is ever left alone whilst eating or drinking to minimise the risk of choking
- All staff who prepare and handle food are competent to do so and receive training in Food Hygiene practices, and to avoid the risk of choking.
- All staff tie up their hair and wear gloves & sanitize hands prior to preparing or serving food. They use serving utensils to minimise the touching of children's food.
- All children have access to appropriate cutlery for serving and eating their food.
- Children are encouraged to safely serve themselves where appropriate.

### **Baby Feeding and Weaning**

- We promote 'baby-led weaning' and finger foods.
- We follow each baby's individual feeding pattern and work closely with parents and regularly review these to ensure they continue to meet the baby's needs.
- We feed babies according to their needs and support mothers with breast feeding, by providing suitable places to breast feed in the setting and make provision for storing expressed breast milk
- We prepare infant formula milk if required, following NHS guidelines.
- Weaning is introduced in partnership with parents including discussions about the stage that their baby is at, the types of food and textures their baby is eating at home and how these are presented.
- The nursery provides a daily written record of feeding routines.
- We provide fresh food for babies and do not use pre-made commercial baby food or drinks.
- We do not permit parents to provide commercial baby food or drinks.
- Fluid intake for babies is closely monitored
- We sign post parents to: [NHS Start for Life weaning advice.](#)

## **Provision for Cultural & Dietary preferences**

- We will always try to provide food from the diet of each of the children's cultural backgrounds, by providing children with familiar foods and introducing them the new foods.
- Cultural differences in eating habits are respected.

## **Learning about Food and Cooking with Children**

- We promote positive attitudes to healthy eating through activities, cooking opportunities, discussions and games throughout the nursery.
- Staff continually support children to make healthy choices and understand the need for healthy eating and good oral hygiene.

## **Food Poisoning**

In the very unlikely event of any food poisoning affecting 2 or more children on the premises, whether this may arise from food offered at the nursery, we will inform Ofsted as soon as reasonably practicable and in all cases within 14 days. We will also inform the relevant Health Agency and follow any advice given.

## **Food Brought from Home includes Packed Lunches & Snacks**

This Policy applies to all children and parents providing packed lunches & snacks which are to be consumed in the setting.

- We will share our expectations with parents through our Nutrition & Mealtimes Policy.
- We allow children to bring snacks and packed lunches into the setting during funded sessions.
- We provide parents with the Guidelines for Nutritious content and signpost to the NHS packed lunch guidance:

<https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes/>

- We offer facilities to refrigerate packed lunches; however, we do not provide re-heating services and the offer of refrigeration may change.
- Children's lunchboxes are checked prior to giving the contents to the children to ensure any risks from potential allergens or choking hazards are managed.
- We will ask parents to use easy-to-open containers that promote children's independence.
- We request that ALL snacks & lunches/tea are in separate containers CLEARLY MARKED with their child's name. and for which meal.
- We will provide the children with drinks.

- We will ensure that all home-packed lunches consumed in nursery provide children with healthy and nutritious food to provide a balanced diet.
- We will support children to develop independence by sitting with them where it is possible to model eating, behaviour, opening containers etc.
- We encourage the children to eat suitable portions from their packed lunch. Any food left or not consumed will be sent home at the end of the sessions for parents to monitor.
- Choking hazards or foods containing nuts will not be served but will be sent home for parents to give later.
- We will encourage parents to include at least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables in their lunch
- High fat meat products such as sausage rolls, individual pies, corned meat and sausages should only be included occasionally. It is not appropriate for lunch boxes to contain chocolate, sweets or fizzy drinks
- A list of helpful alternative suggestions will be given to parents as well as accessing the Healthier Lunch box website.
- The nursery recognises that some children may require special diets that do not allow for the packed lunch standards to be met. In this case, parents are responsible for ensuring that packed lunches are as healthy and balanced as possible. For this reason, children are also NOT PERMITTED to swap food items with others
- We will sometimes celebrate special occasions such as birthdays, with the occasional treat such as cake, these are always given alongside mealtimes. If these times are frequent, we consider other alternatives such as stickers, becoming a special helper, dancing and singing their favourite songs. If parents do bring in a cake this must be purchased and sealed with a printed list of ingredients and allergens to ensure the safety of each child.
- A child will never be made to feel ashamed or uncomfortable about the contents of their lunch box, this will be discussed privately with parents
- If you fail to provide your child with a packed lunch on the booked day, then the nursery will provide a meal for your child, and you will be charged £6.00 which includes a £1 charge for inconvenience.
- If you fail to provide your child with a suitable balanced and nutritional packed lunch on the booked day, then the nursery will provide a meal for your child, and you will be charged £6.00 which includes a £1 charge for inconvenience.

### **Assessment, Evaluation and Review of Packed Lunches**

- Key workers will hold discussions with parents regarding their child's lunches and appetites.
- Any food not eaten will be returned home so parents can see how much it has been consumed.
- If staff members feel that a child's lunch box has not been balanced and healthy on numerous occasions, they will discuss this further in private with parents.