



DRAFT

# Food and Healthy Eating Policy

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Tracked Changes


## **Date adopted by Ilminster Avenue Nursery School Governing Body:**

We are based in Knowle, in the South of Bristol. The numbers of children who are obese and have tooth decay in the under 5's exceed the national figures.

We aim to provide an environment that promotes healthy food and eating. We aim to enable children to make informed choices about the food they eat. We believe that this supports lifelong learning.

This policy was formulated through consultation between staff, governors and parents/carers. The policy is communicated to the whole Nursery community. The nutritional principles of this policy are based on current evidence-based findings. The "eat well plate" is the agreed model for ensuring a healthy balanced diet. We also reference the Department for Education's "Early years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance"

[The Eatwell Guide - NHS](#)

[Eat-Better-Start-Better1.pdf](#)

[The Caroline Walker Trust | improving public health through good food](#)

## **Food Policy Aims**

The main aims of our nursery food policy are for example:

1. To enable pupils to make healthy food choices through the provision of information and development of appropriate skills and attitudes.
2. To provide healthy, balanced, nutritious food/drink choices throughout the school day and ensure food brought into nursery is safe and healthy.
3. To ensure that all aspects of food and drink in school promote the health and wellbeing of pupils, staff and visitors to our nursery.
4. To ensure that children are helped to understand the importance of physical activity and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

These aims are in keeping with the Statutory Framework for the EYFS.

## Curriculum

The Department for Education legislation (September 2015) stipulates that nutrition education is embedded in the curriculum. There are numerous opportunities in our curriculum for pupils to develop knowledge of food and health. An example of this is in our term three curricular goal: To make a healthy snack.

Children are involved in food preparation every day in the Nursery School. They are supported by adults to prepare their own snacks.

We promote healthy eating habits that will lead to lifelong health and well-being. We recognise that healthier children learn more effectively. We aim to have an impact on health-related issues such as children being over or under-weight and having poor dental health which are such significant factors in Bristol.

Exploring a wide range of foods and growing vegetables ourselves is an important part of our curriculum. Our “Children’s Kitchen” is an important space for children to use.

# Food and drink provision throughout the school day

National Nutritional Standards for food in schools became compulsory in June 2014. Food and Nutrient based Standards covering all aspects of school food, form the basis for all food offered and eaten in nursery throughout the nursery day. Together they apply to all food and drink served in schools from 8am – 6 pm.

## **Snacks**

The snacks we offer are carefully planned according to nutritional guidelines for under-fives so they offer a mix of carbohydrate, protein and fruit or vegetables. Snacks are offered on a rolling program once a day. Food is washed and brought to the table by staff and children are involved in preparing their individual snack and clearing up the cutlery, plates etc. All plates, cups etc. are washed in a dishwasher after use. Snack and lunch menus, along with photos are displayed to promote healthy eating. Hand washing guidelines are mounted near snack tables.

A four-week snack menu is offered to all children. We feel that repetition in the snack menu is a good way to ensure that a child has the opportunity to see others eating certain foods regularly before they are confident to try unfamiliar foods themselves.

## **Healthy food choices**

Snack times across all of our services are used to engage children in talking about making healthy food choices. We use these times to talk with children about specific dietary requirements, too. This helps them to develop an understanding that some people have allergies, some people make ethical food choices (e.g. they are vegetarian or vegan) and some people make food choices because of their faith (e.g. halal).

## **School lunch**

The nursery does not have the facilities to provide a cooked mid-day meal to children, so Parents/carers provide their child with a packed lunch. We encourage parents and carers to provide children with packed lunches that complement the nutritional standards. This is achieved by promoting healthy balanced packed lunch options using the principles of the 'Eatwell plate'. This will ensure that children eating packed lunches have a healthy balanced meal. We provide a leaflet to show parents examples of what a 'healthy packed lunch' may look like and are in the process of making videos to show how to prepare a healthy packed lunch.

We are mindful that the Children's Food Trust (2009) reported that packed lunches brought from home were not only, of majority, 99% less nutritious than School Meals. We, therefore, work with parents and carers to understand what foods would make up a healthy packed lunch.

### **Staff role**

Staff working at the snack/lunch areas model eating as a social occasion. They encourage children to try new items without putting pressure on them to eat, to help themselves and learn about food through talking to them about the food on offer, what they eat at home etc.

Staff will not eat their own food with the children, especially if these are not healthy or nutritious.

### **Use of food to celebrate**

At Ilminster Avenue Nursery School, we recognise that small treats are part of a healthy attitude to food. Food often plays a central role in different celebrations. If we invite children to celebrate in Nursery, the class will make a list of suggestions to our families, these suggestions contain balanced and healthy choices. Although, a small treat will be included, this is in moderation.

Things such as fruit or vegetable platters, breadsticks, sandwiches or vegetable dips are suggested.

Food is never offered as a reward, especially as a reward for good behaviour. We model this to parents/carers and offer alternative advice to support them if needed.

### **Working with parents**

The relationship between the parent and the child's key person is central to the way we operate in the Nursery. Key persons speak regularly with parents/carers and will raise and follow up on any issues or concerns relating to health or diet. If concerns continue about a child's health staff can raise this with senior staff.

### **Drinking Water**

The National Nutritional Standards for Healthy School Lunches recommend that drinking water should be available to all pupils, every day, and free of charge. The nursery encourages all staff and pupils to consume water as their primary fluid intake.

We provide drinking water at snack time along with milk and encourage pupils to drink at frequent intervals throughout the day. Drinking water is provided at lunchtime on each table and children are invited to pour their drinks themselves from freshly prepared water jugs.

Additional water is provided outside in hotter weather.

## **Special dietary requirements**

### **Special diets - Medical**

We recognise that some pupils may require special diets that do not allow for our food policy to be exactly met. In this case parents are asked to make us fully aware of this. Individual care plans need to be created for pupils with special dietary needs/requirements. These should document symptoms and adverse reactions, actions to be taken in an emergency, and emergency contact details, along with any particular food requirements e.g. for high-energy diets. The nursery and school caterers (if appropriate) are made aware of any food allergies/food intolerance/medical diets.

If a parent has any concerns about their child's eating, they should discuss it with us so that we can ensure we are ready to cater for them.

When children start Nursery School, they have a home visit from their key person and a separate individual meeting with a senior member of the staff team. At these meetings they are asked some general questions about their child's health and dietary requirements including the name of the child's doctor and dentist. If they have no dentist, they will be given details on how to register.

### **Allergies**

When children start Nursery School, they have a home visit from their key person and a separate meeting with a senior member of the staff team. At one of these meetings, they complete information forms which include a question on dietary requirements and food allergies.

If a parent tells us that their child has an allergy to certain foods, we discuss this with them and ask if they have medical confirmation of allergies. If this is the case, we use an appropriate form to take all the relevant details. Copies of this form are kept centrally by the SENCO in the First aid cupboard in the reception area along with any medication and care plans.

Medication is clearly labelled with the child's name and all staff in the room are aware of its location. An overall list of allergies for the Nursery is maintained by the SENCO and copies of this list with photos of the child are displayed by the main snack table so that any member of staff working in this area is aware of all allergies. Children with food allergies wear a badge with a coloured spot when they start nursery and have a meal mat describing their allergy.

We previously had a 'nut free school' policy however we now follow the advice below from Allergy UK.

*Many parents and schools try to 'ban' certain foods (such as nuts) from school premises. However, we do not recommend a 'no nut policy' in schools, as it is not possible to guarantee and enforce a nut free zone, as staff cannot monitor all lunches and snacks brought in from home. A 'free from' environment creates a false sense of security and does not safely prepare children for environments where nuts may be present. Schools would need to consider other children with different food allergies and it is not practical to restrict them all. Therefore, schools should have procedures in place to minimise risk of reaction via cross contamination.*

When a child who uses an EpiPen comes to Nursery, training is arranged for all staff on the procedures to be followed in the administering of the medication. We discuss with the parent any measures we need to take within the school to keep the child safe, such as being particularly careful about washing hands after handling any food which may cause an allergic reaction. The majority of our staff are trained paediatric first-aiders.

### **Food safety**

Fridges that store milk or food for children have temperatures are checked daily.

Any food safety hazards are identified and controlled. Information is cascaded to everyone who is involved with food related activities in school.

We do not prepare food for meals on site.

### **The food and eating environment**

The nursery provides a clean, sociable welcoming environment for pupils to eat their lunch. Staff help to ensure a safe, enjoyable experience at lunchtime and encourage healthy eating, independence and making choices. Food is served 'family style' with children sitting around a table with staff and children are encouraged to 'chat' as you would around a family dinner table about your day etc.

### **Sustainability**

Food waste is minimal as children at the Snack table are encouraged to take small portions initially and then to take a second helping if they have finished the first and want more.

We use crockery which can be washed and reused rather than disposable paper or plastic cups.

## **Oral health**

We understand that oral health plays a vital role in our daily lives, affecting our ability to eat, speak, and feel confident. Knowle has a high rate of tooth decay in young children, and we want to try and work with parents/carers and children to try to raise awareness of good oral hygiene. We are part of the "The Big Brush Club" initiative and support children to learn to clean their teeth every day. We read stories about teeth and talk about healthy food and drinks that help to grow strong teeth, and those that do not. We will encourage children to look at their own and adults' teeth, using mirrors.

We have a particular focus on making healthy food choices as part of our Term 3 curricular goal. "Make a Healthy Snack".

## **Leading by example and staff training**

Staff have a key role in influencing pupil's knowledge, skills and attitudes about food, so it is important that they are familiar with healthy eating guidelines. Staff are kept up to date with Food in School issues by providing relevant training as appropriate.

Staff have specific training from a health practitioner to support children who have "Eating and Drinking Guidelines".

Hot drinks for staff must be consumed in the staff room. If a hot drink needs to be carried to an office, it must be in an opaque safety cup with a lid to minimise risk of spillage or children encountering hot liquids or surfaces.

Cold drinks need to be healthy and should be served in opaque plastic cups with lids.

Staff who wish to eat during the session may sit and eat with the children at one of the snack tables. No other food is available to staff in the classrooms.

Staff may eat lunch in the staff room away from any areas being used by families. The staff room has facilities for making hot drinks, a fridge for the staff to store food and a microwave for heating lunches.

## **Consultation, monitoring and evaluation**

This policy was written in accordance with the most recent government guidance and support the policy and its impact is reviewed on an ongoing basis. The policy is communicated to the entire nursery community and new families/staff to our nursery are made aware of its importance.