



Little Seedlings Nursery & Seedlings Nursery Meal Times, Feeding & Healthy Eating Policy

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1.0 Aims and Expectations

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to outline how we aim to promote and provide healthy eating within our nursery settings.

1.2 To outline how we work together with parents/guardians to ensure that all children's nutritional needs are met whilst they are in the care of our nursery settings.

1.3 To outline how we will maintain safety and hygiene practices in relation to snack and meal times within our nursery settings.

1.4 To ensure that our practice around feeding and meal times in our nursery setting is transparent and consistent.

1.5 To outline how our practice meets the latest standards set by the EYFS statutory framework, as well as all guidance around nutrition in young children and babies from the NHS.

1.6 To outline how we will ensure that mealtimes are enjoyable and social occasions which provide an opportunity to encourage good communication skills and language development. We also recognise the importance that meal times serve in relation to encouraging children's natural curiosity for exploring new concepts.

2.0 Importance of a Healthy Diet in Early Years

2.1 At Seedlings Nursery we understand that a healthy and varied diet, as well as a healthy attitude to food play an essential part in the maintenance of young people's health, both now and in the future. We aim to provide this within our nursery settings by:

- A. Providing a healthy and varied diet that meets all current nutritional guidelines as outlined by the NHS
- B. Gathering information from parents and guardians prior to a child starting in nursery regarding their nutritional needs and routines, and adapting our practice by acting upon any updated communication given to us
- C. Working alongside parents and guardians to ensure that they understand and follow all information outlined within this policy
- D. Ensuring that we follow all statutory requirements regarding safer food practices
- E. Ensuring that our staff have a detailed understanding of the different nutritional needs of the children we care for dependent on their age and specific circumstances
- F. Teaching our children the importance of a healthy diet, and how this can contribute to lifelong physical and mental health benefits

3.0 Hygiene Practices

3.1 Within our nursery settings we fully recognise the importance in maintaining clean and hygienic areas where food and milk is stored, prepared and eaten, particularly in relation to the health of babies and young children.

3.2 We will ensure that any areas used within food preparation or for eating will be cleaned at regular and appropriate intervals throughout the day using the hygiene routines and products provided by the school.

3.3 The only kitchen area that is used directly by nursery staff for the preparation of food is within Little Seedlings. The room is equipped with a small kitchen area that will be used to store and prepare baby food and bottles for milk, as well as to heat up baby food for mealtimes.

3.4 When ensuring our kitchen and eating areas are hygienic, we recognise these stages within cleaning:

1. Pre-clean: the removal of any soiling through sweeping, wiping or pre-rinsing.
2. Main-clean: use of detergents to remove grease and dirt.
3. Rinse: removal of detergent and dirt.
4. Disinfection: reduce bacteria to a safe level

3.5 Daily health and safety checks will include checking the cleanliness of the kitchen area.

3.6 Staff must wash their hands before the preparation of any food or feeding a child.

3.7 Babies must have their hands wiped before being fed a bottle.

3.8 All children must wash their hands before handling or eating food.

3.9 Staff must not wash their hands using the kitchen sink in Little Seedlings. This sink is only to be used for washing and rinsing baby bottles and equipment related to feeding. Staff can wash their own hands using the sink in the disabled toilet that is located within the baby room.

3.10 All cutlery and baby bottles must be washed after each use with hot, soapy water.

3.11 All cutlery and bowls used to feed babies under 1 must be sterilised after being washed.

3.12 The steriliser must be washed daily with hot, soapy water.

4.0 Safety Practices

4.1 All nursery children must be supervised closely in plain sight when eating or drinking in order to minimise associated risks from choking.

4.2 Babies must never be propped up to drink a bottle. They must always be fed by their key person holding them, however, they will be given the option of holding the bottle themselves when they are able to.

4.3 Babies must be strapped into high chairs and closely supervised at all times.

4.4 We are unable to follow a baby-led weaning programme.

4.5 All food must be chopped appropriately so that it does not pose a choking hazard to the child that is eating it. For example, we recommend that fruit such as grapes are cut into quarters. For children that are not yet able to cut their own food, staff will support the child in doing this for them, but we will always look to promote and support independence where appropriate. Solid food within lunch boxes must be prepared appropriately at home.

4.6 The kitchen area within Little Seedlings is inaccessible to children at all times.

4.7 Food must not be reheated more than once. If a baby does not eat the whole amount of food the remains will be discarded and parents will be notified how much food their baby ate within their daily communication book.

4.8 Unopened pre-packaged baby food can be stored at room temperature and can be eaten at room temperature or warm. There is no requirement for it to be heated to a specific temperature. If food is warmed in a microwave it must be thoroughly stirred to prevent heat pockets and allowed to cool before feeding to a baby.

4.9 Pre cooked 'home' meals that are provided by parents/guardians for babies must be stored in the fridge. They must also be reheated using a microwave to a temperature of at least 75 degrees centigrade and piping hot. Food should be stirred to avoid heat spots and allowed to cool before feeding to a baby.

4.10 Formula milk feeds must be prepared freshly prior to each feed. Within our setting we use a bottle fed preparation machine to prepare all formula milk feeds.

4.11 Babies under 6 months may be offered boiled tap water as a drink in a sterilized bottle or beaker cup. It must have been cooled for at least 30 minutes before being consumed and the temperature must be checked.

4.12 Children are not allowed to swap or share food and snacks at meal times in order to protect any children with allergies or specific dietary requirements.

5.0 Special Dietary Requirements

5.1 Prior to children starting in our nursery settings parents and guardians are required to inform staff of any special dietary requirements within their child's starter documentation.

5.2 Special dietary requirements are defined as diets that may be restricted due to:

- A. Food allergies
- B. Food intolerances
- C. Religious belief
- D. Cultural tradition
- E. Chosen or preferred lifestyle choice

5.3 When a parent or guardian indicates within their child's starter documentation that their child has special dietary requirements the child's key person will discuss this in more detail during the child and parent's first settling in session by filling out a more detailed form.

5.4 Where an allergy or intolerance is indicated, a risk assessment will also be carried out for the individual child by the room leader. This information will then be shared with all staff that come into contact with the child and will direct any specific instructions and routines.

5.5 An allergy, intolerance and special dietary requirement register will be kept within each nursery room for staff to refer to.

5.6 All food prepared for a child with a special dietary requirement will be prepared in a clean and sanitized environment where there is no chance of contamination and served on equipment that has been in contact with any food that is restricted from the child's diet.

5.7 Our nursery settings and school environment is a nut-free zone and this is communicated to parents and guardians of all new starters. If it is noticed that a child has any food containing this allergen it will be sent home with the child at the end of the day and parents/guardians will be politely reminded to refrain from sending these foods into our setting in future.

5.8 The lunchtime menu for children over the age of 1 is available for parents to view on the school website at all times and it details all allergens, as well as meat content. This allows parents to view the menu in advance and decide which would be a suitable option each day.

6.0 Feeding Using Breast Milk & Breastfeeding

6.1 Little Seedlings participates in the active encouragement of parents breastfeeding their babies. If a parent wishes to breastfeed their baby they are welcome to do so within our setting. We are also able to feed babies expressed breast milk.

6.2 Prior to starting within our setting, we will gather as much information from parents and guardians regarding their child's feeding routines, and how we can support them to continue feeding their baby using breast milk.

6.3 Containers and storage:

- A. Breast milk should be provided on a daily basis. Any unused breast milk will be sent home at the end of each day.
- B. Breast milk must be sent into the nursery in a sterilised container, or within sterilised air-tight bottles (lids on) with the pre-prepared amounts for each feed. All containers must be marked with the child's name.
- C. Parents and guardians must send in the correct number of sterilised bottles the baby will need for each of their feeds throughout the day.
- D. Breast milk is to be kept at the back of the fridge and will be marked with the date it was received on it.
- E. Breast milk must never be left at room temperature for more than an hour.

6.4 Warming breast milk:

- A. Breast milk is to be warmed to a body temperature using a bottle warmer only.
- B. The milk is to be checked for temperature to ensure the milk is cool enough for the baby to drink.
- C. Breast milk must never be heated using a microwave.
- D. Once warmed, breast milk must never be reheated.

6.5 Feeding a baby with breast milk:

- A. Ensure that a positive identification takes place of checking the correct baby is receiving the correct milk against the name and date recorded.
- B. Ensure that babies have their hands wiped before feeding.
- C. Babies are fed by their key person, and if their key person is unavailable, then they are fed by their back-up key person.
- D. The key person sits in a comfortable chair, or on cushions to feed the baby; the key person needs to be relaxed and calm.
- E. Babies should be held close so that eye contact can be made. Key persons are responsive to their communication gestures during feeding, talking quietly to them, stroking or holding their hands.
- F. Once a baby has finished their feed they are winded and checked that they are comfortable.
- G. If there is any milk left within a feed it must be consumed within an hour, otherwise it must be discarded.
- H. Parents/guardians will be informed how much milk they consumed for each feed within their child's communication book.
- I. Bottles will be cleaned using hot, soapy water by staff. They will need to be sterilised by parents and guardians before being used again.

6.6 Hygiene:

Breast milk is a bodily fluid which carries with it a small risk of infection/disease. Key persons that are handling breast milk should avoid direct contact with the liquid and ensure that any spillages are cleaned and sanitized.

7.0 Feeding Using Formula Milk

7.1 Prior to starting within our setting, we will gather as much information from parents and guardians regarding their child's feeding routines. This information will include the oz of water each feed needs to be prepared correctly, as well as timings. We are able to feed babies ready-to-use formula milk from individual cartons

(providing the seal has not already been opened and it is in date), or we can prepare each feed using formula milk powder as provided by parents and guardians.

7.2 Parents and guardians that wish for their child to be given formula milk must provide daily:

- A. The correct number of clean and sterile bottles that the baby will need for each of their feeds during the day.
- B. If using formula milk powder, the feeds must be pre-prepared with the correct number of scoops in individual sterile airtight containers.

7.3 If there is a change to the baby's feeds regarding changing the amount of oz of water required to prepare a feed, parents and guardians must notify the child's key person in writing within their communication book.

7.4 Preparing the feed:

- A. If warming ready-to-use milk this will take place following the manufacturer instructions.
- B. If preparing a feed with powder, staff must read through parent's guidance to check they are providing the feed with the correct amount of oz of water.
- C. Staff should wash their hands.
- D. Staff must do a visual check that they are preparing the correct feed using the correct bottles.
- E. Prepare the feed using the milk preparation machine.
- F. If the machine is unable to be used, then the feed must be prepared using freshly boiled water from the kettle. Once boiled, the water should cool slightly before being measured into the bottle. The water should be allowed to cool for at least 20 minutes so that it reaches a temperature of approximately 70 degrees. The pre-measured powder should then be mixed into the water. Attach the sterilized teat and lid and shake vigorously. The milk should then be tested to check it has reached body temperature.
- G. All feeds should be prepared in plenty of time for the child. No baby should become distressed due to waiting for their feed.

7.5 Feeding a baby with formula milk:

- A. Ensure that a positive identification takes place of checking the correct baby is receiving the correct milk against the name and date recorded.
- B. Ensure that babies have their hands wiped before feeding.
- C. Babies are fed by their key person, and if their key person is unavailable, then they are fed by their back-up key person.
- D. The key person sits in a comfortable chair, or on cushions to feed the baby; the key person needs to be relaxed and calm.
- E. Babies should be held close so that eye contact can be made. Key persons are responsive to their communication gestures during feeding, talking quietly to them, stroking or holding their hands.
- F. Once a baby has finished their feed they are winded and checked that they are comfortable.
- G. If there is any milk left within a feed it must be consumed within 2 hours, otherwise it must be discarded.
- H. Parents/guardians will be informed how much milk they consumed for each feed within their child's communication book.
- I. Bottles will be cleaned using hot, soapy water by staff. They will need to be sanitized by parents and guardians before being used again.

8.0 Snacks

8.1 Snack time within our nursery settings are a social time of the day which should provide opportunities for children to:

- A. Experience a variety of different fruits and vegetables.
- B. Feel relaxed and be able to have conversations with their key person and other children.
- C. Develop their independence through being involved in preparing and cutting their snack after washing their hands and being closely supervised by their adult.

8.2 All children within Seedlings and children over the age of 1 within Little Seedlings will have a fruit or vegetable snack provided to them by the nursery within each morning and afternoon session.

8.3 No child is obligated or forced to eat their nursery snack, though they may be gently encouraged. If a child clearly indicates they do not want to eat their snack then they may be offered an alternative if one is available.

8.4 Parents/guardians can send their child with their own snack, however, it must be a fruit or vegetable.

9.0 Meal Times

9.1 Meal times are key times in the day for promoting social skills, exploration and learning. It is essential that staff support our children to enjoy these important parts of the day in a relaxed environment.

9.2 All children over the age of 1 are able to have a nutritious cooked meal at lunchtime for an additional cost. All food is prepared and cooked on site and the weekly menus for each half term are available on our school website. Alternatively, all children can opt to bring in a packed lunch from home.

9.3 Babies and children within Little Seedlings and the Serpentine room eat their meals within their nursery room with nursery staff.

9.4 Children within the Burghley room eat their lunches supervised by nursery staff in the main hall in order to help prepare them with school readiness.

9.5 All children have access to fresh water at all times of the day. Children are encouraged to bring their own water bottle each day, and if required, this can be refilled as many times as needed.

9.6 All children over the age of 1 are offered a carton of milk within each session as part of a government subsidy scheme.

9.7 Before eating begins all children must wash their hands and staff must role-model good hygiene at all times.

9.8 If a child has a packed lunch, any food that has not been eaten will be sent home so that parents and guardians can see how much they have eaten.

9.9 All children will be gently encouraged to eat, but they will not be forced to eat anything they do not want to. If nursery staff are concerned about the amount of food a child is eating then the key person should liaise with parents and guardians.

9.10 Meal Times in Little Seedlings Nursery (Under 2s):

- A. Parents and guardians of babies under 1 must provide all feeds and food for their child throughout the day. Fully weaned children over the age of 1 are able to have a cooked lunchtime meal for an additional cost, or they can continue to bring in their own food from home.
- B. Any baby or child that attends Explorers provision in the morning before 8:45 am are able to be fed any breakfast foods by our nursery staff that are provided by parents/guardians. Any baby or child that attends Explorer provision after 3.15pm will also be able to be fed an afternoon/early evening meal that is provided by parents/guardians.
- C. Our nursery staff are able to warm packaged baby food, or reheat mashed meals for babies and children that have been cooked at home. Staff will follow all safety procedures outlined within this policy.
- D. Babies and toddlers are given time to eat at their own pace and are not hurried.
- E. Babies and toddlers are not discouraged from eating with their fingers; this exploration of their food with their hands is the beginning of self-feeding.

- F. Any heated food that has not been eaten will be discarded and will be noted in a child's communication book how much they ate.

10.0 Policy Review

10.1 If for no other reason this policy will be reviewed every 2 years.