

## Nutrition and Mealtimes Policy

At St. Michael's 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 are committed to offering children healthy, nutritious and balanced meals and snacks, which meet individual needs and requirements, following the Department for Education nutrition guidance<sup>1</sup>.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Allergies and Allergic Reactions Policy.

### Our approach to food and healthy eating

- A balanced and healthy breakfast (babies) or morning snack (2 -4 year olds) ,midday meal and tea are provided for children attending a full day at the nursery
- Menus are planned in advance and in line with example menu and guidance produced by the Department for Education (copies can be provided on request). These are rotated regularly, reflect cultural diversity and variation and are displayed for children and parents to view; parents and children are involved in menu planning
- Menus include servings of fresh fruit and vegetables each day.
- We provide nutritious food at all snack and mealtimes, avoiding large quantities of fat, sugar, salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings
- Quantities offered take account of the ages of the children being catered for, in line with recommended portion sizes for babies and young children.

### Sustainability

- We purchase, wherever possible , from local suppliers keeping our carbon footprint as small as possible
- Recycling is embedded within our setting, with waste collection sorted into categories; glass, cardboard, paper, plastic, metal, food waste
- We ask our suppliers to reduce levels of plastic used for packaging and buy our cleaning products in bulk to reduce the amount of small plastic bottles disposed of.

### Mealtime environment

- No child is ever left alone when eating or drinking to minimise the risk of choking, and a qualified paediatric first aider is always present during meal and snack times
- Staff set a good example, eat with the children, and demonstrate 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 meal and snack times children are encouraged to use appropriate table manners and staff promote conversation to support social development
- Staff present food and hand out with the level of respect they would expect themselves, talking to children as they are given food and serving with thought.

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://bit.ly/EYFS\\_nutrition\\_guidance](https://bit.ly/EYFS_nutrition_guidance)

- Staff use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drinks, and feeding themselves.
- We are sensitive to child's likes and dislikes and a child is given encouragement and understanding if they become distressed about a meal. If a child does not finish their first course, they will still be given a helping of any second dish
- Children not on special diets are encouraged to eat a small piece of everything
- Children who refuse to eat at the mealtime are offered food later in the day
- Children are given time to eat at their own pace and are not rushed.

#### Drinks

- Only milk and water are provided as drinks to promote oral health
- Open cups are used at snack and lunch to promote physical development and also to encourage fluid intake to support bladder development.
- Fresh drinking water is always available and accessible. 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.

#### Baby feeding and weaning

- We follow babies' individual feeding patterns following conversations with parents. We regularly review these to ensure they continue to meet the baby's needs
- We feed babies responsively according to their needs and support mothers with breastfeeding, through providing suitable places to breastfeed in the setting and making provision for expressed breastmilk
- We prepare infant formula milk if required, following NHS guidelines. Formula Milk is provided by parents in unopened/ sealed tins.
- Weaning is introduced in collaboration with parents, including discussions about the stage their baby is at, the types of foods and textures their baby is eating at home and how these are presented to the baby; no assumptions are made based on the age of the baby. Weaning stages must mirror where the child is at home, talking regular with parents , to ensure young babies have experienced solid foods at home first.
- The nursery provides parents with daily written records of feeding routines for children for children upto 15 months, after this we ensure detailed verbal feedback is given.

#### Commercial baby food and drink

- We provide fresh food for babies and do not use pre-made commercial baby food or drinks
- We do not encourage parents to supply commercial baby food.

#### Management of food allergies and dietary needs

- All allergens are displayed alongside the menus to show the ingredients of each meal
- Individual dietary requirements are respected.
- Before a child joins the nursery, 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. All information is shared with staff involved in preparing and handling food

- 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/allergy plan for their child. This will be regularly reviewed and any changes shared with all staff
- 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
- Children have personalised placemats/ their own plates and dishes where a special diet is prepared, as a visual reminder to staff.
- At each meal and snack time, we ensure a nominated practitioner is responsible for checking that the food being provided meets all the requirements for each child
- Where appropriate, discussions will also take place with 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 use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child, or make a child feel singled out because of their diet or allergy.
- We have a 'no nut' policy at nursery, with no food being brought in from home. This extends to junk play , bird seed and pet food in nursery , our meals and cookery sessions.

#### Provision for cultural and dietary preferences

- Our menu is varied with a variety of meals , providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones
- Cultural differences in eating habits are respected.

#### Learning about food and cooking with children

- Staff support children to make healthy choices and understand the need for healthy eating
- We promote positive attitudes to healthy eating through play, growing, shopping and cooking opportunities and discussions.

#### Celebrations and special occasions

- We will sometimes celebrate special occasions with treats such as cake, sweets or biscuits. These will be given at mealtimes to help prevent tooth decay and not spoil the child's appetite
- We do not allow parents to bring in cakes on special occasions, but offer a birthday cake made in our own kitchen. This is enjoyed at lunchtime as a second course.
- We do not allow packed lunches/ food from home for children's to ensure to control foodstuffs/ allergens/ contamination
- We sometimes hold special events such as charity Bake Sales. We ensure that all food brought in from parents meet health and safety requirements and that ingredients are listed, following the Food Information for Consumers (FIR) 2014.

### Food safety and hygiene

- All staff who prepare and handle food are competent to do so and receive training in food hygiene which is updated every three years
- All staff are trained in preparing foods safely to avoid the risk of choking, following the Foods Standards Agency guidelines
- All staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis
- All staff are aware of the differences between allergies and intolerances, including that they need to maintain vigilance as children can develop allergies at any time
- 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.

### Food brought from home

- We do not allow children to bring packed lunches into the setting.
- We share the Food Standards Agency choking hazards guidance to support parents to prepare foods to reduce choking hazards
- We provide appropriate storage in allocated fridges for breast milk, which is clearly labelled and dated . This is to be used on the day given to nursery.

<b>This policy was adopted on</b>	<b>Signed on behalf of the nursery</b>	<b>Date for review</b>
26.8.2025		August 2026