

Nutrition and Mealtimes Policy



At Findon Village Woodland Preschool 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 putting every step in place which will aid children being provided with as healthy, nutritious and balanced meal and snacks as possible. Lunchboxes will also meet individual needs and requirements, following the Department for Education nutrition guidance¹.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Allergies and allergic reactions policy and the Packed lunch policy.

Our approach to food and healthy eating

Mealtime environment

- Children are supervised appropriately while eating, including being within sight and hearing of staff, and supported to eat safely
- 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, sometimes 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 use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drinks, and feeding themselves
- 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
- Fresh drinking water is always available and accessible. It is frequently offered to children, and intake is monitored
- In hot weather staff will encourage children to drink more water to keep them hydrated.

Management of food allergies and dietary needs

- All allergens are displayed in the main play room and the kitchen
- 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

¹ https://bit.ly/EYFS_nutrition_guidance

- 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, 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.
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Provision for cultural and dietary preferences

- 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 ice lollies cake, sweets or biscuits.
- We do allow parents to bring in cakes on special occasions however a slice will be sent home at the end of a child's day for parents to decide if/when the cake is given
- We consider celebrating with alternatives such as stickers and badges, bubbles, fruit platters, choosing a favourite story, becoming a special helper, playing a party game, dancing and/or singing their favourite song, and so on
- 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

Food brought from home

- We share the Food Standards Agency choking hazards guidance to support parents to prepare foods to reduce choking hazards
- We ask parents to use ice packs
- We do not provide reheating services for children's packed lunches
- Children's lunch boxes are checked prior to giving the contents to the children to ensure any risks from potential allergens or choking hazards are managed.

Our policy is developed in partnership with parents, staff and children and reviewed on a regular basis.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
<i>1st April 2026</i>	<i>Emily Petitt</i>	<i>1st April 2027</i>