



# **Nutrition and meal time Policy**

**Created: January 2026**

**To be reviewed: January 2027**

At Little Learners Nursery Group 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 snacks and meals which meet individual needs and requirements.

We will ensure that:

- Balanced and healthy meals and snacks are available for children attending the nursery
- Menus are planned in advance, rotated regularly and reflect cultural diversity and variation
- We offer nutritious food at all snack times, avoiding large quantities of fat, sugar, salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings
- Meals and snacks include the four main food groups each day: starchy foods, fruits and vegetables, protein sources, and dairy or dairy alternatives
- 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.
- In accordance with national guidance, the only drinks we offer to children are plain tap water and whole milk.
- Individual dietary requirements are respected. 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, before a child starts or joins the nursery. 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 plan for their child
- Dietary plans also take into account cultural and religious practices, as well as any specific nutrition needs identified for children under one year of age. Portion sizes and food choices reflect children's ages and stages, in line with national guidance.
- Families who do not wish to access the meals offered by the nursery have the option of bringing a packed lunch.
- 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, age/stage discussions will also take place with all 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 her/his diet or allergy
- Staff set a good example and eat with the children and show 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 meals and snack times children are encouraged to use their manners and say 'please' and 'thank you' and conversation is encouraged
- Staff use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink, and feeding themselves
- Staff support children to make healthy choices and understand the need for healthy eating
- We provide children with utensils/cutlery that are appropriate for their ages and stage of development considering each child's cultural eating practice
- Cultural differences in eating habits are respected
- We don't accept cakes or sweet treats for birthdays, but children are welcome to bring in stickers or bubbles to share in party bags if they'd like.
- Any child who shows signs of distress at being faced with a meal he/she does not like will have his/her food removed without any fuss. If a child does not finish his/her first course, he/she will still be given a helping of dessert
- 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 not rushed
- Quantities offered take account of the ages of the children being catered for in line with recommended portion sizes for young children
- We promote positive attitudes to healthy eating through play opportunities and discussions
- No child is ever left alone when eating/drinking to minimise the risk of choking. Food is prepared and served in ways that reduce choking risk, in line with Food Standards Agency guidance (e.g. cutting foods like grapes, cherry tomatoes, and sausages appropriately).
- Our portion size is age appropriate
- All staff who prepare and handle food are competent to do so and receive training in food hygiene which is updated every three years
- 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.

- Staff serving and handling food have food and hygiene certificates.
- During meals and snacks, we must have at least one staff member with a valid full PFA certificate in the room where children are eating.