The Mill Nursery

Food and nutrition policy

Aim/purpose

This Policy Is developed In partnership with parents and has adopted the current Early years nutritional guidance (2025) to ensure that snack and meal times are an important part of each session at The Mill nursery. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating and to make healthy choices. At snack and meal times, we are committed to providing healthy, nutritious and tasty food that is safely prepared and sensitive to the medical/dietary, religious, and cultural requirements of all the children. Food and cooking activities will form a regular part of the curriculum within the Mill nursery. During school term time, lunch is provided by The fabulous lunch company Ltd. Outside of term time, lunch will be provided by Parents as a healthy Packed lunch following Nutritional guidance.

Methods

- Information about each child's dietary needs is recorded in their registration details and parents sign to confirm that it is correct.
- Parents are given the choice of providing a healthy packed lunch for their child or ordering a hot meal.
- Pack lunches must be healthy and not contain any nut bases product.
- Records are updated annually and parents are asked to inform us immediately if their child's dietary needs change.
- Individual children's dietary needs are displayed so that all practitioners and volunteers are fully informed. Therefore children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and preferences.
- Ensure that practitioners model good behaviour with their eating habits and table manners.
- In accordance with parents' and carers' wishes, children will be provided with breakfast, snacks, lunch and tea within the appropriate sessions.

  Breakfast 8.00 am

  Snack 10:00am

  Lunch 12.00 pm

  Snack 2:00pm

  Tea 4.00 pm
- Nutritious food is provided for all meals and snacks, avoiding saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- **Parents** must provide a named water bottle for each session.
- A balance of foods from the four main food groups is provided.

- Practitioners are required to show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. This includes using a **red coloured** plate discreetly to distinguish the difference in foods for children with allergies.
- Practitioners do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child or make a child feel singled out because of a diet or allergy.
- Meals and snack times are organised as social occasions in which children and practitioners participate. Children are encouraged to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.
- Eating utensils are appropriate for the ages and stages of development and take account of eating practices in children's cultures.
- Fresh drinking water is always available and children are shown how to obtain the water at any time.
- Semi-skimmed and full fat milk is provided.
- Children will still receive a fruit dessert if they refuse the main course.
- We have a tea time menu available for parents to view, these menus will take into consideration what the children have had for their lunch as well as being nutritionally balanced.
- At lunchtimes we provide vegetables or salad in a self serve bowl in the middle of each table to encourage independent self serve and also self selection.

Lunchbox Standards

A healthy lunch box should include:

- **A good portion of starchy food** e.g. bread, crackers, pasta or rice
- **A minimum of one portion of fruit and vegetables**
- **A source of protein**, such as meat, fish, lentils, kidney beans, chickpeas, hummus, falafel
- **A source of dairy**, such as, cheese or yogurt.

(We also ask parents to ensure that grapes are cut into quarters lengthways and that all food is presented in a way that minimises the risk of choking).

In addition, and in line with the St Vigor and St John Church School Nut Policy, we are a 'no nut' site. As such we ask that no nut or nut based products are included in children's lunch boxes. Please see the school website for more information around this. https://www.stvigorandstjohnschool.co.uk/policies/

It is the nursery's policy that sweets, chocolate, fizzy, squash, fruit juice and smoothies should not be included in children's lunch boxes. If lunchboxes include these items we will not be able to serve this and instead hand back to you at the end of the day.

For more information and some helpful hints and tips around lunch boxes please visit https://www.nhs.uk/change4life

Snack Time

- Appropriate drinks and snacks are provided to all children at snack time during the morning and afternoon session.

- Children will be encouraged to have opportunities to self-select food.
- We aim to encourage children to try new tastes and flavors and to experience food from other cultures; ensuring children from all backgrounds encounter familiar tastes and also have the opportunity to try unfamiliar foods.
- Adult to supervise snack time At all times to minimise Choking incidents and also to encourage social interaction.
- To allow a few children at one time, encouraging children to take turns and communicate with others.
- Children are encouraged to help prepare snack (e.g. cutting fruit/vegetables, spreading toppings).
- Children with allergies will have a snack made for them in a separate **Red plate** to ensure they are only eating foods that have had the ingredients checked.

Food Safety Code of Practice

- Food to be prepared and served complying with food hygiene practices in accordance with Food Hygiene (England) regulations 2006.
- All practitioners qualified to Level 2 Food Safety and Hygiene, which is updated regularly.
- All hot food supplied to be tested for high temperatures or undercooked food with appropriate food thermometer before being served to children. Temperatures for Nursery lunches are recorded and provided by The Fabulous Lunch Company Ltd. Temperatures of food supplied by nursery are recorded in the food diary.
- Practitioners serving food must wear PPE provided eg gloves and aprons.
- All Practitioners and children to observe basic hygiene principles eg hand washing before eating.
- We take care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products and are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts. There is a possibility however, that nut traces may be found in any menu item.
- In order to protect children with food allergies, children are not allowed to share and swap their food.
- Children when eating at the table are never to be left unattended and are to be supervised at all times by a qualified member of the nursery team.
- A daily record is kept of what children have eaten at lunch and tea time to provide parents with feedback at the end of the session.
- Food hygiene inspections to be carried out regularly by Mendip District Environmental Health Team.

Under 3's Barley Room procedure: *Please follow above procedures in all cases and in particular the procedure below;*

- We recommend that food is provided by parents until children are confident eaters of solid food. The nursery does however have the facilities to blend food if requested by a parent. Parents may ask for a copy of the nursery menu to make their decision about this.
- Parents who provide food for their babies are informed about the storage and heating facilities available in nursery. Perishable contents are refrigerated.
- Parents of babies are given daily care diary updates about feeding routines, intake and preferences.
- Practitioners are required to show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. This includes using a **red coloured** plate discreetly to distinguish the difference in foods for children with allergies.
- Appropriate drinks and snacks are provided for babies and young children following the NHS guidelines. For example; skin will be removed off apple for the babies to avoid choking.

Oral Health

The underpinning guidance also focuses on settings promoting good oral health. As a setting we endorse this through our lunch box policy and the meals/snack we provide, alongside lots of fun activities and ways to promote children taking interest in their own oral health. Please see government guidance and information on ways you can promote this at home also (https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/safeguarding-and-welfare/oral-health). Nursery will ensure a supply of fresh water is always available and either water or milk provided at snack times.

Celebrations and special occasions

It is at the Mill Nursery's discretion that a shop bought Birthday cake may be provided on children's birthdays to celebrate with their peers.

- The cake must be shop bought and unopened in its original packaging.
- A small slice of Birthday cake will be offered at snack after fruit has been offered.
- Cake must not include Nuts (following No nut Policy)

A small slice of cake to celebrate an occasion is a special moment amongst peers and can be shared in a way to promote social development and discussion around having occasional treats amongst a healthy diet. The Mill Nursery will always endeavour to not include sugar or high fats foods into the children's daily intake.

Please see a link to the Early years Nutritional Guidance 2025
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6839b752210698b3364e86fc/Early_years_foundation_stage_nutrition_guidance.pdf

Policy endorsement

Signed by:

Name:

Position:

Date: