

Nutrition and Mealtimes Policy

At Brentwood Day 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.

We ensure that:

- A balanced and healthy midday meal including desert, tea with desert and two daily snacks 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. These are rotated regularly, reflect cultural diversity and variation and are emailed weekly in advance for parents to view
- All allergens are displayed alongside the menus to show the contents of each meal
- We provide nutritious food at all snack and mealtimes, avoiding large quantities of fat, sugar, salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings
- Menus include servings of fresh fruit and vegetables at each mealtime
- We incorporate views from parents and children in our menu planning
- 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
- 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
- We give careful consideration to seating (where necessary) 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 her/his diet or allergy
- Staff are always seated with children during all mealtimes, maintaining full visibility and hearing. No child is ever left unsupervised while eating or drinking, to minimise the risk of choking. A qualified first aider is always present during mealtimes
- In the event of a choking incident, a detailed log will be kept, recording the time, actions taken, and the outcome. The incident will be reviewed, and appropriate steps will be implemented to help prevent future occurrences. This protocol aligns with the latest Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory nutrition guidance, effective from

September 2025, which emphasises the importance of safe eating practices and informed incident review

- We regularly review dining areas, including mealtime seating arrangements, to ensure they are effective, safe, and appropriate. Adjustments are coordinated as needed. In addition, we conduct annual audits, or more frequently, if necessary, to assess the condition and suitability of furniture, equipment, seating, and available space
- Staff set a good example and eat (where possible) 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 conversation is encouraged
- Staff use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drinks and feeding themselves
- Staff support children to make healthy choices and understand the need for healthy eating
- Where possible, we provide foods from the diet of each of the children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones
- Cultural differences in eating habits are respected
- 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. This will be after offering food in smaller portions or individual food types. If a child refuses everything on offer, he/she will still be given a piece of fruit as an alternative 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
- The nursery provides parents with daily records of food intake for all children
- From time to time, for birthdays or special events, we may allow a small treat like cake, sweets, or biscuits to mark these events. These treats will always be offered at mealtimes to help protect children's teeth and to avoid spoiling their appetite
- We do allow parents to bring in cakes on special occasions. We ensure that all food brought in from parents meets the above and health and safety requirements and ingredients that are listed within the Food Information for Consumers (FIR) 2014 and detailed in the allergens policy and procedure
- We are mindful that frequent celebrations can lead to an excess of sugary foods. In such cases, we may explore alternative ways to celebrate. These might include
 - Sending sweet treats or cakes home for families to enjoy together
 - Encouraging parents to provide healthier options, such as fruit platters or savoury snacks
 - Suggesting non-food treats, like bubbles, stickers, or small toys to share with friends
- All staff who prepare and handle food are competent to do so and receive training in food hygiene which is updated every three years and reviewed regularly where necessary

- 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.

Packed lunches

We do not allow children to bring packed lunches into the setting due to management of children with allergies. We find children are more likely to try out different foods alongside their friends when they are all eating the same meals.

Signed on behalf of the nursery
<i>RL Austin</i>