



DIET POLICY

Aim: To provide healthy, balanced and nutritious food and drinks for all children.

Links to requirements of the EYFS: 3.45, 3.46, 3.47, 3.72.

We will ensure that:

Menus for snacks, lunch and tea are healthy, balanced and nutritious (Link to EYFS 3.45). They are planned using the **Eat Better Start Better** Voluntary Food and Drink Guidelines for Early Years Settings in England. Menus cycle for Spring – Summer and Autumn – Winter. The lunch menu is a four week cycle, and the snack and tea menu is a two week cycle. A multicultural diet is offered to ensure that all children encounter familiar foods as well as trying those that are new to them. Foods containing nuts are never offered, although it cannot be guaranteed that foods will be nut free due to product manufacturing processes.

Foods containing large quantities of salt, sugar, additives or fats are avoided. However, food and drink often play an important role on special occasions and events. These occasions are useful to provide opportunities for children to learn about food and drink from different religions and cultures. These types of foods can be high in saturated fat, additives, sugar and salt, therefore on special occasions consideration will be taken as to whether healthier options can be offered to children. Parents / carers are welcome to bring in a shop bought cake to celebrate their child's birthday, however a healthier option, such as fruit cake is recommended.

Fresh drinking water will always be available for children to help themselves to and offered to children regularly throughout the day (Link to EYFS 3.45).

Children (over the age of 6-12 months) drink from an open cup. Those learning to use an open cup may also use a free-flow (without a valve) lidded cup to drink from, so that they learn to sip rather than suck drinks, which is better for their teeth.

Providing food for all (Link to EYFS 3.45)

Allergies, strong likes or dislikes and cultural or religious requirements will be discussed with parents/carers prior to their child starting and will be recorded as part of the registration form. This information is clearly displayed in the kitchen and children's rooms for staff (& students/volunteers) to see. These special dietary needs will be met and reviewed during parent consultation meetings. To ensure inclusion during celebrations of children with food allergies, a batch of cakes specifically made to meet the children's special dietary needs, will be frozen to be used as appropriate.

For information about the food provided containing the 14 allergens please see our allergen folder.



Food safety and hygiene (Link to EYFS 3.46)

Food is stored, prepared and presented in a safe and hygienic environment and children are taught basic hygiene. This is especially important for young children as they may have a lower resistance to food poisoning. There is a kitchen for the hygienic preparation of meals and snacks. All staff involved in preparing and handling food receive training in food hygiene, which is then updated every 3 years. Children and staff wash their hands with soap and warm water before eating meals and snacks. For further information see the Health and Hygiene Policy.

The Eating Environment

Mealtimes provide opportunities for children to learn about and try new foods and develop their social skills.

Children will be encouraged to eat their main course. They should not be expected to finish everything on their plate, and should be able to eat their dessert, even if they have not finished their main course. If children are still hungry after their main course, they should have the opportunity to have second helpings. If a child regularly struggles with meals, then an individual eating plan will be developed in discussion with their parents/carers.

Children sit around tables to eat. No child should be left alone while eating. Staff sit with the children at meal times to be positive role models, support good eating habits and encourage conversations. If a child is particularly slow a member of staff may start to clear up around them whilst continuing to supervise. Snack and meal times should be social occasions and a valuable time to talk to children about food and nutrition.

Communicating with parents and carers (Link to EYFS 3.72)

The lunch menu and the snacks and tea time menu are displayed in the nursery and on our website. Information about what food has been provided for the children on that day and how well they have eaten is sent out on Family.

Information on breastfeeding, weaning, healthy eating, special diets, allergies and dental health is available to staff and parents.

Parents / carers are encouraged to attend events to celebrate special occasions and to cook cultural dishes for the children.

Learning about and through food

Learning about food and being healthy is integrated in our educational programme.

Children are involved in growing fruit and vegetables to eat in our gardens. Children are involved in cooking activities and with preparing snacks. These are effective ways to encourage children to taste and eat a wide range of foods.



Sustainability

Food production, processing, transport, cooking and waste all impact on the environment. The Exwick Ark reduces its impact on the environment by having milk delivered from a local dairy. We recycle food packaging and compost suitable food waste. The children learn about recycling and composting too. During the growing season children are involved in growing our own fruit and vegetables to eat.

Encouraging fussy eaters to eat well

Young children can be fussy about what they eat, or how they eat. Fussy eating and fear of new foods affect between 10% and 20% of children under five years¹. Fear of new foods in children typically starts between 18 months and two years old and it is thought to be a natural behaviour.

Strategies to manage fussy eating

- Modelling – Sit fussy eaters with good eaters, children adopt the food preferences of their peers if they eat together regularly. Staff should eat with children (where possible) and talk enthusiastically about the tastes and texture of food.
- Exposure – Give children regular and repeated chances to taste new foods. The child must taste the food to change their preferences and it can take as many as 10 to 15 tastings before they accept it.
- Rewards – Praise children for trying new foods. Favourite foods should not be used as a reward to encourage children to eat foods they do not like. Food should never be used as a reward or a punishment.
- ‘Pressure to eat’ – Never force children to finish everything on their plate. Children who are made to eat everything they are served learn to dislike foods they are pressured to eat, and these aversions may last into adulthood. Instead give children small servings at first, with the opportunity to have second helpings; as they may find larger portions off-putting.

Snacks

Healthy, balanced and nutritious drinks and snacks will be provided during each session. This will normally include a piece of fruit and/or vegetables, a carbohydrate such as bread sticks and a drink of water or semi skimmed pasteurised milk (whole milk for children aged 12-24 months) or a milk alternative such as soya milk, for those with a dairy allergy (Link to EYFS 3.45).

Children from 2 years up are able to choose when they come to the snack table and all children are encouraged to develop independence in self-monitoring when choosing the amount food that they are going to eat.

At snack children are involved in the preparation and serving of the food and drinks. They learn to use tools such as peelers and table knives under close supervision.

¹ Carruth, B.R. (1998) The Phenomenon of a Picky Eater: A Behavioral Marker in Eating Patterns of Toddlers. Journal of the American College of Nutrition, 17, 180. Cited in Eat Better Start Better, Voluntary Food and Drink Guidelines for Early Years Settings in England (2012).



Packed lunches

Parents / carers can provide packed lunches for their children which contain foods that do not need reheating. Items needing refrigerating should be in a packed lunch box with an ice pack. We keep spare ice packs in the freezer in case parents forget. We will provide water to drink for children who have a packed lunch. Parents are encouraged to provide healthy, balanced and nutritious lunch boxes for their child(ren). Information is available if support is needed with this.

Weaning Foods

Parents/carers need to provide all weaning foods. These are to be unopened commercial packets, tins or jars of food; or food that does not require reheating.

Bottle feeds

Normally each bottle should be made up fresh for a feed. Storing made-up formula milk may increase the chance of a baby becoming ill and should be avoided.

Parents/carers need to provide sterilised bottles, with the correct amount of infant formula power measured into an individual pot, and clear instructions of the amount of water needed to make up the feed.

We will ask the parents upon registration to provide spare bottle formula in case of an emergency such as a spillage or it has been all used up.

Preparing a feed using powdered infant formula

1. Clean the surface thoroughly on which to prepare the feed
2. Wash hands with soap and water and then dry.
3. Boil fresh tap water in a kettle. Do not use water that has been previously boiled.
4. **Important:** Allow the boiled water to cool to no less than 70° C. This means in practice using water that has been left covered, for less than 30 minutes after boiling.
5. Pour the amount of boiled water required into the sterilised bottle.
6. Add the exact amount of formula as instructed on the label. Adding more or less powder than instructed could make the baby ill.
7. Re-assemble the bottle following manufacturer's instructions.
8. Shake the bottle well to mix the contents.
9. Cool quickly to feeding temperature by holding under a running tap or placing in a container of cold water. Make sure that the water does not touch the cap covering the teat.
10. Check the temperature by shaking a few drops onto the inside of your wrist – it should feel lukewarm, not hot.
11. Discard any feed that has not been consumed within 30 minutes of initially offering to the infant.

Prepared bottles

Bottle feeds that are provided by the parent/carer already made-up will be stored in the fridge at **below 5° C**. Prepared bottles are best kept in the back of the fridge and not in the door. The temperature of the fridge should be checked regularly. A fridge that is opened frequently may need to be set at a lower temperature to ensure that it does not rise above 5 °C during times of frequent access.

Guidance for preparing feeds using powdered infant formula are transporting feeds is provided in the parent handbook.



Transporting feeds – e.g. if going on an outing.

Because of the potential for growth of harmful bacteria during transport, feeds should first be cooled in a fridge (below 5° C) and then transported.

- Prepare feed(s) and place in the fridge, as outlined above.
- Ensure feed has been in the fridge for at least one hour before transporting.
- Only remove feed from the fridge immediately before transporting.
- Transport feeds in a cool bag containing a frozen ice block.
- Feeds transported in a cool bag should be used within four hours.²
- Re-warm at the destination as in section 'Re-warming stored feeds'.

Re-warming stored feeds

- Only remove stored feed from the fridge just before it is needed.
- Re-warm using a bottle warmer, or by placing in a container of warm water.
- Microwaves should never be used for re-warming a feed.
- Never leave a feed warming for more than 15 minutes.
- Shake the bottle to ensure the feed has heated evenly.
- Check the feeding temperature by shaking a few drops onto the inside of the wrist
- it should be lukewarm, not hot.

Signed:

Date:
