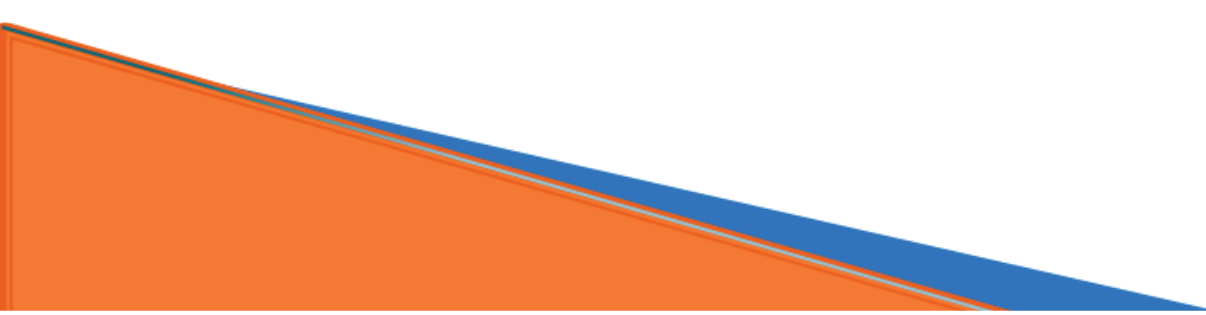


Nursery Food Policy

Reviewed by: Early Start Education Ltd Nursery Manager

Approved by: Early Start Education Ltd Nursery Director



Aim:

Shrewsbury Nursery regards meals and snacks as an important part of our day. Mealtimes represent a social time where children can learn about healthy eating through trying the different types of foods which meets children's individual dietary needs.

The purpose of this policy is to inform parents about the food provided to children, how it is prepared, and the nutritional guidelines we follow.

Food and Drink

All menus are planned in line with the Eat Better Start Better voluntary food and drink based guidelines.

Lunch and Tea (with pudding) is prepared off site and delivered daily by the food catering company, Zebedee's. Their menus operate on a 3-weekly cycle and are changed twice a year, to ensure variety and a range of seasonal ingredients.

We provide breakfast and serve a mid-morning and afternoon snack. Water is free available across the day and milk is provided at snack time.

Children are encouraged to contribute to feedback on menu suggestions.

Meals and Snacks are offered at the following times:

Breakfast: 8:00am-8:45

Morning Snack: 10:00am-10:15am

Lunch: 11:30am-12:00pm

Afternoon Snack: 14:30pm-14:45pm

Tea: 16:00pm-16:30pm



Drinks

The Nursery provides Water, Cow's milk & Soya Milk. Children are encouraged to drink water throughout the day, and there is a water station available from which older children (2 to 5 years) can help themselves. Water is served at lunch and at tea time and children are offered a choice of milk and water during snack time. We encourage having choices, from as early an age as possible. Under 2's have their own labelled free flowing cup/beaker of water in the room with them, available and accessible throughout the day.

Milk & Breast milk

We recognise the importance of ensuring a consistent approach amongst staff who work with families when providing support and education around infant feeding. We are currently working to develop our infant feeding policy to ensure we can support families with feeding and developing close, loving relationships, ensuring that all babies get the best possible start in life. We will ensure families are supported to access evidenced based information and signposted to support services. We are committed to ensuring all staff will receive the relevant training in infant nutrition.

*“Breastfeeding is the best form of nutrition for infants. **Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended for the first 6 months** (26 weeks) of life as it provides all the nutrients a baby needs”.*

As highlighted in *Unicef's Baby Friendly Initiative*, we encourage mothers to continue breastfeeding her infant beyond the age of 6 months. We encourage families to bring expressed breast milk or to breastfeed before and after work at our nursery settings. We ensure breastmilk is stored safely in line with guidelines. We will provide families with information on local breastfeeding support groups delivered by their midwife or health visitor or peer support groups. We will display and provide families with Start4Life resources where they can receive additional breastfeeding support, advice and information.

We recognise early relationship building is also important for formula fed babies and mothers. Families who choose to formula feed their infants will be encouraged and supported to do so safely and correctly. We will provide families with the advice and support they need on safe preparation of bottles and responsive feeding to develop a

close and loving bond with their baby. We will ensure our staff are following [early start](#) preparation of bottles in line with steps outlined in the Start4Life '[Guide to Bottle Feeding](#)' to ensure infant formula is prepared safely. This will be monitored on a regular basis. We will encourage families to speak to their health visitor/midwife in the first instance for questions relating to breastfeeding or formula feeding. We display and provide families with Start4Life resources where they can receive additional infant feeding support, advice and information. We will not promote or provide information or products from infant feeding companies in line guidelines from the Baby Friendly Initiative.

Under 1's parents are required to provide a suitable formula milk in the original packaging. We advise after their child's 1st birthday to introduce the child full fat milk (blue top) between 1 – 5 years considering individual child's dietary requirements.

Food Safety and Hygiene

Our nursery kitchen holds a five-star rating from the London Borough of Newham Environmental Health Department. All other meals are prepared on the premises by members of staff who hold a level 2 qualification in food and hygiene and are competent in health and safety with regards to food preparation and storage. Our fridge and freezer temperatures are regularly monitored.

Menu

The menu is posted on the parent's noticeboard to see what their child will be eating during that day. There are 3 weekly menus which are used on a rotational basis. We do try to be flexible with regards to celebration, festivals and if children have participated in a cooking activity, so occasionally we will make a change to an item on the menu for an alternative of equal quality. Any foods offered for celebrations, festivals or cooking activities are still in line with the Eat Better Start Better guidelines.

We accommodate a variety of diets in the nursery, for example vegetarian, vegan, lactose intolerant, various allergies, and religious specifications.

No extra charge is levied for this. Parents' comments and suggestions on the food we provide, or their child's preferences, are always welcome. The Nursery provides a meat or fish option and a vegetarian alternative each day.

The Nursery will inform parents who provide food for their child to ensure that:

- food provided is labelled with the child's name, description of food and date of preparation. Unlabelled food will not be accepted
- food can only be reheated once to a temperature of 83°C and that this is recorded on the Babies Food Temperature Log
- rice products cannot be reheated
- parents are encouraged to bring food that is in line with the Eat Better Start Better Guidelines

Meal Time Environment

It is important that at Shrewsbury Nursery we treat meals and snacks as social occasions, encouraging conversation with opportunities to learn.


Children learn good table manners and are encouraged to say "please" and "thank you," and not to talk with a mouthful. Staff help where appropriate but encourage children to eat by themselves where possible

Babies are given the opportunity to hold a suitable spoon while an adult feeds them with another spoon; their snacks consist of finger foods allowing them to self-feed.

The Nursery provides children with utensils that are appropriate for their ages and stages of development.

Older children are encouraged to help set the tables, to scrape their plates and clear away afterwards, and to serve (as much as possible) their meal/pudding themselves.

Children can serve themselves second helpings of the main meal, we would encourage them to take extra servings. Where there is a problem with a child not eating, liaise with parents, and utilise our fussy eating strategies, taking the age and

health of the child into account. Under no circumstances should a child's food taken away from them as a form of punishment. 

Nursery staff will provide feedback to parents regarding how their children have eaten through feedback sheets which can be found outside of each classroom.

Fussy eaters

All children are encouraged to try all the food, but never forced to eat or drink anything. When children are refusing to put food onto their plate the staff encourages them as best as possible but never force them. Methods that have been found to help when encouraging fussy eaters to try new foods include;

- Role modelling; sitting fussy eaters with good eaters at mealtimes as it has been shown that children will adopt the food preferences of their peers if they eat together regularly. The staff themselves role model good eating habits and for this reason Shrewsbury Nursery provides meals and snacks for the staff on duty. Staff also demonstrate good role modelling of using cutlery and good manners at the table
- Offering rewards; praise children for trying new foods no matter how little they eat. The focus should be on individuals and their eating habits rather than just giving praise to 'dinner winners'
- Exposure to foods; 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

Food Activities

We encourage and engage children in cooking and baking simple meals and desserts as it's an enjoyable and very instructive for children at the nursery. Children themselves will sometimes prepare part of the snacks and puddings, for example cakes, fruit cocktails or pizzas ensuring that recipes vary between sweet and savoury and inline with the Eat Better Start Better guidelines.

Cookery activities can incorporate practice in mathematics and self-care, for example in measuring or counting ingredients and reinforcing the importance of

handwashing, etc. Children also feel a sense of pride in making a meal for their peers or taking it home to share with their family.

Teaching children where their food comes from is also very important. All Early Start Nursery settings have an area where the children can grow their own fruit and vegetables.

While Early Start Nursery discourages food play, as it is seen as wasting food and confusing the children at meal times, we also see the importance of children learning through direct experiences. For this reason, dried pasta, lentils and rice may be used in the role play area for example or jelly and spaghetti in the messy area. In all such cases, wherever possible food will be coloured or left dry so as not to appear the same as when a child should be eating it at meal times.

Allergy Management – please refer also to our Allergy Management policy

When parents start their children at Early Start Nurseries they are asked if their child suffers from any known allergies. This is recorded on the registration form. If a child has an allergy, a risk assessment form is completed to detail the following:

- The allergen (i.e. the substance, material or living creature the child is allergic to such as nuts, eggs, bee stings, cats etc)
- The nature of the allergic reactions e.g. anaphylactic shock reaction, including rash, reddening of skin, swelling, breathing problems etc.
- What to do in case of allergic reactions, any medication used and how it is to be used (e.g. EpiPen)
- Control measures – such as how the child can be prevented from contact with the allergen
- This form is kept in the child's personal file
- Parents train staff in how to administer special medication in the event of an allergic reaction
- Generally, no nuts or nut products are used within the nursery. Parents are made aware so that no nut or nut products are accidentally brought in, for example, packed lunch.
- Children's Personal Details Record are signed by parents to confirm that dietary information is correct.

We have a list of children's allergies and food preferences posted in [early stage](#) kitchen, in all the children's room and on children's placemats. All are reviewed and updated regularly. Parents are regularly consulted to ensure that the records of their children's dietary needs are up-to-date. Parents sign the updated record to confirm that dietary information is correct.