



MEAL TIMES POLICY & PROCEDURE

At York Childcare mealtimes are sociable occasions. Children are seated at low level tables, alongside staff members who encourage appropriate conversation in order to make mealtimes a relaxed and enjoyable experience. Staff adhere to the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2024, page 28 3.37.

We provide and/or serve food and drinks for children at the following times: morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack. Drinking water is always available to children, within the rooms.

We organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate. We use meal and snack times to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink, and feeding themselves.

We provide children with utensils which are appropriate for their ages and stages of development and consider the eating practices of their culture and staff will support with this. This may include supporting children to place food on cutlery and/or cutting their food. Good manners are promoted throughout mealtimes and children will be encouraged to say please and thank you where appropriate.

In the older age range of rooms, children are encouraged to self – serve food, this allows them to control their portion size, and this is fully supported by the staff team.

All information regarding mealtimes is shared with parents/carers at the end of the nursery day.

Food preparation safety:

The nursery has set high standards when it comes to preparing and handling food and provides Food Hygiene training to the cook and all members of staff.

We are registered as a food provider with the local authority Environmental Health Department.

Allergies, intolerances, and preferences:

It is important that we work in partnership with parents and ensure the wishes of the parents are met, along with any allergies, intolerances, parental preferences, and any other dietary requirements. All children at the setting have a colour coded placemat which is used at snack/mealtimes to ensure diets are adhered to. The placemats have a picture of the child, their name, and dietary requirements. There is an allergy file in each room and allergy lists displaying the children who have dietary requirements for the purpose of if there is a change of staff in rooms and serves as a visual reminder for all. We consider seating to avoid cross contamination of food from child to child. In line with EYFS 2024 (page 28 3.37) an adult must 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. Please refer to our Food Allergy & Intolerance Policy.



Menus are created in conjunction with parents, staff, and the children where appropriate and all dietary, religious, and cultural needs are taken into consideration. Where there are no dietary, religious or cultural requirements, all children are encouraged to try a variety of foods. Should a child display dislike for a particular food, they will be verbally encouraged to try it. No child will have food forced them in any way, including placing foods on their lips and/or open mouth to encourage them to taste food. Where a child continues to display dislike for the food on offer after verbal encouragement, it may be appropriate to offer the child a 'safe food' option. This would be offered in consultation with parents/carers. The practitioners know the children very well and can distinguish between a child not liking something and them trying to push boundaries when it comes to mealtimes.

We will sometimes celebrate special occasions such as birthdays with the occasional treat of foods such as cake, sweets, or biscuits. These will be given at mealtimes/home times to prevent tooth decay and not spoil the child's appetite. Where we have frequent birthdays and celebrations, we consider other alternatives such as celebrating through smiles and praise etc choosing a favourite story, becoming a special helper, playing a party game, dancing and/or singing their favourite song.

We do allow parents to bring in cakes on special occasions. We ensure that all food brought in from parents meets health and safety requirements and the full ingredients are listed in line with the Consumers Regulation 1169/2011.

Food safety preparation:

Babies and children under 2 are at high risk of choking and just because they have teeth, it does not mean they can handle all types of food. To ensure the children's safety we follow guidance on how we prepare certain foods for different age groups.

Under 1's MUST NOT be given*:

- Cow's milk as a drink (parental wishes will be considered)
- Honey
- Nuts
- Crackers or breadsticks

Under 2's snack preparation:

- All fruit and some vegetables must be peeled
- Raw carrot batons/sticks are not to be given
- Grapes must be cut into quarters
- Bananas must be cut into quarters and NOT rounds

Reheating of food

When reheating food we follow the Food Standards Agency guidelines.

<https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/reheating.pdf>



Portion sizing, variety and serving suggestions:

- We provide nutritious food for all meals and snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives, and colourings.
- We include a variety of foods from the four main food groups: meat, fish, and protein alternatives; dairy foods; grains, cereals, and starch vegetables; and fruit and vegetables. We also offer an alternative to the meat dishes for any vegetarian/vegan children.

Food hygiene procedures:

- Daily opening and closing checks on the kitchen to ensure standards are met consistently.
- There are separate facilities for handwashing and for washing up.
- All surfaces are clean and non-porous.
- All utensils, crockery etc. are clean and stored appropriately.
- Cleaning materials and other dangerous materials are stored out of children's reach. See COSHH file.
- Children do not have access to the kitchen.
- All equipment must be used according to manufacturer's instructions and checked regularly to ensure that it is functioning correctly. Pat testing of electrical appliances is carried out yearly.

Cleaning the Kitchen:

It is important that the kitchen is always kept clean and tidy.

- Put all food away before cleaning so it does not come into contact with cleaning agents.
- All equipment and working surfaces must be kept in a clean and hygienic condition.
- Cleaning chemicals should be used at the prescribed dilution rate.
- Sinks that you do washing up in must be kept clean.
- Hand washing sinks are for hand washing only.

To clean things properly you need to follow four different stages:

- Pre-clean – brush away any food debris.
- Main clean – use clean hot water and detergent making sure you get into difficult areas.
- Rinse – use clean hot water and a clean cloth.
- Drying – leave to dry naturally.

Personal hygiene:

All employees, paid or voluntary, who handle food, have a responsibility to:



- Maintain a high standard of personal hygiene.
- Adhere to the nursery's no smoking policy.
- Refrain from handling food when they are suffering from an infectious disease or have boils, ulcers, cuts or rashes, diarrhoea, eye, ear, or throat infection.
- Report shortcomings to the manager, e.g. faulty or damaged equipment.
- Wash hands before preparing food or drink.
- Adhere to the nursery's Health and Safety Policy.

Reporting of food poisoning:

Food poisoning can occur for several reasons; not all cases of sickness or diarrhoea are because of food poisoning and not all cases of sickness or diarrhoea are reportable. Where children and/or adults have been diagnosed by a GP or hospital doctor to be suffering from food poisoning and where it seems possible that the source of the outbreak is within the setting, the manager will contact the Environmental Health Department and the Health Protection Agency, to report the outbreak and will comply with any investigation. If the food poisoning is identified as a notifiable disease under the Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 1988 the setting will report the matter to Ofsted.