

Refreshments Policy

The nursery adheres to **The Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance May 25**, devised by the DfE, this forms part of our commitment to safeguarding children within the **Early Years Foundation Stage framework**. Parents, please view the document, if you wish to, as there is lots of useful advice for parents from breastfeeding, to weaning, to providing healthy, balanced and nutritious food for children as they grow and develop. Providing positive eating experiences early on can positively shape future eating habits. It can also promote maintaining a healthy weight and good oral health into adulthood.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-nutrition>

All nursery children over 12 months old are provided with a cooked lunch of completely fresh food from a very local restaurant, called 'La Main D'or,' who have experience and knowledge around providing healthy, balanced meals for young children and follow the Nutrition Guidance. Our nursery lunches are vegetarian based. The lunches provide a balance of nutrients, including protein, which is found in in the form of cheese, beans, pulses, lentils, soya and other plant-based proteins. We find that the provision of vegetarian lunches is more inclusive to all children, a healthy option and is more environmentally friendly than meat-based meals (in line with our drive to be more sustainable). A healthy dessert is provided after lunch, for example, fruit salad with natural yoghurt (after a hearty meal) or often heartier desserts, such as banana bread and rice pudding, if the meal is slightly lighter. Please refer to our four weekly menu included in your admissions pack.

Please note, children are welcome to bring foods that contain meat for tea. **There is guidance attached to the admissions pack regarding suggestions around food that can be brought from home for tea. Birthdays are celebrated with a birthday teatime. Please refer to our Children's Birthday Policy for further information.** Please note that if children do not finish any perishable food at teatime and the packaging has been opened, then it will be disposed of, due to hygiene and health reasons.

Children under 12 months bring in their own lunch and tea to nursery as their nutritional needs vary so much depending on their age and stage of development. Younger children's lunches can be heated up in order to provide a substantial cooked meal for them. All children are required to bring in their tea from home. The nursery advises parents to bring in healthy meals and snacks for the children so that children have a balanced diet, full of the essential nutrients required for healthy growth. A nutritional, healthy, balanced diet helps children to play productively, sleep well and helps them to be emotionally healthy (with substantial, hearty meals feeling full and satisfied) and physically healthy (strengthening their immune system and all round physical development). It also helps them to focus and engage well with activities, promoting their cognitive (intellectual) development.

Mealtimes are an enjoyable, relaxed sociable occasion, staff support this sociable experience by talking to the children during mealtimes and encouraging meaningful discussion around the table, extending children's language and understanding around a range of wonderful topics that come up in conversation, not just around food!

As part of our commitment to '**Safer Eating**' a paediatric first aider is always present during mealtimes. Staff support and supervise children closely during snack times and mealtimes to minimise choking risks; a staff member remains sitting with the children at all times whilst they eat. Any choking incidences are logged on an incident form and shared with the parents accordingly.

We ask parents to kindly donate snacks for mid-morning time. Snacks can be fresh fruit/salad or any other healthy snacks, for example, rice cakes and breadsticks. Each playroom has their own fruit bowl containing an array of different fruits generously donated.

Children have access to water throughout the day and cow's milk after mealtimes, for children over twelve months old. Children under twelve months will bring in their own expressed or formula milk. Parents are also welcome to come into the nursery to breastfeed. We ask that parents bring in a water beaker for their child which will be left at the nursery for everyday use. The nursery will provide a name label for this.

The nursery avoids making regular fruit smoothies with the children as they contain high sugar content when the natural sugars are broken down to form the liquid. If smoothies are made, very occasionally, they are made mostly with milk, adding a little flavour with a small handful of seasonal fruit, selected by the children.

When children join the nursery, parents are required to provide information regarding food allergies, special dietary requirements or religious preferences/requirements around food, relating to their child. It is important that this information is shared from the onset and that the information is clear. We ask that if you believe your child to have a food intolerance or any type of allergy that you obtain verification of this from your GP or other health professional. We can then be absolutely clear about what your child can and cannot have at nursery. Details of children's allergies and any religious dietary needs are displayed clearly in their playrooms, and any new staff are alerted to this information. Children with allergies are seated next to their key person during mealtimes and snack times or next to a familiar room based staff member.

If children are involved in a food tasting session, as part of a theme or celebrating a festival and experiencing new foods, then the nursery will ensure that permission has been sought on the parental consent form for food tasting, which is completed when the child starts nursery. A more detailed consent form is completed prior to each activity.

Unfortunately, we are unable to accept homemade food at nursery, **for group-based activities** (to share with other children) as we are required to check the written ingredients on food packaging in accordance with children that have food intolerances or allergies.

Please do not provide your child with nuts for their lunch or tea. It is recommended that children under five years old do not eat nuts as they can choke on them. Also, other children in the setting may have nut allergies, therefore we would like to minimise the risk to these children coming into contact with nuts (please refer to our separate nut policy found on our website). Children under 12 months are not permitted to bring any fruits that are considered to be a choking hazard for babies, for example, whole apples or oranges. Please refer to the Choking Hazards document included in your admissions pack for further information about choking.

As part of our Sustainability Policy, children are encouraged to plant, nurture, prepare (pick, wash, cut, serve and eat) nursery grown seasonal fruit, vegetables and herbs at the nursery. Children also learn about healthy food through stories and books, home corner experiences, circle time discussions, specific planned activities, such as, food tasting activities (including celebrating foods from around the world) and outings to, for example, local grocery stores.

The nursery is planning to work towards HEYL recognition (Healthy Early Years London) award. It is an award scheme that supports and recognises achievements in child health, wellbeing and development in early years settings. HEYL supports a healthy start to life across themes including healthy eating. We have already completed the 'First Steps' award and will now progress towards bronze, silver and gold recognition.

All nursery staff, including bank staff, attend Food Hygiene training every three years which includes training around allergies and ensures safe food handling and preparation at snack times and mealtimes.