

Nutrition, Food and Mealtimes Policy

At **Castle Lane 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 breakfast, midday meal, tea 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 displayed for children and parents to view on both our website and Kitchen board.
- Menus have been planned and received using the new Early Year's Foundation Nutritional Guidance April 2025
- All allergens are displayed alongside the menus to show the ingredients 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 at least 3/4 servings of fresh fruit and vegetables per day
- 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 babies and intake is monitored. In hot weather staff will encourage children to drink more water to keep them hydrated.
- Children with Allergies/intolerances or preferences regarding food will complete an information sheet that is shared with the kitchen and rooms.
- 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 their diet or allergy
- Staff set a good example and eat 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 meal 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.
- Any child who shows signs of distress at being faced with a meal they do not like will have their food removed without any fuss. If a child does not finish their first course, they will still be given a helping of dessert
- Children not on special diets are encouraged to eat a small piece of everything
- 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 babies and young children

Parents as Partners

- Healthy eating is promoted and encouraged with children and their families.
- 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
- We promote positive attitudes to healthy eating through play opportunities and discussions
- The nursery provides parents with daily written records of feeding routines for all children in the Babies, Toddlers and Tweenies room. Pre-schools are verbally informed on collection.
- Cultural differences in eating habits are respected
- 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 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 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. Parents are provided with a list of allowed cakes on the kitchen board.
- Staff share recipes and meal ideas for home. Baby and Toddlers Staff support families in the weaning process and offer advice and guidance when required.
- Through an effective key worker system, parents seek support from staff if having issues at home regarding food. Parents are signposted to the local health visiting team if additionally, support is required.

Food Safety and Mealtimes

- No child is ever left alone when eating or drinking to minimise the risk of choking
- A member of staff must hold a full paediatric First aid Training during Mealtimes.
- Staff wear correct PPE while serving food. Staff and children always wash hands before snack and mealtimes.
- Staff follow Allergies policy for safe allergy practices.
- We consider children seating 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 sit with the children and always ensure to have clear views of the children's mouths to minimise the risk of choking.

- All staff who prepare and handle food are competent to do so and receive training in food hygiene and allergy awareness which is updated every two years

Breast Feeding and Weaning

- Parents are supported with the weaning process and the baby room has a separate baby weaning menu.
- All food offered to babies is adhered to from the Early Years Foundation Stage Nutritional Guidance 2025.
- Parents are encouraged to Breast feed on the premises if desired, we have our staff room, office or communal sofa area.
- Breast milk and Formula can be brought into nursery. Breast milk will be labelled and stored in the fridge. Formula milk can be stored in babies' boxes. Staff must ensure Bottles are made in the kitchen using a sterile bottle provided by Parents. Hands must be washed prior. Bottles must only be kept for 1 hour.
- Staff will signpost parents on the importance of breastfeeding and provided nutritional knowledge and support to families.

Educating and supporting Children

- Staff provide children with different cooking activities; these should aim to be completed with the children once a week.
- Children should be provided with information regarding healthy food choices and activities should promote children's understanding of the nutritional groups.
- Children will be provided with physical experiences allowing them to see the benefits of physical exercise on both their physical and mental health.
- In the very unlikely event of any food poisoning affecting two or more children on the premises, whether 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 allow children to bring packed lunches into the setting. This coincides with the new Government funding scheme (please see management for information on the new funding scheme).

We provide parents with guidelines for nutritious content and signpost to the NHS packed lunch guidance (<https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes/>).

We request that parents use ice packs in lunch boxes as we do not have the facility to store lunch boxes.

Parents must provide the nursery with a clear and labelled description of what children contain.

Children's lunch boxes are checked prior to giving the contents to the children to ensure any risks from potential allergens or choking hazards are managed.

Last updated: June 2026