

Mealtime and Dietary Policy



Policy

Mealtimes are an important part of the nursery day. Tiny Oaks Day Nursery promotes healthy eating and is committed to offering children nutritionally balanced meals which meet individual needs and dietary requirements.

The term 'meals' within this policy is inclusive of all food, drinks, formula and bottles provided to the child.

Procedure

- For children aged under two years feeding routines will be recorded including any weaning menus.
- All Staff and children must wash their hands before every mealtime.
- Staff must ensure that they understand the content of meals through effective communication with the kitchen staff/ Chef.
- The correct dietary placemats must be placed on the table in front of each child prior to food being served.
- Mealtimes will reflect social dining and therefore should be utilised to promote social experiences.
- Practitioners must be seated at an allocated table by either a room leader or a senior member of staff during mealtimes.
- Staff will be deployed effectively to ensure that children are supervised at all times to minimise risk of harm (i.e., risk of choking, allergy management).
- Wherever possible children should be encouraged to self-serve with appropriate utensils where developmentally appropriate.
- Children must be provided with fresh drinking water during every mealtime.
- Children over two should be provided with all cutleries (Fork, knife and / or spoon) during mealtimes to enhance independent feeding. Children under two should be provided with a spoon during mealtimes to support weaning.
- Setting must risk assess which appropriate PPE should be worn at mealtimes, a tabard and hand washing.
- Children will be given time to eat at their own pace and not rushed.
- All staff that prepare and handle food (including serving) are competent to do so and receive training in food hygiene.
- All staff supporting meal times must be aware of the children's dietary requirements and care plan information.

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- On occasions where children refuse to eat the main menu an alternative will be offered. If a child refuses to eat any food throughout the day staff will liaise with parents for the best course of action.
- Child specific meals catering for dietary requirements will be labelled with the child's name, dietary requirement and the alternative provided.
- When staff are serving and cutting children's food, they are made to ensure that all food which is served is age and stage appropriate. Please refer *Food Standards Early Years Choking Hazards Table & Poster*.

Drinks

- Fresh drinking water will be made available and accessible at all times.

Dietary Requirements

- Individual dietary requirements will be respected. We will 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 is admitted to the nursery. Such information is recorded in the child's registration records which parents will sign to confirm that it is correct. Where appropriate we will carry out a risk assessment in the case of allergies and work alongside parents to put into place an individual care plan for their child.
- Daily a dietary requirements form must be completed.
- We provide alternatives for specific dietary requirements and medical needs.
- A list of all children's dietary requirements will be displayed in the kitchen and available in all children's rooms.
- Care plans must be always accessible at all times.
- All children will be provided with place mats detailing the child's name and details of their allergy and specific actions to follow (emergency procedures, administering allergy management medication).
- The nursery must operate using a traffic light system
- Red coding will be used for food allergy and intolerances an allergy can be a life threatening reaction. Intolerance could make the child feel ill or affect their long-term health. If parents suspect either of these conditions, they should have it confirmed by a medical practitioner detail of which must be provided to the nursery.
- Yellow coding will be used for dietary preferences. Some religions have specific dietary requirements that do not allow certain foods to be

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consumed. If it is agreed that we can meet the children's needs within the nursery, then it is our duty to ensure that we do not compromise the family's culture or beliefs.

- Green coding will also include any children who are vegetarians and vegans in this category along with other parental preferences.
- Blue coding will be used for children who have no dietary restrictions.

Red is allocated to children with allergies
Yellow for preference or specific diets, such as vegetarian or religious
Green indicates a child is a vegetarian
Blue indicates that a child has no allergies

Responsibility for checking

Once the food is prepared the chef must explain all dietary requirements and meals prepared for these to the person who is serving the meal.

Once a child with an allergy has been served their food, they must continue to be supervised throughout the mealtime by a competent member of staff.

Dietary Errors/Reactions

If a child has a reaction or requires any treatment to prevent or treat an allergic reaction then this **MUST** be given by a trained first aider or person trained to administer the medication.

In an emergency always call the ambulance before the parents. The care plan must be followed.

Food from outside

We discourage food to be brought into nursery from home. We need to be able to trace all food to point of source and be fully aware of all of the ingredients in our foods. Staff are not permitted to bring any of their own food into the rooms.

Further guidance

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- Safer Food Better Business (Food Standards Agency)
<https://food.gov.uk/business-guidance/safer-food-better-business-sfbb>

Linked Policies

Bottle Feeding Policy

Maintaining Food Standards Policy

Managing Covid-19 Policy

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
16/1/2023	<i>m khaira</i>	16/01/2024