

## **Perfect Start Food Drink and Mealtime Policy**

Perfect Start aim to provide children with a healthy, balanced meal as well as ensuring that safety considerations are paramount at all times.

We operate a set menu of breakfast, mid-morning snack, lunch and tea.

- Before serving any food to a child that has a special dietary need (even if they can have that particular meal) the staff member must sign a D2 form with the chef to check the food is correct for the child. They then announce to all other staff in the room what food they are about to give and to which child they are giving it to
- Drinks should be made available for children at all times. Water or milk are the only two options that are permitted
- The nursery manager must ensure that the menu is adhered to by the kitchen staff and that any necessary changes, (due to issues with deliveries, etc) must be discussed between the chef and the manager before they are made.
- Children must have any special diet information recorded and adhered to, we use a D1 form to state all of these on and they are kept in all rooms and the Managers office. Each day a D3 form is filled in with how many children are in that day, how many are religious/vegetarian and also if any children have allergies. A D2 form is then filled out with all allergies for the day and signed by the chef and the member of staff at each point the child is provided with a meal. The manager and chef must ensure that that any variation to the menu for children with special diets is suitable (i.e.: if a roast dinner is served, a vegetarian child should not be given beans on toast as an alternative). The manager must ensure that the chef has a range of food in stock to meet all dietary requirements.
- Staff must be aware that there are numerous learning opportunities at every meal time for all ages – for example 2, 3 and 4 year old children be a 'special helper' and should set out the table each day and babies should be spoken or sung to throughout the mealtimes
- Parents are not permitted to provide food for their child whilst at nursery or allow their child to come into nursery with food
- We do not allow birthday cakes to be brought in from home.
- The only variations that we will provide to the menu are for vegetarian, medical or religious reasons. We do not operate a system of accommodating 'preferences' of food choices. This is so that the kitchen staff can focus on safely preparing foods for children whose dietary requirements fall into the above categories.
- Tables must be cleaned with sanitizer before and after each meal
- Knives and forks must be provided for all pre-school children and those 2 year old children that can use them. Children are not to be given just 1 item of cutlery , i.e. a fork for roast dinner (exceptions are meals that require just a spoon, such as soup).
- Babies are to be supplied with cutlery appropriate to their stage of development (see baby feeding policy)
- Children must be sat down when eating at all times
- 'Rolling' snack should operate in the Toddler and Pre-school rooms

- Appropriate portions should be given to children – those with smaller appetites should not be given large plates full of food
- Children should not be offered seconds until they have cleared their plate
- Children should not leave the table at the end of a meal to scrape their own plates
- 2 year olds and pre-school should self-serve where appropriate
- Any containers of food should be cool enough to touch before putting on a table to self-serve, even if this means a meal time is later than usual
- All children must wash their hands before mealtimes and afterwards
- Children should not be sat down at a table for their meal until has been delivered to the room
- Children should not be sat down for long group times before sitting down for a meal
- Food should be appropriately chopped for all children – it cannot be too small
- If a meal is going to be ready later than usual, the kitchen staff must inform the manager who in turn should inform the room staff
- Food should always be placed in a bowl or plate and never directly onto a table
- Gravy should be prepared at least 1 hour before it is to be served to the children and not served until it has cooled
- A staff member should be sat with each table of children.
- Staff should not eat with the children as they need to focus on safety, helping the children where needed, conversations with the children, ensuring that children have enough food, water, that the children are tucked into their chairs correctly etc
- Under no circumstances should staff be walking around the room eating
- Food must never be forced onto a child
- Food should not in any circumstances be used as a punishment (i.e.: you cannot have pudding if you don't eat your dinner)
- Children should be encouraged to eat their vegetables and staff should keep their own views on food (if they are negative) to themselves
- If a child refuses a meal, they may be offered an alternative after a discussion with the Nursery Manager. If this is an on-going occurrence, then the nursery manager must have a discussion with the parent
- Food on the floor must be cleaned up immediately after food is served
- Staff cleaning up after a meal must do so as quickly and thoroughly as possible
- Before serving food to children, it must be checked to see if it is a suitable temperature. This must be done by a staff member using a clean spoon, sampling the food and discarding the spoon immediately afterwards
- The chef must prepare a meal for the manager each lunchtime and tea time which is of the portion the chef thinks is suitable for a pre-school child. This is so that the manager can control and test quality, presentation and quantity of food
- Staff must not blow on food to cool it or place it under a fan.
- Staff must only drink water in the rooms in a labelled container and not eat snacks unless permitted to do so for health reasons by the nursery manager
- Staff must wash their hands before serving any food
- Staff to wear blue aprons at all times during meal times
- Staff to wear gloves when dealing with any children with allergies