



Nutrition and Mealtimes Policy

At Little Dragon's 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. At Little Dragon's Day Nursery, we ensure all food and drink provided for the children, staff and visitors is homemade, using good quality ingredients. Meals and snacks are planned according to national guidelines for food and drink in early years settings and will be reviewed twice per year (spring/summer and autumn/winter menus). 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.
- All allergens are displayed alongside the menus to show the contents 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 5 servings of fresh fruit and vegetables per day.
- Parents and children are involved in menu planning.
- 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.
- 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 starts or 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 give careful consideration to seating to avoid cross contamination of food from child to child.
- 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 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.
- Children with any dietary or allergy requirements will have their food served on a red plate/bowl.
- 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 meals 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
- Where possible, we incorporate foods from the diet of each of the children's cultural backgrounds to our menus, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones
- Cultural differences in eating habits are respected.
- Any child who shows signs of distress at being faced with a meal he/she does not like will have his/her food removed without any fuss. If a child does not finish his/her first course, he/she will still be given a helping of dessert.
- Children not on special diets are encouraged to eat a small piece of everything.



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- Children who refuse to eat at the mealtime are offered food later in the day.
- 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
- 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 via our communication app FAMILY.
- No child is ever left alone when eating or drinking to minimise the risk of choking
- 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 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, stickers and badges, choosing a favourite story, becoming a special helper, playing a party game, dancing and/or singing their favourite song.
- All staff who prepare and handle food are competent to do so and receive training in food hygiene which is updated every three years.
- In the very unlikely event of any food poisoning affecting two or more children on the premises, whether or not 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.

Procedures to follow during meal/snack times

- All staff to wear tabards during snack and mealtimes, to be worn before serving commences.
- Bibs for those children that require them.
- All children must be seated when eating.
- Staff to be seated at or close to the table, at the children's level to ensure they are supervised at all times whilst they are eating.
- Babies should be fed with a suitable spoon. Some under 2s may be given a teaspoon or a small fork to feed themselves. Over 2s should be given a child size knife and fork. It is the responsibility of the child's key person to liaise with parents to ensure any changes to the above requirements are met.
- When serving food to the children, ensure food is cut up to a suitable size i.e. grapes cut in half and sausages cut length ways to prevent choking hazards but also enabling the child to feed themselves.
- Children under 2 should have the skin removed from fruit and jacket potatoes.
- Children under 2 will have softened fruit and vegetables if too hard to bite through e.g. carrots and apples.
- Honey can contain a bacterium that can produce toxins in children under the age of 1 which can lead to infant botulism which can be very serious. Honey will not be served to children under the age of 1.
- If a child is sitting with straps attached, these straps must only be used to keep young children safe and must not be used to restrain a child.

Procedures for cleaning up after meal/snack times

- Tables to be cleaned with Selgiene Ultra and wiped dry.



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- Spray Selgiene Ultra onto a cloth or directly onto the table, if the table area is clear from children.
- Floor to be swept and mopped, if necessary, using Selgiene Ultra.
- If the floor has been mopped a yellow caution sign MUST be appropriately displayed.
- All bibs to be sent to the kitchen for washing.
- Staff tabards to be washed in the washing machine daily if soiled.

Food activities

Activities that encourage children to recognise healthy choices and the importance of a healthy diet and lifestyle should be embedded in everyday practice. The nursery will provide cooking activities and staff will ensure that the recipes vary between sweet and savoury. The recipes will also be easy for the children to follow, enabling them to be involved with weighing and measuring ingredients.

Teaching children where their food comes from is also very important. The nursery has an area where the children can grow their own fruit and vegetables. The children are encouraged to look after the fruits and vegetables and harvest them when the time comes.

Children attending our nursery may come from a wide range of cultures and backgrounds and creating a cultural environment with opportunities to learn about diverse foods should therefore be encouraged. Working with families through effective parent partnerships plays a key role in helping all children to learn about, respect and celebrate foods from a variety of different backgrounds.

While the nursery discourages food play, as it is seen as wasting food and confusing the children at mealtimes, we also see the importance of children learning through direct experiences. For this reason, some sensory activities might include ingredients such as cornflour, and dried pasta, lentils and rice may be used in the role play area. In all such cases, food will be mixed with other ingredients, coloured or left dry so as not to appear the same as when a child should be eating it at mealtimes.

Food and Drink from home

At Little Dragon's Day Nursery, we provide food throughout the day, and encourage all parents to take up this provision in line with our healthy eating values. If a child with SEND requires additional food/snacks from home (such as sensory snacks) this will be agreed with the nursery prior to them being brought in, added to the child's IEP and in line with nursery food regulations and requirements e.g. healthy snack choices, no nuts.

Only food brought in for certain celebrations (such as birthday cake) may be shared with other children in the nursery and it must detail all the ingredients for allergy purposes. Items will be sent home for parents to choose whether they are happy for their child to have it.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
<i>August 2024</i>	Kate McLeod	<i>August 2025</i>