



# John Wilkinson Primary School and Nursery

## Nursery Food and Nutrition / Healthy Eating Procedure

Updated September 2025

### STATEMENT OF INTENT

We regard snack and mealtimes as an important part of the day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults which helps children to learn about healthy eating.

### AIM

At snack and mealtimes, we aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs. We aim to meet the full requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Requirements (September 2025), as well as taking into account advice from the Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance (May 2025).

### METHODS

#### The Child:

- Before a child starts at Nursery and After School Club parents complete a registration form where their child's dietary needs, including allergies are recorded. Parents then sign this form to signify that this information is correct.
- Families are offered a home visit prior to their child starting at Nursery where the manager and the child's key person can discuss the child's dietary (including allergies) needs further. The school kitchen also completes an allergies report based on the given information.
- If medication is required for any allergies, then a Long-Term Medical Plan is completed and put in place. This information is shared with all practitioners and staff involved in food preparation and meal/snack times. These are reviewed every term by the manager, key person and parents.
- Through the key person approach, regular discussions take place so the child's dietary and allergy needs will be updated on a regular basis.
- The staff complete training to ensure they are aware of the signs and symptoms of allergic reaction and are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts and take care not to provide foods containing nuts or nut products. The whole school environment is a nut free space.
- We require staff to show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. Staff do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child or make a child feel singled out because of his/her diet or allergy.
- We ensure religious and cultural preferences are respected and celebrated and where certain healthy foods are required to be excluded, we strive to source an appropriate substitution.

### FRESH DRINKING WATER

- There is always fresh drinking water available for the children.
- The fresh water is always placed in the same location and discussed with children at circle times on a regular basis. The children can ask for water at any time during the day, and access independently.

### REFRESHMENTS AND MEALTIMES

- Refreshments and mealtimes are organised, so they are social occasions in which both children and staff participate.
- We provide nutritious food at all refreshments and mealtimes, avoiding large quantities of fat, sugar, salt, artificial additives, preservatives and colourings. We provide snacks in the morning and afternoon and at After School Club (if attending a late session).
- Typical healthy meals and snacks provided take account of 4 main food groups: -

- Fruit and vegetables
- Starchy carbohydrates such as potatoes, bread, rice, pasta, cereals
- Dairy or dairy alternatives
- Proteins such as beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and poultry and meat alternatives

For children who drink milk, we provide semi-skimmed pasteurised milk, or calcium fortified soya milk. We would also provide alternative milk where required, such as rice milk. As previously noted, drinking water is also always available.

- Staff provide children with utensils which are appropriate for their ages and stages of development and which take account of the eating practices in their cultures.
- There are designated areas of the room where children eat. Children and staff eat together as we recognise that mealtimes are important social interactions. Staff face children so that they can quickly recognise any allergic reactions or choking.
- Staff are very proactive at using refreshments and mealtimes to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.
- Staff encourage children not to share and swap their food with one another in order to protect children with food allergies, or the potential for an allergy.
- A diet encompassing food from a range of cultures ensures that children from all backgrounds encounter familiar tastes and that all children can try unfamiliar foods.
- We offer hot meals to those children attending lunch club which are supplied by the school kitchen.
- Children may still receive desserts if they refuse to eat their main meal, although children are encouraged to eat their meal first.
- Children are given time to eat and drink and are not rushed.

#### **STORAGE AND PREPARATION OF FOOD AND DRINKS**

- At present, when the children stay for lunch club parents provide packed lunches or order a school meal.
- Parents are encouraged to ensure their lunch boxes have ice packs as they will be stored in their individual boxes in the classroom. Parents are also informed about our regulatory obligation to ensure lunch boxes provide healthy, balanced and nutritious food and encourage healthier food choices. It is important to ensure that food provided from home aligns with the healthy options offered by the setting, so that children receive consistent messages about nutrition.
- Foods we ask families to avoid: Sweets, Chocolate, sugary yoghurts, biscuits, sweetened drinks.
- We monitor the contents of lunchboxes and will work with parents if food provided does not meet our healthy eating guidance. Written examples of healthy lunchboxes can be provided, and we display posters of suggested foods for parents.
- We ask parents and carers to ensure they cut up fruits and vegetables into appropriate sizes and shapes as per the latest guidance (see attached information).
- Staff follow the latest Food Standards Agency (FSA) guidance on preparing food to avoid choking, and relevant posters are displayed in food preparation and eating areas. All staff receive regular training on choking prevention.
- All surfaces are clean and non-porous, and wipeable tablecloths are put on all tables before food is served.
- There are separate facilities for handwashing and for washing up.
- Hot meals are supplied from the kitchen at School. A member of staff collects the meals just as children are hand washing for lunch.
- Children are helped with cutting their food and supported throughout the mealtime.
- Session leaders carry out daily checks of the refrigerator to ensure that foods are stored and served safely. This information is recorded along with other health and safety checks carried out.

## CHILD AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

- We regularly complete learning activities around healthy eating and nutrition, and these include cooking. We encourage children to try different types of foods and encourage positive food relationships in an educational but fun way.
- Cooking and food activities are planned at least once per half term, supporting children's understanding of nutrition and healthy choices.
- Menus are displayed on the outside noticeboard for family's information. We actively seek feedback from parents and children about our menus and use this to inform future planning.
- Parents receive information about healthy eating and including advice about lunch boxes at various points throughout the year, including portion sizes, safe packaging and nutrition for healthy development (home visits, parents' information evenings etc).
- We use traffic light food labelling in our communications to help staff and parents understand healthier choices.
- Birthdays and celebrations – we celebrate birthdays in fun, inclusive ways and ask parents to consider healthier options should they want to bring something into the setting to celebrate their child's special day such as fruit platters, or non-edible options like stickers. Any food brought into the setting will be checked for potential allergens and we strongly encourage non-food treats for celebrations. Any food brought in for celebrations must meet the same healthy standards as our daily provision.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- All staff have received information about allergies and the symptoms to be aware of and treatment of Anaphylaxis from the NHS guidance which can be found here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/anaphylaxis/>. When specific medical needs require specialist training, e.g., allergies which could require the use of an epi-pen, then training would be provided at this point for all staff. This is provided on a need's basis.
- Currently Lisa McGowan, Steph Bowen, Chloe Wilde and Clare Tooth have in-date Food Hygiene Certificates. Qualified staff members disseminate this information to all staff members. At least two of these members of staff are always present at snack and mealtimes and sit with children whilst eating and drinking.
- Through training, research and discussion with parents we obtain information about the dietary rules of religious groups to which families belong, and of vegetarians and vegans, and about food allergies. We take account of this information in our provision of food and drink.
- Various posters detailing safe food preparation, common allergens in food and healthy eating advice are displayed in food preparation areas as constant reminders to practitioners when preparing snacks.
- We ensure that healthy food is provided in a cost-effective way, for example by using seasonal produce and bulk buying where possible.

### Key documents

- The Eatwell Guide
- The Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, September 2025)
- The Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance (DfE, May 2025)
- NHS Healthy Start
- GOV.UK Guidance on free school meals