



St Helens College



University Centre  
St Helens

# Nursery Childcare Policy – Foods and Snacks

**Relating to:** Nursery

**Document reference:** SHCPolNur08

**Document owner:** Nursery Manager

**Date of approval:** 25 January 2025

**Date of next review:** 25 January 2026

## **Policy Statement**

We recognise meal and snack times as an important part of our day. Mealtimes represent a social time where children can learn about healthy eating. We provide snacks and meals which are healthy and meet children's individual dietary needs and recognise that healthy children learn more effectively.

We strive to have an impact on issues such as obesity and oral hygiene.

We understand that early food experiences can have an effect on adult eating patterns and may influence attitude to eating.

We are committed to ensuring that the food provided supports the development of healthy eating practices in the future.

## **Aims**

- The Nursery staff work closely alongside the designated Nursery cook, who holds the relevant qualifications, to plan, regularly review and adapt a well-balanced three weekly menu.
- Children's individual requirements such as allergies/intolerances and cultural backgrounds are discussed with parents prior to their child starting the setting. The Manager liaises with the cook to ensure a suitable alternative is provided.
- Our menu is varied to contain meat/vegetarian and fish dishes on a weekly basis.
- The Nursery menu includes foods from the four main food groups:- Meat, fish and protein alternatives, dairy foods, grains, cereals and starch vegetables and fruit and vegetables.
- The food provided avoids large quantities of fats, sugars, and salt.
- Children in the older room are encouraged to self-serve during lunchtime. Staff support and model choices made by the children.
- Children are offered fruit such as apples, tangerines, bananas, etc, or a plain biscuit for morning snack, alongside milk or water. Fresh water is provided during mealtimes.
- Occasionally the children will be encouraged to taste foods from around the world when learning about different cultures.
- The Nursery organises meals so that they are social occasions in which children and staff can participate.
- All eating problems (such as fussy eating) will be discussed in a supportive and sensitive manner. Parents can be offered strategies and provided with information to help support these issues.
- Parents are provided with a daily diary detailing how much the child has eaten. Menus are displayed in the reception area, on the playroom doors and a copy is given to parents during the induction process. Parents are reminded that children are provided with 'child sized portions'.

- Allergens contained in our weekly menu are displayed in the Nursery reception area.
- It is the responsibility of all members of staff to ensure that safe practices are maintained in the preparation of food and snacks, and comply with legislation, training, and policy.
- The Nursery provide the children with utensils which are appropriate for their age and stage of development.
- The Nursery uses meals and snack times to help children develop independence through making choices. Staff encourage children to try a bit of everything but not to make a fuss if they don't want to. Children are praised when they try something new.
- Children who are slow eaters are never rushed to finish their meal.
- Staff model good eating habits by sitting with the children and encouraging table manners, please and thank you, and initiating conversation.

### **Drinks**

- The Nursery provides cow's milk for snack times, for children who are lactose intolerant, parents are requested to bring in their child's own milk from home.
- Fresh drinking water is available throughout the day.
- No other drinks are offered to children other than milk and water.

### **Packed Lunches**

The Nursery recognises that some children may require a special diet that can sometimes be hard for the Nursery to meet. In these cases parents can provide their child with a packed lunch. Children who access funded sessions can either be provided with a hot meal at a small cost or bring in their own packed lunch.

- Children eating packed lunches sit alongside the children eating a hot meal and are encouraged in the same way.
- Staff do not throw away any uneaten items so that parents are aware of what their child has consumed whilst in Nursery.
- Parents are encouraged to provide their children with a healthy packed lunch, staff will monitor and discuss any concerns they may have regarding any children who constantly bring in unsuitable options in their packed lunch with parents.
- Packed lunches will be stored appropriately.

## **Guidance for what to Include in packed lunches**

- At least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables.
- Meat, fish, or other source of non-dairy protein such as lentils, kidney beans, hummus.
- A starchy food such as bread, pasta, rice, cous cous, noodles, potatoes.
- Dairy food such as milk, yoghurt, cheese, custard.

## **Good Practice**

- A large percentage of staff hold a level 2 food safety qualification.
- Aprons will be worn when preparing and serving foods to children, staff will ensure they wash their hands accordingly and will support children when they wash their hands before and after snack/mealtimes. Staff will wear disposable gloves when necessary.
- Tables are cleaned using antibacterial spray prior to children sitting down for snacks and meals.
- Children's individual dietary information is displayed in the kitchen so that all staff are fully informed of them.
- Water in children's water bottles is changed throughout the day.
- Parents are encouraged to sit independently at the table and are not to walk around with food.
- Should parent's request to bring a birthday cake in for their child, staff and children will sing Happy Birthday to the child and will provide each child with a small piece of cake to take home.
- Older children regularly have the opportunity to help staff to prepare snack using age appropriate safety knives.

## **Infant Feeding**

The Nursery holds a Baby Welcome Environment Award enabling Nursery parents to be able to feed their child as and when needed.

For children who require bottle feeds throughout the day:-

- Babies' individual requirements are discussed with parents and documented.
- Parents are requested to bring clean, sterilised bottles and either a tin of baby formula powder or the correct measured amount of formula powder for each bottle in a clean, dry container.
- Children's formula powder and bottles are stored accordingly in the Milk Room. Staff indicate the date the formula was opened and ensure that parents are reminded when their child requires a new tin.
- Staff follow NHS guidance when sterilising any bottles, dummies and feeding equipment.

- If a parent brings in breast milk for their child it can be stored in the fridge at 4 degrees or lower for up to eight days, or in an ice compartment in the fridge for up to two weeks. Breast milk can be defrosted by putting the container/bag it is stored in in a jug of warm water or by holding it under running warm water. Once a baby has drunk from a bottle containing breast milk it should be used within one hour. Parents are encouraged to bring breast milk in either a small plastic container or a sealed zip lock bag with the child's name clearly labelled on it along with the date that the milk was expressed.

### **Introducing Solid Foods**

Parents are informed that solid foods are not recommended for babies under 6 months. All information and resources about the introduction of solid foods should reflect the Department of Health recommendations. Parents are given advice and support about when and how to introduce solid foods including :-

- Solid food should be started at around 6 months.
- Babies' signs of development readiness for solid foods.
- How to introduce solid foods to babies.
- Appropriate foods for babies.
- Where to access additional information about the introduction of solids.

Staff will discuss with parents the individual needs for their child. If parents choose for their child to have baby jars, packets, pouches, etc the parent must provide these. Parents are advised when introducing solid foods to link into the Nursery menu, staff will discuss with parents' which stage of the weaning process and how they are able to blend food accordingly for babies.

### **Scope of the Policy**

This policy applies to all staff, parents & children of the childcare facility.

### **Associated Policies**

- Equality & Inclusion
- Health & Safety
- Parental Participation
- Managing Children's Behaviour
- Staff Behaviour
- Communications
- Special Educational Needs
- Visits & Outings
- Confidentiality & Record Keeping

- Data Protection & Sharing of Information
- Maintaining Children’s Safety & Security on The Premises
- Intimate Care
- Dummies
- Transition
- Education & Curriculum
- Working in Partnership with Other Agencies
- Admissions & Registration

### **Access to the Policy**

This policy will be issued to all Childcare Practitioners and made available to the users of the Childcare Facility. A copy of all policies & procedures will be kept in the Managers office and in the reception area for parents/carers to access.

### **Post-Holder to Contact**

Director of Student Services.