

Nutrition and Mealtimes

Mealtimes should be a happy, social occasion for children and staff alike. Positive interactions should be shared at these times and enjoyed. Aston University Nursery is committed to offering children healthy, nutritious and balanced meals and snacks which meet individual needs and requirements.

We will ensure that:

- A balanced and healthy breakfast, lunch, tea and two daily snacks are provided for children attending a full day at the nursery. Those attending a morning session will be offered breakfast, lunch and a mid-morning snack, and those attending an afternoon session will be offered an afternoon snack followed by tea.
- Fresh drinking water is available to the children at all times. We will also provide cow's milk as an option for children at meal times.
- Cows' milk should not be given as a drink until a baby is a year old. This is because it doesn't contain the balance of nutrients a baby needs
- Children should be given whole milk and full fat dairy products until they are at least two years old because they may not get the calories or essential vitamins they need from lower-fat milks.
- After the age of two, children can gradually move to semi-skimmed milk as a drink, as long as they are eating a varied and balanced diet and growing well and there are no conflicting medical needs.
- The nursery employs a Nursery cook to prepare the main Nursery meal. The menu is a halal menu and also has a vegetarian option. Any further dietary requirements will be catered for and suitable meals arranged in conjunction with parents.
- The nursery provides a 3 week rolling tea menu and a selection of fruit or salad items for snack times.
Foods high in fat, salt and sugar are limited and children are offered and encouraged to eat fruit and vegetables at all meals and snack times.
- Individual dietary requirements will be respected. Information will be gathered from parents and stored on the child's file and be accessible within the room. Where appropriate we will carry out a risk assessment in the case of allergies and work with parents and other professionals to implement a care plan for the child.
- Staff take precautions to avoid cross contamination between different food types.
- Details of dietary requirements are displayed in the room. Placemats are also used at mealtimes identifying any requirements. Staff check these prior to serving meals.
- The member of staff giving the meal or food to the child has the ultimate responsibility of ensuring that it is suitable for the child and is in line with their dietary requirements. They are obliged to carry out all necessary checks to ensure that they are fully aware of the child's individual requirements and also that they are aware of all of the ingredients of the meal.

- Staff will show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. They would 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.
- Staff will set a good example and where possible eat their meals with the children and show good table manners. Meal and snack times will be organised so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate in small groups. During meals and snack times children will be encouraged to use their manners and say 'please' and 'thank you' and conversation will be encouraged.
- We promote healthy eating and do not provide sweets, chocolate, crisps or fizzy drinks at nursery. Staff will not eat such items within the nursery rooms and are only permitted to take food into the nursery that the children would be allowed to eat and may only eat this during mealtimes with the children. Staff may not take any food items into the room to which children may have an allergy to. We discourage parents from sending children to nursery with such items.
- Children accessing a funded place may choose to bring a packed lunch. Parents will be asked to provide a healthy lunch and are given guidance on this if required, and will be made aware of any foods that are not allowed into the nursery due to allergies.
- Children will be supported by staff throughout meal times and will be encouraged to use the appropriate utensils to feed themselves.
- Water will be served in beakers for younger children.
- Non-valved, free-flowing beakers and whenever possible, unlidged cups will be used for all drinks given to children to protect their teeth.
- We will be happy to mash or puree food for children that are weaning and will provide parents with the option of supplying meals if the provided meals are not suitable.
- Key persons will work with, and support parents during the weaning process.
- Individual meal routines will always be considered when offering children meals, particularly with the younger children.
- Young babies who require feeding will also be provided with a spoon so that they can attempt feeding themselves.
- Children will be offered encouragement to eat their meals and try new foods (children will need to experience a new taste a number of times before they get used to it). Children will never be forced to eat their meal.
- If a child refuses their meal they will be offered this at a later time in the day.
- Children will be given time to eat and will not be rushed.
- We will promote positive attitudes to healthy eating through play opportunities.
- The nursery will provide parents with daily written records of feeding routines for all children under the age of 2 years.
- No child is ever left alone when eating / drinking to ensure that someone is available should a child start to choke on an item of food
- If a parent wishes to bring in any food then this needs to be agreed by a member of staff.
- Please see outdoor policy for more information on how we keep children healthy.

Whilst we will cover for all allergies and dietary requirements it is impossible to cater for a children's likes and dislikes. Children need to try a new taste a number of times before it becomes familiar to them and for them to like it. A child's taste buds also change over time and it is therefore important not to stop offering any food they refuse. It is also common for children to use food as a control method. If it becomes apparent that a child genuinely dislikes a certain food the key person will work with parents to address this.

Internal use only

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| This policy was adopted on | June 22 |
| Signed on behalf of the nursery | |
| Date disseminated to staff | |
| Date for review | June 23 |