

BIRKBEES NURSERIES

Food & Nutrition Policy

A Unique Child	Positive Relationships	Enabling Environments	Learning & Development		
Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning & can be resilient, capable, confident & self-assured	Children learn to be strong & independent through positive relationships	Children learn & develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs & there is a strong partnership between practitioners/Parents/Carers	Children develop & learn in different ways. The framework covers the education & care of all children in early years provision, including children with SEN & Disabilities		
Every Child Matters					
Be Healthy	/	Stay Safe	Enjoy & achieve	Make a Positive Contribution	Achieve Economic Wellbeing

EYFS: 3.47 3.48

We aim to provide healthy, nutritionally balanced and enjoyable meals for the children. All our nurseries employ qualified, experienced, enthusiastic and dedicated cooks who prepare and cook fresh meals and snacks on the nursery premises. Our Kitchens are maintained to a high standard meeting all the Food Hygiene Regulations.

The nurseries all take part in the Kirklees Healthy Choice Awards and display the scores on the doors grading so that parents and visitors can clearly see these.

There is a supportive breastfeeding environment as we understand that breast milk is the ideal source of nutrition for infants for at least the first year of life. Each nursery has refrigerated storage where clearly labelled expressed breastmilk can be safely stored. We welcome mothers to breastfeed in the setting and there are facilities available for this. We have strong links to the children's centre and can signpost mothers to access further support on breastfeeding.

All our menus are written in house using parents, staff and children's suggestions, we then create a varied, balanced and diverse menu which changes throughout the seasons. Our menus are written to meet with the Voluntary Guidelines for food and drink in Early Years settings in England. This helps to ensure that young children have the best chance of getting all the nutrients they need to grow well, be active and stay healthy. The type and amount of food served meets the nutritional requirements for Early Years. The menus are available for parents on our website or in the nursery. All new parents are given a copy of the current menu at enrolment.

We believe that the best drinks for children are water and milk so these are the only drinks served in nursery. We kindly ask parents to support this policy by not asking us to give their children juice from home. We use whole milk for children under 2 and semi skimmed for all other children. Drinks are offered in an open cup or a free flow beaker at meal times from six months and we support parents to stop using bottles at one year. We follow Department of Health hygiene instructions when preparing a formula drink.

The food served is appropriate for the age and stage of the individual child and we are able to advise parents on current weaning practice. We welcome and encourage baby led weaning and will work with families to ensure that the food we serve is in a form that young children can eat with minimum assistance and without choking; the texture changing from soft mashed food to adult texture by the age of 12 months.

We offer regular meals and snacks as children have small stomachs and high nutritional needs. It is important to have these regular intakes of food so that children can grow and develop and play and achieve. Our daily menu covers breakfast, lunch and tea as well as two snacks; one mid-morning and the other mid-afternoon.

Our portion sizes are age appropriate. We serve small portions as we understand that it is better for children to ask for seconds than to serve them too much. This helps children to recognise when they are hungry and when they have eaten enough. We encourage self-service from an early age and will always try to have some dishes on the table which the children serve themselves.

All the food served is healthy, so whatever the child chooses will be nutritious. We trust the children to know how much they want to eat and allow them to say no to something they dislike. We will however, always encourage the children to try new foods.

Food is never used as a reward or punishment

Children get involved with setting the table and clearing their dishes as much as possible. We use table cloths and have flowers and self-designed name cards on the table for main meals. The children are involved with decorating their dining areas.

Adults sit with the children at mealtimes and eat the same food, they role model good manners and eating behaviour and create a relaxed eating environment with direct conversation. We talk about healthy food. By sitting with the children, the staff are able to assist in self-feeding if necessary but can also supervise the children. This is important because choking happens quietly and immediate help is vital. There are always paediatric trained first aiders on hand who have been trained on choking.

At the end of the session we give feedback to parents on the meals, drinks and snacks that have been served and which they have particularly enjoyed. We also inform them of the quantities that have been eaten. This is either written or verbal depending on the age of child. We believe that working together and sharing information is beneficial for the child, the parents and the setting.

On entry to the setting, parents are given the opportunity to share information with us on any special dietary needs.

We are able to cater for a broad range of special diets and we support our cooks by providing training and resources so they fully understand the individual requirements of children's special diets.

All the staff in the nursery are made aware of any child with a special diet and their photo and dietary needs are displayed in their room so all staff can see them.

Our menus reflect the ethnicity and cultures of all the children attending our settings and we actively encourage parents to share recipes with us.

We celebrate a wide range of festivals in the setting as well as special occasions and Birthdays. Any food used at these celebrations form part of a balanced meal. We ask parents not to bring in birthday cakes, sweets and unhealthy snacks but instead we promote non- food treats such as stickers and balloons. We make birthdays special by giving a personalised card and book and celebrating with a birthday song and blowing out candles on a wooden cake.

We have regular "Food from around the World days" where the children get to try new recipes. Parents are encouraged to share ideas with us.

We ask when food is brought in from home that it meets the voluntary food and drink guidelines for early year's settings.

We encourage eligible pregnant women and mothers with children under four years old to register with the healthy start scheme and access the weekly food vouchers. We will promote free Healthy Start vitamins to all pregnant or breastfeeding women and all children up to the age of four

We educate the children on oral health by talking to the children about good oral health practice; we cover this topic as part of our curriculum. We promote oral health in the setting and also on our website. We ask that parents support this policy by not bringing juice in bottles in to the setting.

All the nurseries enjoy growing food with the children and food education is very important to us. We grow food with the children on site as well as at our Community allotment using safe organic methods and give them an opportunity to eat fruit, vegetables and herbs that they have grown. All the food grown is used in our menus and shared with families where possible.

Children love to cook and cooking within our settings is a regular activity, it provides a fantastic opportunity to engage children from a young age with the joy of using fresh ingredients to make food they can eat and share with others. Children are actively involved in preparing their own snacks on a daily basis and our cooks often join the children to share their food skills and knowledge.

Parents and Carers are encouraged to join in with food activities. We hold regular Stay and Play sessions where food and growing are always available. We encourage parents to come into the nursery and share their recipes with us. We encourage parents to join in with our community allotment and are able to signpost them to training on horticulture. We hold nursery events throughout the year and have healthy homemade food for sale.