

Healthy Eating Policy

West Rise Nursery



October 2026

Healthy Eating Policy

At West Rise Nursery we encourage children to develop a positive attitude to food and healthy lifestyles. This is achieved through adopting a whole nursery approach which encompasses children, their families and staff.

Our Aim

We want promote healthy eating habit that will lead to lifelong health and wellbeing.

Introduction

This Policy recognises that children under the age of 5 years have difference nutritional needs from those of older children and adults. They have a high energy and nutrient requirement in relation to their size. Early Years is an important time to shape food preferences and habit, by allowing children to make their own selections through guided choice: this can have a positive impact on health in later life. This policy covers general nutritional guidance: children have individual needs which should be acknowledged. If parents/carers have any concerns they should discuss these with their Health Visitor, GP or Dietician.

General

- Those responsible for food preparation and handling of food must be competent to do so, and all West Rise Nursery staff have a food hygiene/safety certificate.
- Information must be made available to parents/carers regarding food and drinks provided to the children. Menus will be displayed for parent/carers to see.
- Staff will receive training in relation to healthy eating and food safety.
- Staff will be good role models for healthy eating and drinking by only drinking water in front of the children and only eating the same healthy food that is available to the children.
- No nuts will be used in any of the recipes for meals produced on site, however we cannot guarantee an environment free from any food product including butts due to manufacturers' disclaimers on most products. Refer to Allergies policy including nut allergies for children with nut allergies.
- We are a nut free setting.

Allergies/Food preferences/Special Diets

The Nursery will obtain and record necessary information from parents/carers regarding any special dietary requirements, preferences or food allergies during the induction process.

Staff will be made aware if any children in our setting have any of the following allergies:

- Peanut and tree nuts

- Sesame and other seeds
- Fish and shellfish
- Dairy products
- Eggs
- Soya
- Wasp or bee stings
- Natural latex rubber
- Penicillin and other drugs

Prevention measures

Care will be taken to prevent accidental consumption of foods which a child may be allergic to:

- A chart/photo will be kept in each room with the named photo of the child and allergy type.
- When preparing food, great care will be taken to ensure no allergic food type will come into contact with other foods.
- For severe allergic reactions, children may use an injectable adrenaline Epi-Pen. Staff will be trained on the use of Epi-pens and what to do in the event of an anaphylactic shock.

Nutrition

- The nursery will provide healthy, balanced and nutritious snacks and drinks. A snack of starchy carbs, fruit and vegetables will be offered.
- Food from the four main food groups will be offered every day (starchy carbohydrates, fruit and vegetables, milk, dairy foods).
- Foods containing added sugar will be confined to meal times to reduce the risk of dental decay.
- Parent/Carer can provide packed lunch or Chartwells can provide school dinners.

Food Groups

Starchy carbohydrates include: breads, pasta, rice and potatoes – these provide a good source of energy. Fruit and vegetables include: Fresh, frozen, tinned (fruit in juice, vegetables in water with no added salt or sugar) dried and juiced fruit and vegetables (dried and juiced fruit will only be consumed as part of a meal) – these provide a good source of calcium for healthy teeth and bones.

Foods containing protein include: meat, fish, eggs and pulses – these are required for growth and repair.

Meal Times

- Children are encouraged to operate independently, they are encouraged to pour their own drinks, serve, spread or cut food as appropriate, then clear away and wash-up after they have finished.
- Nursery staff will pro-actively involve children at meal times to create a social occasion which provides opportunities to promote children's social and emotional development as well as encourage good eating habits and table manners.
- Fussy eaters will be encouraged (but not forced) to eat. Praise will be given when the child eats; food will be removed without judgement if the child refuses food.
- Children will be given as much time as they need to finish their meals.
- Children will be given appropriate utensils and crockery according to the meal served. Where it is part of a child's culture, or developmentally appropriate, to eat with their fingers or particular utensils, this will be encouraged and supported.
- Cups, bowls and spoons are washed using the dishwasher to maintain hygiene standards.
- Healthy eating displays including pictures of children taking part in snack time and cooking activities to be displayed in the home corner.
- Pictures of children taking part in snack time, food preparation and cooking activities will be displayed near eating areas.
- Healthy practice displays to include pictures of children washing hands etc will be displayed in the kitchen and bathrooms.
- Staff model eating as a social occasion, they encourage children to try new items without putting pressure on them to eat, to help themselves and learn about food through talking to them about the food on offer, what they eat at home etc.
- Staff will ensure that all food either prepared or served for the children will be cut to take in to account the early years food choking hazards advice.
- Staff will sit with the children at all times and facing them.

Snacks

Snacks are available in the morning and in the afternoon with water or milk. These will include carbs, fruit and vegetables.

Drinks

- Children will have access to drinking water, water bottles provided, at all times.
- Children will be offered milk or water during snack time. Milk is provided free for under 5's.
- Milk and water are offered at lunchtimes.

Working with Parent/Carers (Parental involvement)

- Parents will be advised if their child is not eating well and a plan put in place in co-operation with the parent.
- Recipes and food ingredients will be available to parents.

- Parents will be consulted around the dietary or religious requirements of their child and plans put in place.
- Healthy eating suggestions will be given to support them to give their children healthy food options i.e. examples of a healthy lunchbox.
- Parents will be encouraged to offer menu suggestions.
- Parents are asked not to send sweets, crisps and other snack foods to the pre-school.
- Parents of some children on special diets will be asked to provide as much information as possible about suitable foods. In some cases parents may be asked to provide food themselves.
- A copy of the Healthy Eating Policy can be found on the Nursery website.

Food and Cooking Activities

Food and cooking activities are used in a variety of ways to teach children and widen their experience of growing, cooking and preparing food. The children select food, chop it up and serve it to each other.

Celebrations and Rewards

- The nursery will encourage staff to be innovative in the way birthdays and festivals are celebrated, e.g. without the use of food high in sugar and salt.
- Parents are **not allowed** to bring 'party bags' or birthday cake into the nursery to celebrate their child's birthday as we will make them feel special by singing happy birthday and sending them home with a birthday certificate.
- Parents/carers will be consulted over appropriate ways to celebrate ethnic/cultural and religious occasions.

Cultural and Religious Diversity

The Nursery is keen to help introduce children to different religious and cultural festivals and events through tasting different types of food and drink. The Nursery staff are committed to embracing the cultural and religious diversity of the families who use our services. We will work with parents and carers to ensure that any particular dietary requirements are met.

Equal Opportunities

The Healthy Eating and Drinking systems and strategies in our nursery will be accessible to all children and staff.

Dental Health

The Nursery will promote the importance of dental health by highlighting the importance of making healthy choices regarding the food and drinks consumed. (See our dental health policy).

Breast Feeding

Breast feeding mothers will be provided with a private space that is warm and has a comfortable chair if they wish to breast feed their baby/child at pre-school.

