

Cold Ash Pre-school: Food & Drink Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Health

Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, they must be healthy, balanced and nutritious.

Policy statement:

We regard snack and lunch time as an important part of our day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. At snack time, children eat food that is provided by their parents, and children who are with us for lunchtime bring their own packed lunch.

We carry out regular cooking and food preparation activities with the children as part of their learning.

****WE ARE A NO NUTS SETTING**** No staff, volunteers, parents/guardians or children are permitted to bring any food item in that contain nuts – including, but not limited to, chocolate spread.

Whilst children are eating there should always be a member of staff in the room with a valid paediatric first aid certificate. The children will always be within sight and hearing of a member of staff whilst eating.

Procedures:

We follow these procedures to promote healthy eating in our setting.

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we ask their parents about their dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies. (See the Managing Children who are Sick, Infectious or with Allergies Policy.)
- We display current information about individual children's allergies/dietary needs so that all our staff and volunteers are fully informed about them.
- Through discussion with parents and research reading, we obtain information about the dietary rules of the religious groups to which children and their parents belong, and of vegetarians and vegans, as well as about food allergies. We take account of this information when planning cooking activities.
- We show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. We do 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.

- We organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and adults participate.
- We use lunch and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, opening their food, and drinking and feeding themselves.
- The children have access to their drinking water constantly. We inform the children about how to obtain their water and that they can ask for water at any time during the day.
- In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.

Packed lunches:

As we don't provide cooked meals and children are required to bring packed lunches, we:

- Encourage parents to include an ice pack to keep food cool;
- Provide healthy eating information to parents and teach the children about a healthy diet;
- Encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk based desserts, such as yoghurt or crème fraîche. We discourage sweet drinks;
- Discourage packed lunch contents that consist largely of crisps, processed foods, sweet drinks and sweet products such as cakes or biscuits. We reserve the right to return this food to the parent as a last resort, and;
- Ensure that adults sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.

Legal framework:

- Regulation (EC) 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Hygiene of Foodstuffs.
- Early years foundation stage statutory framework: For group and school-based providers (2025)

Further guidance:

- Safer Food, Better Business (Food Standards Agency 2011)