

03 Food safety and nutrition procedures

03.5 Meeting dietary requirements

Snack and mealtimes are an important part of the day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. We provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs and preferences.

- Staff discuss and record children's dietary needs, allergies and any ethnic or cultural food preferences with their parents during their transition visit when starting and throughout their time a
- If a child has a known food allergy, procedure 04.4 Allergies and food intolerance is followed.
- Staff record information about each child's dietary needs in the individual child's registration form; parents sign the form to signify that it is correct.
- Up-to-date information about individual children's dietary needs is displayed so that all staff and volunteers are fully informed.
- Staff ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and cultural or ethnic preferences, as well as their parent's wishes.
- The menus of meal and snacks are displayed on our Family app for parents to view. Foods that contain any food allergens are identified.
- Staff aim to include food diets from children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.
- Through on-going discussion with parents and research reading by staff, staff 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. Staff take account of this information when providing food and drink.
- Staff provide a vegetarian alternative when meat and fish are offered and make every effort to ensure Halal meat or Kosher food is available to children who require it.
- Where it is not possible to source and provide Halal meat or Kosher food, a vegetarian option is available; this will be discussed and agreed with parents at the time of the child's registration.
- All staff show sensitivity in providing for children's diets, allergies and cultural or ethnic food preferences. A child's diet or allergy is never used as a label for the child, they are not made to feel 'singled out' because of their diet, allergy or cultural/ethnic food preferences.
- Fresh drinking water is available throughout the day. Children are encouraged to bring their own bottles in from home and labelled, these are available for children to drink and staff inform children where these are available and this is for them to get independently at any time during the day.
- Meal and snack times are organised as social occasions.

Fussy/faddy eating

- Children who are showing signs of 'fussy or faddy eating' are not forced to eat anything they do not want to but only encouraged in a positive way. Staff will sit with children and eat with them when possible. Meal/ snack times are seen as a learning opportunity. Staff talk about where foods come from, colours, shapes, textures, cultures, smells, tastes etc.
- Staff recognise the signs that a child has had enough and remove uneaten food without comment, unless they are encouraging them to eat in a positive way. Some children will benefit from encouragement to try different foods which they may not be use to at home. le staff will not say "You haven't done very well with your food today".
- Children are not made to stay at the table after others have left if they refuse to eat certain items of food.
- Staff work in partnership with parents to support them with children who are showing signs of 'faddy or fussy eating' and sign post them to further advice, for example, How to Manage Simple Faddy Eating in Toddlers (Infant & Toddler Forum) <https://infantandtoddlerforum.org/health-and-childcare-professionals/factsheets/>