



Food and Nutrition policy

Our Approach to food and nutrition:

We want all our children to be healthy and happy. We want them to enjoy food and feel like active participants in mealtimes, making choices for themselves and feeling supported to develop healthy habits. We want our families to understand the value of healthy life choices, including with food, and feel supported to be able to make these choices for their children.

At Little Learners we are:

Confident: Children are confident to try new foods, make healthy choices and be involved in food preparation. Families are confident that their children are supported to make healthy choices while at nursery and feel confident to make healthy choices for their children at home.

Curious: Children are encouraged to be curious about new textures and new tastes. They are exposed to a range of different foods and are given choices about what they would like to try. This includes foods in play situations, foods at mealtimes and in adult lead cooking activities. Children are curious about the process of growing foods and where it comes from. Children are curious about a wide range of different food traditions and cultures. Children are curious about other people's food preferences and accepting of the differences between them and their friends – developing an understanding that we all like things that are different and that is OK.

Caring: Children value their health and understand how food can help them stay healthy. Children care for food in the environment, developing an understanding about how we grow food and about minimising food waste. Children develop an awareness of others needs and help others to get the food they need too, by being considerate about the food they take and passing plates to others.

How is our ethos delivered:

- **Mealtimes (including breakfast, snack and packed lunches)**

We provide **breakfast** choices for children arriving between 8.30 and 9am.

These include a range of cereals, toast and fruit daily. Children are supported to choose what they would like to eat (with guidance from parents / guardians for those children not yet able to communicate this themselves).



Optional **snack** is provided each session. The menu is varied daily to provide a range of tastes and textures for children to try and covers the main food groups throughout the week. See Appendix B 'Snack choices' for more information on the range of food provided. Children sit together with adults during snack and are encouraged to try different foods. Children support each other by passing plates and helping to give out drinks etc. Children are supported to eat a balance of foods, including fruits and vegetables. Children are allowed to eat as little or as much as they feel they need, supported by adults to understand when they are 'full'.

Children bring in their own **packed lunches**. Children sit together with adults to eat and are encouraged to eat the food their adults have provided. Please see the Appendix A - 'packed lunch policy' for more information about what we accept in packed lunch boxes.

Water is available to the children all day, either in their own water bottles or a jug and cups provided by the nursery.

Children are offered milk during snack time (allergies allowing).

- **Teaching / activities**

Activities and learning are built into our curriculum to teach about where food comes from, how to keep ourselves healthy and hygiene when preparing and eating food. Children engage in cooking and food preparation activities regularly throughout each term. Consideration is taken when planning cooking activities to ensure a range of savory and sweet offerings, healthy choices over less healthy ones (e.g. dried fruit over sweets for toppings) and cultural experiences or exposure to foods they may be less likely to have tried at home.

- **Celebrations**

At Little Learners we want children to engage in celebrations, and food is often a part of this. Food is sometimes provided as part of celebrations throughout the year e.g. Christmas parties or end of year events. Consideration is given to ensure there is a range of foods provided and sweet treats are given in moderation. Birthdays are celebrated in a range of ways in the nursery – singing to the birthday child, giving choice over activities in the day that they prefer, small non food gifts (e.g. bubbles). Parents are allowed to bring in treats for the other children, but this is discouraged. If treats are bought in, these are sent home with the children to be eaten with families.

- **Links to home**



Every effort is made to take into account children's home backgrounds when looking at food and nutrition. This includes providing food from a range of cultures, taking into account families food choices e.g. veganism when providing food at the nursery, inviting parents in to share food preparation and recipes from home, sending food made at nursery to be eaten at home to the experience can be shared with the family.

How allergies are managed

All staff are Pediatric First Aid trained, including how to spot and support allergic reactions.

The nursery is a NUT FREE zone, with no nut products being given to the children and this is reflected in our packed lunch policy. Packed lunches are also monitored by staff while children are eating to ensure this is the case.

Children's allergy information is collected as part of registration and review regularly.

Information on children's allergies is displayed at all times, as well as the main allergens staff should be aware of.

Medication for allergies is stored in the servery, where there is easy access if needed.

Parents are informed if medication has had to be administered (e.g. inhalers) and are called immediately if there has been a reaction to an allergen.

Children with epi pens have individual care plans, detailing their allergens and how staff should respond if they come in to contact with them.

All medication is taken on outings and carried by a PFA trained member of staff, who the child stays with during the outing.

All medication is checked termly for use by dates.

Safety and Hygiene

All staff have a food and hygiene certificate which is renewed at least every 2 years. Adults follow this guidance in preparation of all foods, including preparing food, storing food and cleaning food preparation areas.

Supply staff who may not hold this certificate are not involved in the preparation of food at nursery.

All children are helped to wash their hands before meals and cooking activities. Children are taught why we need to do this.



All food preparation equipment e.g. knives, pans, are only put in children's reach if deemed to be safe.

We want children to feel confident with the use of cooking tools. If children are using equipment that carries risk, adults are always within arms reach of the child.

Sustainability

At Little Learners we want children to develop an awareness of sustainability and waste.

Children are encouraged to just choose foods they wish to eat from communal snack plates, always being allowed to come back for more if they would like it.

Children are encouraged to eat their packed lunches, and any food not finished is returned home for children to eat later if appropriate.

Parents are encouraged to minimise packaging when sending in packed lunches.

We have a compost bin for vegetable waste, that can be used on our garden.

We grow our own, seasonal fruits and vegetables whenever we can.

We choose seasonal fruits and vegetables as much as possible when offering food to the children.

Food is used for play, but consideration is given to how much and the waste impact is balanced with the experiences for the children.



Appendix A – Packed Lunch guidance

Parents are encouraged to use the 'Eat Well Plate' as a guide when packing lunches, taking in to consideration what their child is likely to eat that day / across a week in other meals.

We suggest lunch boxes include:

- A starchy 'main' food, for example, wholewheat sandwiches, brown rice or pasta, crackers, potatoes, couscous or other grains.
- Plenty of fruits and vegetables, with a range of textures and colours.
- Protein such as chicken, eggs, hummus, beans or lentils
- Dairy or a dairy alternative such as milk, yogurts or cheese
- If children wish to have a 'treat' in their lunches, we suggest granola or low sugar cereal bars, low sugar muffins or plain biscuits.
- If parents choose to add other options, such as crisps, we encourage them to choose ones with a 'green' or 'amber' rating from the food label (<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-guidelines-and-food-labels/how-to-read-food-labels>)

Children have access to water and milk at the nursery, so additional drinks are not needed in lunch boxes.

Children are **NOT ALLOWED** to have sweets, fizzy drinks or chocolate based products in their lunch boxes.

The nursery has a **NO NUTS** policy. This includes spreads such as peanut butter or nutella, as well as products that may contain nuts. Nut allergies are **LIFE THREATENING** so we ask all parents to be diligent in checking labels.

Additional tips:

- We ask parents to be mindful of **portion sizes** and pack what they feel their child is likely to eat to minimise waste. All foods not eaten are returned home where possible.
- Children's food habits benefit from exposure to a variety of textures and tastes and this should be reflected in lunch boxes
- Food should be prepared and stored with safety in mind. Please cut up (length ways) any round foods such as cherry tomatoes or grapes, and considered whether a mini ice pack would support keeping food cool.
- For recipes and advice can be found at <https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes/>

Appendix B – snack choices / menus



At Little Learners we want children to be curious about food and confident to try different tastes and textures.

We want to make sure we are offering foods from all main food groups across the week and to all children. With this in mind, menus are rotated so children who only attend a couple of sessions a week get a varied offering over the half term.

Examples of daily snack offer:

- 'Yoghurt bar' - dairy and dairy alternative yogurt with choice of fruits and granola etc
- 'Wrap bar' - wholemeal wraps with choice of fillings including cheese and cheese spreads, salads, chicken, hummus etc
- 'Picnic plates' - selection of fruits and vegetables, pitta and dips, boiled eggs, quiche etc
- 'Fruit bar' - wide range of fruits and vegetables with dips, including those grown ourselves and chosen by the children from the local market
- We also provide a range of starchy foods such as crackers, rice cakes , bread sticks and wholemeal toast

Children are encouraged to try foods and this is celebrated. Children are given choice and are encouraged to be part of the process, both in setting up for snack, helping each other to serve and in clearing away.