

Policies and Procedures for Food and Drink

We regard snack and meal times 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 Pathways we aim to provide regular drinks and a well-balanced nutritious diet that reflects dietary and religious requirements for each individual child.

Procedures

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

- Before a child starts to attend our setting, we ask their parents about their dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies.
- We record information about each child's dietary needs in the application form and parents sign the form to signify that it is correct.
- We will regularly consult with parents to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs- including allergies - are up-to-date.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all staff and volunteers are fully informed about them.
- We implement systems to ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and preferences, as well as their parents' wishes.
- We provide nutritious food for all meals and snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings. Our meals are provided by Bishop Rawle Primary School through Staffordshire County Catering.
- Drinking water is available throughout the day in both rooms for children to access at any time.
- Snack times are at regular intervals every day and milk and water is offered during the morning session and water in the afternoon. Toast, crumpets, oatcakes, a range of fruit and veg, crackers and cheese and breadsticks etc are provided during these snack times.
- We take care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products and we are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts.
- Food is collected around 11.30-11.45 from the lunch hall and is transported in a hot box. We also offer our breakfast club in the mornings for those children attending nursery early. This consists of cereal, toast and fruit.
- For children under two, we provide parents with daily written information about feeding routines, intake and preferences.
- A food blender is available to blend food for younger babies; alternatively parents/carers can provide a healthy meal.
- 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 in the provision of food and drinks.
- 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 his/hers diet or allergy.
- We organise meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.
- We provide children with utensils that are appropriate for their ages and stages of development and that take account of the eating practices in their cultures.
- In accordance with parents' wishes, we offer children arriving in the morning, and or staying late, an appropriate meal or snack. These could include:
 - Toast, crumpets, muffins or oatcakes

- Crackers and cheese
- Fruit
- Veg sticks
- We inform parents who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in our setting.
- In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- For young children who drink milk, we provide whole pasteurised milk. Although we slowly introduce semi-skimmed milk from the age of two years; firstly into meals and dishes, such as cereal or in white sauces, before offering it as a drink, so that the transition is gradual.

Packed Lunches

Where packed lunches are provided we ask that parents:

- Ensure perishable contents of packed lunches are refrigerated to keep food cool;
- Inform parents of whether we have facilities to microwave cooked food brought from home;
- Encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit and milk base desserts, such as yoghurt or crème fraiche, where we can only provide cold from home. We discourage sweet drinks and provide children with water;
- 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;
- Provide children bringing packed lunches with plates, cups and cutlery;
- Ensure that adults sit with children to eat their lunch so that mealtimes is a social occasion; and
- Food which can be provided includes sandwiches, pasta salad, rice dishes, yoghurts, fruit, veg sticks.

Feeding and Weaning

When feeding young children at Pathways we will do so in a gentle and kind manner. Young babies will be fed in the arms of the staff and more close contact will be used. Highchairs are used for the children who can start to sit up and feed themselves. We will follow parent/carers wishes and the baby's development as to when to start to wean.

Food Preparation

A separate area is used for the preparation of babies' feeds in the kitchen and a steriliser is available for the cleaning of bottles and dummies. The warming of food and milk will be done by a competent and qualified member of staff.