



6.4 Food and Drink

1) Purpose

Mealtimes and snack times are an important part of the day. We use them as social and learning opportunities and provide nutritious food and drink that meets each child's medical, cultural, religious and personal needs.

2) Main rule / nursery commitment

- Dietary needs, allergies, intolerances and preferences are gathered before a child starts, recorded on registration and medical forms, signed by parents and reviewed regularly.
- Current dietary information is displayed for staff, including children's photos, and a copy is available in the kitchen for the chef.
- The nursery uses systems to ensure each child receives the correct food and drink.

3) Healthy eating and inclusion

- Menus are planned in advance, displayed for parents and, where possible, involve children and parents in planning.
- Meals and snacks are nutritious and avoid large amounts of sugar, salt, saturated fat and artificial additives.
- Menus include protein foods, dairy, grains/starchy foods and fruit/vegetables.
- The nursery includes familiar foods from children's cultural backgrounds and introduces new foods sensitively.
- A vegetarian alternative is available when meat or fish is offered.
- The nursery operates a no-nuts approach and takes extra care where any child has a nut allergy.
- Dietary needs are not used as labels and children are not made to feel singled out.

4) Mealtime practice

- Mealtimes are social occasions where children and adults sit together.
- Children are supported to make choices, use age-appropriate utensils, serve where suitable and develop independence.
- Fresh water is available all day and children can ask for it at any time.
- Children are discouraged from sharing or swapping food to reduce allergy risks.
- Young children who drink milk are given whole pasteurised milk; from age 2, semi-skimmed milk is introduced gradually.
- Parents receive daily written information about feeding, intake and preferences.
- The nursery does not offer sweet puddings and instead offers fruit and yoghurt.
- Birthday cakes are not part of nursery celebrations to support healthy eating and oral health.
- Food is prepared to reduce choking risk, children sit in age-appropriate chairs, and a staff member sits facing them to watch for choking signs.
- There is a separate kitchen area in the baby room for bottle preparation and sterilising.



5) Meal time procedure

- While tables are set, children sit on the carpet.
- A red tablecloth is used on one table to highlight children with allergies.
- Plates, bowls, cups and cutlery are laid out according to allergies, parent preferences and dietary needs such as vegetarian diets.
- Children wear colour-coded bibs where used (for example red for allergy/intolerance and the nursery's agreed colour coding for other dietary needs) before handwashing.
- Each staff member is allocated a table, ensures children receive the correct meal, and serves pudding at the end.
- Older children are encouraged to scrape away leftovers and return for pudding.
- Only permanent and confident practitioners serve food. Bank staff may only sit with children with no allergies.
- Students and new practitioners must be seated with permanent experienced staff and can only serve or supervise food once the room leader is satisfied that they know the children, allergies, reactions and emergency responses.
- All staff complete Level 2 food hygiene and allergy awareness before serving food.
- There must be a first aider sitting with children when eating.

6) Policy details

- Provider: Aspire Day Nursery Ltd
- Adopted: May 2015
- Date last reviewed March 2026
- Signed by: C Moxon
- Name of signatory: Christine Moxon
- Role: Manager