

Title	Food and Nutrition (Including Food Safety)
Audience	Directors, Managers, Employees

At Little Wellies Nursery we believe that mealtimes should be happy, social occasions for children and staff alike. We promote shared, enjoyable positive interactions at these times.

We are committed to offering children healthy, nutritious and balanced meals and snacks which meet individual needs and requirements.

Meals and Snacks

- We provide breakfast and lunch for children attending in the morning and a mid-afternoon snack and tea for children attending in the afternoon. Children who attend all day receive all meals.
- Meals and snacks follow latest Early Years Foundation Stage Nutritional Guidance (2025) and ensure they provide a balanced diet for all young children's needs, avoiding large quantities of fat, sugar, salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- Meals and snacks include at least 5 portions of fresh fruit and vegetables per day.
- Quantities offered take account of the ages of the children being catered for in line with recommended portion sizes for babies and young children.
- We will sometimes celebrate special occasions such as birthdays with the occasional treat of foods such as cake, sweets or biscuits. These will be given at mealtimes to prevent tooth decay and not spoil the child's appetite.
- Parents are able to bring in cakes on special occasions. We ensure that all food brought in from parents have listed ingredients within the Food Information for Consumers (FIR) 2014. We do not allow food that has been prepared or baked at home.

Drinks

- Fresh drinking water is available at all times for all children and is easily accessible to them
- Water intake is monitored and encouraged more during hot weather
- We offer milk at breakfast and snack time. However, no other drink, other than water, is offered during all other times of day. However, if a child has Special Needs and or Disabilities and refuse water then we will discuss with parents how best to manage this and possibly offer an alternative in an opaque/sealed plastic bottle.

Menu Planning

- Menus are planned in advance and are on a three weekly rotational cycle. Menus change according to the time of year.
- Menus include a wide range of foods and reflect cultural diversity.
- Children are regularly asked about their favourite foods and staff are asked for their input in menu planning. Families are asked for their input into menu planning during our annual family surveys.
- Menus are published on the nursery website and each day's menu is displayed within the setting.

Safety in Food Preparation

- Each setting has their own Nursery Cook who is trained to at least Level 2 in Food Hygiene.
- Each cook has undertaken further training in food allergens through the Food Standards Agency website.
- Each cook and manager is responsible for ensuring all Safer Food guidelines are adhered to and paperwork is completed.
- Each cook and nursery manager is responsible for ensuring any recommendations or directions given by local food hygiene inspections are adhered to.
- All staff who prepare and handle food are competent to do so and receive training in food hygiene which is updated every three years.
- In the event of food poisoning affecting two or more children on the premises, we will inform Ofsted as soon as reasonably practical and in all cases within 14 days. We will also inform the relevant health agencies and follow any advice given.

Safety at Mealtimes

- During all mealtimes staff are within sight and sound of all children.
- There is at least one member of staff at each table sat with the children.
- Staff sit at tables where they are facing children wherever possible and are vigilant to ensure children remain safe when eating; spotting early signs of choking,
- All staff are Level 3 trained in Paediatric First Aid.

Children's Individual Needs and Parents' Requests

- Menus at Little Wellies are planned to ensure there is a wide variety of foods and give all children an opportunity to try foods that they may not usually try.
- On the whole alternatives will not be provided. However:
We cater for preferences relating to religion, which is communicated during the registration process, or in writing afterwards. For example, we offer a vegetarian diet for Muslim families who request Halal meat. We offer a vegetarian diet for families who request it. There is always a vegetarian alternative if the main meal is meat based, but this will only be given to children who have registered as vegetarian or requested it in writing.
- Information on weaning is collected during the registration process on a separate Under 18 months All About Me form and this is discussed with parents, room staff and is adhered to for as long as the weaning process takes. Staff continue to be guided by parents during this time.
- Children's food preferences are captured during induction process through the All About Me booklet, but their preferences will not be catered for.
- During a meal, a child will be encouraged to eat a very small amount of a food that they have said they do not like. However, if a child shows distress at a mealtime due to being given a food that they do not like, they will not be forced to eat it. The food will be taken away with minimal fuss and the child will still be offered a further course if available.
- If a child has refused to eat their meal they will be offered food again later. This will be explained to the parents and the Manager/staff and parents will work out a best way forward to cater for the needs/likes of the child.
- Children are never rushed to finish their meal and are given as much time as they need. Mealtimes should be relaxed and calm for all children for as long as it takes
- A child's daily food intake is fed back to all parents during an oral handover at the end of the day. For the under 2 children this is also written down.

Children's Allergies and Intolerances

- At Little Wellies children's allergies and intolerances are catered for.
- During the registration process families are asked whether their child has any medical or dietary needs including allergies and intolerances. If the answer is "yes" then more information is asked for and a discussion takes place.
- Parents are asked for either a written medical diagnosis or more information from a health practitioner, in the form of a letter or written advice, for example evidence that they are on a dairy ladder.
- If parents provide such evidence, then Little Wellies will cater for the child's dietary need.
- If no further evidence is provided then Little Wellies will ensure that a child does not eat a food that could make them ill, but will ask parents to provide any alternative themselves at their own cost.
- Children with an allergy / intolerance (whether verified or not) will not be given a food which may contain any allergens.
- Children with allergies or intolerances will never be singled out or made to feel different. They will be included as much as possible.
- A high level of caution will be exercised during food preparation to ensure there is no cross contamination of allergens.
- When food for a particular child is brought from the kitchen the cook will pass onto the Room Leader who the individual food is for and how it differs from other children's meals. Another member of staff will then verify that this has been passed on and both staff members will ensure that the food goes to the correct child.
- During the mealtime consideration will be given to cross contamination of allergens. However, the child will not be singled out or separated from their peers unless necessary for their safety.
- During mealtimes a child with allergies / intolerances will be carefully observed to ensure they do not come into contact/eat anything that may contain allergens.
- Before/after mealtimes any food which may contain allergens will be returned to the kitchen/placed out of reach of children.
- All children with allergies or intolerances must have a care plan to explain what to do if they come into contact with/eat a food that may contain allergens.
- If a child with allergies or intolerances comes into contact with or eats a food which may contain allergens then their own personal care plan will be immediately followed, and parents will be informed as soon as practicably possible.
- If age appropriate, discussions will be held with children to explain the importance of not sharing food with each other.

Mealtimes as a Learning Opportunity and Social Time

- At Little Wellies, mealtimes are seen as special occasions where the whole room comes together.
- Children sing a song to welcome the cook and the food into the room, which marks the beginning of the special time.
- Children listen to the cook while she describes the food that they are going to eat and all the children thank the cook together.
- Children sing a song to remind them of the importance of manners.
- Children are reminded to say please and thank you during mealtimes. Very young children are encouraged to use Makaton signing to do this.
- Children are encouraged to be as independent as possible while food is being served. For example, pre-school children will serve their own food from a serving plate and count the number of spoonfuls.
- Children are encouraged to use cutlery appropriately and as independently as possible.
- During eating, children are encouraged to chat and see the mealtime as a calm but social occasion.
- During the meal, staff sit with the children at the table, modelling manners, behaviour, use of cutlery etc
- Practitioners speak to the children about the food they are eating and how it has been made / where it has come from.
- Often in the summer/autumn months food has been grown by the children themselves, from seed, and this is discussed with the children while they eat it.
- Staff speak to the children about nutrients within the foods and the importance of healthy eating.
- Discussions take place around the children's likes/dislikes or news from home or what they have done during the previous session at nursery.
- At the end of a meal older children are encouraged to scrape any waste off their plates and take their own plate to the sink for washing up

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
22.11.18	Linsi Tidswell	22.11.19
3.2.20	Linsi Tidswell	3.2.21
	Linsi Tidswell	9.3.24
7.7.25	Chris Tidswell	7.7.28

Policy to be reviewed every 3 years or if there are any changes to procedure required.