

Healthy Eating Policy

Policy statement

This setting regards snack and mealtimes as an important part of the setting's day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. We follow the nutrition guidance set out by the DFE to provide nutritious, balanced food and drink, throughout the day, which meets the children's individual dietary needs.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-nutrition>



Procedures – children 1 - 5 years

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

- Nursery provides a hot cooked lunch and dessert that is prepared on site by our chef. All children that stay for lunch are encouraged to eat a variety of foods. A sandwich or similar may be provided if any child does not eat their hot meal, and fruit and yoghurt is provided as an alternative to the pudding. Charges apply for the hot meals.
- Lunchtime is a sociable time for the children and staff, and we do find that the children want to eat the same as all their peers. We do not actively encourage providing a packed lunch for your child however if you need to, then nursery recommends a cold packed lunch bought into nursery in an appropriate lunch bag/box, along with an ice pack to maintain freshness. For parents who do provide a packed lunch for their child; we advise that they supply a selection from the following items in accordance with NHS choices a balanced lunch box should contain:
 - Starchy foods – bread, rice, potatoes, pasta
 - Protein foods - meat, fish, beans
 - Dairy – cheese, yoghurt
 - Vegetables, salad
 - Fruit
- It is not necessary to provide a drink in your child's lunch box as water or milk is available.
- We 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.
Parents are NOT to send in any confectionary or ANY product containing NUTS.
- Before a child starts the setting, we gain information from the parents about their children's dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies and record the information.
- Children with any specific dietary needs/allergies/preferences or any medical needs that require them to have specific foods or 'safe foods,' will be discussed on registration and the child's individual needs will be met, alongside offering them the same healthy choices from our menu.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs in the kitchen areas, 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/cultural needs and preferences.

- We display the menus for parents/carers, and these are reviewed regularly, and are also available to view on the website and on Family..
- We provide nutritious, balanced food for all meals and snacks, avoiding/limiting large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- Snacks are provided twice a day, and there is a weekly charge for these. Alternatively, if parents wish to provide the snack, it needs to consist of fruit, vegetables, crackers or breadsticks or something similar.
- We include a variety of foods from the four main food groups:
 - meat, fish and protein alternatives.
 - dairy foods.
 - grains, cereals and starch vegetables; and
 - fruit and vegetables.
- From time to time, we will introduce the children to foods from different cultures.
- We take care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products and are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts.
- We require staff to show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. Staff do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child or make a child feel singled out because of her/his diet or allergy.
- We organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children can chat to their peers and the staff, promoting good communication and language development, as well as learning about the food types that they are eating.
- We use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.
- Water and milk are on offer at mealtimes, and water is available throughout the day for every child.
- 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.
- All children need to bring in a named water bottle/beaker so they can access water throughout the day. We inform the children about how to obtain the water and that they can ask for water at any time.
- 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 or semi skimmed milk, along with alternative products to cater for allergies and intolerances. It may be necessary at times to ask parents to provide specific products.
- Formula will need to be provided by the parents.
- We provide breakfast and tea for nursery children that attend the setting from 7.30am until 5pm/5.30pm, as well as primary school children before and after school. We follow the same guidelines set out by the DFE (see link at the top of the page)

Children under 1 year

Breastfeeding

- We support parents or carers that wish to continue breast feeding and encourage them to bring in expressed breast milk or visit the nursery to offer a feed at appropriate times. We will aim to provide a quiet space to do this.
- We will follow the guidance on safe storage of breast milk from the NHS. We ask that any breast milk that is bought into the nursery is clearly labelled with the child's name and date that it was expressed.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/breastfeeding-and-bottle-feeding/breastfeeding/expressing-breast-milk/>

Infant Formula

- Parents will need to provide infant formula for their baby while at nursery, bringing in a clearly labelled tub of formula which can stay at the setting. A bottle will also need to be provided and will be sterilised between each feed.
- Staff will prepare the formula in accordance with the guidelines on the formula ensuring that it is made with boiled water that has cooled for no longer than 30 minutes, so it stays at temperature of at least 70 degrees centigrade to kill any harmful bacteria. The made formula will then be left to cool to the correct temperature before giving it to the baby.

Weaning

Children from the age of approximately six months will be introduced to a variety of different foods, flavours and textures. The 4 food groups need to be considered and introduced gradually, in a puree form and then moving onto a few lumps and then mashed food as the child learns how to move the food around its mouth and swallow.

- We will provide a variety of healthy, nutritious foods for your baby in a pureed, lumpy or mashed form, catering for any dietary requirements/allergies.
- We will gain information from parents or carers about their child prior to starting the nursery, about what stage they are at with weaning and if there are any allergies/preferences or dietary requirements.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of: Thorney Island Nursery

Held on: 4th May 2026

Date to be reviewed: May 2027

Signed on behalf of the committee: _____

Name of signatory: _____

Role of signatory: _____

Manager's signature: _____

Manager's name: Karen Theobald