



## Food and Nutrition Policy

### 1. Our approach

At St Richard's Nursery, we recognise that good nutrition is important for children's health, growth, development, wellbeing and learning.

Our approach reflects the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework and the Department for Education Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance.

We aim to provide children with positive experiences around food and drink and to help them develop healthy eating habits from an early age.

We recognise that children have different tastes, appetites, cultural backgrounds, dietary requirements and nutritional needs. We promote healthy choices without pressuring children to eat or creating anxiety around food.

### 2. Healthy snacks

The nursery provides a healthy snack each session.

Our snack choices include a variety of:

Fresh fruit; vegetables; wholegrain or lower-sugar cereals; crackers; cheese; and other suitable nutritious foods where appropriate.

We use the Healthy Plate template to support children's understanding of a balanced diet and to help children make healthy choices. Staff use this resource naturally during snack and mealtimes to talk with children about different foods and the importance of eating a variety of foods.

We aim to offer a variety of tastes, textures, colours and foods so that children have opportunities to explore and develop their preferences.

Children are encouraged, but never forced, to try foods they are unfamiliar with.

We avoid routinely providing foods high in added sugar, salt or saturated fat. Food is offered in appropriate portions for young children, taking account of individual appetite and developmental stage.

### 3. Drinks and hydration

Fresh drinking water is available to children throughout the session.

Children are encouraged to bring a clearly named water bottle from home each day so that they can access water easily and regularly.

Milk is also available as an appropriate drink.

Children are encouraged to drink regularly, particularly during warm weather and following physical activity.

Sugary drinks, including squash and fizzy drinks, are not provided by the nursery.

#### **4. Packed lunches from home**

Children who bring a packed lunch are encouraged to have a lunch that is healthy, balanced and suitable for their age and stage of development.

The nursery will provide parents and carers with information about healthy packed lunches and the EYFS nutrition guidance.

Parents and carers remain responsible for the food they choose to provide from home. The nursery will work in partnership with families to encourage healthy choices and will discuss any concerns sensitively.

We encourage packed lunches to include a variety of foods, for example:

- Fruit or vegetables
- A starchy carbohydrate such as bread, pasta, rice, wraps or potatoes
- A source of protein such as meat, fish, eggs, beans, lentils or cheese
- Suitable dairy or dairy alternatives where appropriate
- Water as the main drink

Parents are encouraged to avoid routinely including foods high in sugar, salt and saturated fat.

Children will not be denied food because a packed lunch does not fully meet the guidance. Where there are concerns about the nutritional content of a child's packed lunch, these will be discussed constructively with the parent or carer.

#### **5. Food allergies, intolerances and dietary requirements**

Before a child starts at nursery, parents and carers are asked to provide information about food allergies, food intolerances, special dietary requirements, cultural or religious dietary requirements, medical conditions affecting diet, and any other relevant health requirements.

This information is recorded, kept up to date and shared with staff who need to know.

Where a child has a known allergy or intolerance, appropriate arrangements and, where required, an allergy action plan will be agreed with parents/carers and relevant health professionals.

Staff must be aware of children's individual dietary requirements and the symptoms and treatment of known allergies and anaphylaxis.

At each snack and mealtime, a designated member of staff will be responsible for checking that the food provided for each child meets their known dietary requirements and is suitable for their developmental stage, including consideration of choking risks.

## **6. Safe eating and choking prevention**

All food provided to children, whether supplied by the nursery or brought from home, must be suitable for the child's age and developmental stage and prepared in a way that minimises the risk of choking.

Staff will follow current food safety and choking-prevention guidance.

Children will be appropriately supervised while eating and will be encouraged to sit safely while eating and drinking.

Staff will be familiar with the individual needs of children who may require additional support during mealtimes.

## **7. Food hygiene and safety**

The nursery follows appropriate food hygiene and safety procedures.

Staff handling food will follow the nursery's food hygiene arrangements, including appropriate handwashing, cleaning and safe food handling.

Food brought from home should be clearly labelled with the child's name.

Parents and carers will be given information about keeping packed lunches safe and fresh, including the use of insulated lunch bags and cool packs for foods that require refrigeration.

The nursery will follow its existing infection-control, food-safety and cleaning procedures.

## **8. Eating together and supervision**

Snack and lunchtime are treated as positive social experiences and opportunities for children to develop healthy eating habits, independence and communication skills.

Staff sit with children during snack and mealtimes. This provides opportunities for meaningful interactions, conversations and positive role modelling while also ensuring that children are appropriately supervised when eating and drinking.

Staff remain attentive to children throughout eating and drinking times and support children to eat safely, calmly and at an appropriate pace. This close supervision helps to reduce the risk of choking and enables staff to respond promptly if a child requires assistance.

Children are encouraged to sit safely while eating and drinking.

Staff use mealtimes to model positive behaviours, encourage conversation and support children's social and emotional development.

We encourage children to recognise when they are hungry or thirsty and to respond appropriately to their own appetite and thirst.

Children are never forced to finish food or made to feel guilty or ashamed about what they eat.

## **9. Learning about food and nutrition**

Food and nutrition are incorporated naturally into children's learning and everyday experiences.

The Healthy Plate template is used as an age-appropriate visual resource to help children understand the different types of food that contribute to a healthy and balanced diet.

Children may have opportunities to:

- Talk about healthy foods and where food comes from
- Explore different fruits and vegetables
- Prepare and taste simple foods
- Grow herbs, fruit and vegetables
- Learn about making healthy choices
- Develop independence when eating and drinking
- Talk about hygiene, including washing hands before eating
- Talk about different foods and their colours, tastes, textures and smells

These experiences support children's understanding of health and wellbeing and are incorporated naturally into the nursery's child-led curriculum.

## **10. Working with parents and carers**

We recognise that parents and carers play an important role in establishing healthy eating habits.

We will:

- Share our food and nutrition policy with families
- Provide information about healthy packed lunches
- Discuss individual dietary requirements with parents and carers
- Work sensitively with families where there are concerns about food
- Respect cultural, religious and medical dietary requirements
- Signpost families to appropriate sources of advice where helpful

We recognise that families may have different circumstances and budgets. Our approach will therefore be supportive rather than judgemental.

## **11. Celebrations and special occasions**

We recognise that food can form part of celebrations and special occasions.

Where food is brought into nursery for a celebration, staff will consider allergies, dietary requirements, food safety and choking risks.

The nursery encourages families to consider healthier or non-food alternatives for celebrations where appropriate.

## **12. Sustainability and reducing food waste**

Where practical, we encourage children to develop an understanding of where food comes from and the importance of reducing waste.

Children are supported to develop appropriate independence and awareness around portion sizes and listening to their own appetite.

## **13. Monitoring and review**

The Nursery Manager is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented and reviewed annually or sooner where guidance or legislation changes.

Staff will be made aware of their responsibilities through induction, staff meetings and ongoing training.

This policy should be read alongside the nursery's Food Safety and Hygiene procedures, Allergies and Anaphylaxis Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, First Aid Policy, Inclusion/SEND Policy, and Safer Eating and Choking Prevention procedures.

This policy will be reviewed in September 2027 or sooner if national guidance or statutory requirements change.