

## **Birdhurst Day Nursery - Nutrition and Meal-Time Policy**

Mealtimes should be a happy and social occasion for both children and staff. Positive interactions should be shared at these times and enjoyed. Birdhurst Nursery is committed to providing healthy, nutritious, well-balanced meals and snacks which meet individual needs and requirements.

We will ensure that:

- A balanced and healthy breakfast, midday meal, tea and two daily snacks are provided for children attending the Nursery for a full day.
- Menus are planned in advanced, rotated regularly and reflect cultural diversity and variation. These are displayed in the main corridor for children and parents to view and can be emailed to parents upon request.
- We provide nutritious food at all snack and mealtimes, avoiding large quantities of fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives, and colourings.
- Fresh drinking water is constantly available and accessible. It is frequently offered to children and babies and intake is monitored.

Individual dietary requirements are respected. We gather information on the initial registration form from parents regarding their child's dietary needs including any special dietary requirements, food allergies and intolerances, and preferences that a child has. Where appropriate we will carry out a risk assessment in the case of allergies, and work alongside parents to put into place an individual dietary plan for their child. The Cook is given a list of the children with special diets and requirements and the sessions that they attend.

Staff will show sensitivity in providing for each child's diets and allergies and do not use them as a label for the child, or make a child feel singled out because of his/her diet or allergy.

Meals and snack times are organised so that they are social occasions between children and staff. Good manners are encouraged with 'please' and 'thank you' and conversation is encouraged, especially about the food on their plate and the links to healthy eating.

All children are encouraged, not forced, to try a variety of fruit and vegetables. We provide foods from around the world providing children with familiar foods and introduce them to new ones. Cultural differences in eating habits are respected. Any child who shows signs of distress at being faced with a meal he/she does not like will have their food removed without any fuss. If a child does not finish their first course, they will still be given a small helping of dessert. Children are encouraged to eat a small piece of everything on their plate.

Children are given time to eat at their own pace and are not rushed.

Quantities offered take account of the ages of the children being catered for.

## **Babies**

Young babies from the age of nine to eighteen months are most open to new food and taste. The Cook will offer lots of interesting foods, both in the form of purees and partially blended foods and finger foods. Babies will eat together in their room group. They learn by watching and listening and will copy what and how others eat.

Babies who have developed the strength and co-ordination to sit unsupported begin to gain good control of their arms. At this stage they hold principally with the palmer grasp, using the whole hand to grasp and manipulate an object. They enjoy picking things up and putting them in their mouth. The provision of finger foods and a spoon to hold, support this developmental stage.

Babies will be closely supervised at all times.

