

Food and mealtimes

Welfare requirements: 3.47 and 3.48

The entire philosophy of The Winchmore Hill Preschool is one of health and happiness, a philosophy which would not be complete if it did not include a fundamental foundation of healthy eating.

The Winchmore Hill Preschool promotes a diet which:

- is mostly organic and
- is based on a menu of recipes produced daily from fresh produce
- is well balanced in terms of the essential nutrients required by a growing child is capable of giving children the energy they need to enjoy their days at nursery
- includes a large proportion of fresh fruit and vegetables
- is fun, interesting, includes many children's favourites but also asks them to explore their taste senses and helps them to develop their palates
- represents the many cultures and religions around the world and offers children the opportunity to try many different food types.

There is a 4-week rotating summer and winter menu which is displayed on a weekly basis on the notice board, in the entrance foyer of each nursery.

All meals and snacks provided at The Winchmore Hill Preschool are healthy, balanced and nutritious and take into account children's individual needs such as dietary requirements. Our staff are all well trained to ensure that meals are prepared and served appropriately. Mealtimes should be relaxed social occasions, enjoyed by staff and children alike with positive interactions.

Mealtimes should be family style dining with staff joining the children and role modelling so that the children can learn from this part of the daily routine. Older children should be helping to set the tables. As soon as they are able children should be making choices and self- serving to promote independence.

At The Winchmore Hill Preschool we will ensure that:

- All our nurseries which produce and prepare food on site will be registered with the relevant Local Authority
- All of our cooks will be trained to Food Safety – CIEH Level 3 as a minimum, which will be renewed every three years.
- All other staff in the nursery that are serving or handling food will be trained to Basic Food Hygiene Level 1.
- We provide a balanced and healthy breakfast, mid- morning snack, lunch and afternoon tea.
- Menus will be planned in advance, rotated regularly, reflect cultural diversity and variation, they will be displayed for parents to see.
- Our menus will be checked by a nutritionist to ensure that they meet the nutritional needs of the age group we serve.

- We will avoid the inclusion of large quantities of fat, sugar, additives and preservatives. All meals served will be salt free. Food served to under twos will be sugar free.
- Fresh fruit and vegetables will be served each day.
- Fresh drinking water will be available for the children at drinking stations in each room and offered constantly to babies and toddlers. Fresh drinking water will also be served at each meal.
- It is the responsibility of parents to inform us of any allergies their child has. When a child is settling in we ask parent to complete forms giving us detailed information about any allergies. We plan specific food/menus for children based on this information which is updated regularly. Where needed a risk assessment is carried out. An individual health care plan is drawn up for every child with an allergy and displayed in the kitchen and in the child's base room. All children with food allergies will have their food cooked separately. It will be served on red plates and will be individually labelled using **H&SF7 01 Dietary Requirement Label**.
- Children will be encouraged to wash their hands before the meal and under twos hands will be wiped for them to ensure they are clean.
- Food for babies should be prepared and served to meet their individual needs so it is possible for them to eat easily e.g. mashed or finely chopped, with extra liquid or sieved. This should be reviewed regularly to ensure that they are progressing onto more solid food. Babies should be given the opportunity to feed themselves.
- Children under two should be fed by their mentor or a consistent adult.
- Staff will sit with children and will role model good table manners saying "please" and "thank you" for example. Staff will encourage conversation with the children at meal and snack times.
- Staff will use meal and snack times to support children's understanding of healthy eating.
- Children will be encouraged to serve themselves and pour their own water and to make choices. This fosters independence.
- Children who show signs of distress or do not want to eat will have their food removed without any fuss being made. They will be offered food later to ensure they are not hungry.
- If a child refuses a main course they will still be offered a small serving of dessert.
- Slow eaters will be given time and not rushed.
- Portion sizes will be based on the age of the child. Wherever possible seconds will be offered.
- Daily feedback will be given to parents on what their children have eaten
- No child is ever to be left on their own whilst eating or drinking.

Mealtime guidance

Children will be introduced to new foods and encouraged to try new tastes in our nurseries. However, under no circumstances will a child be forced to eat something they dislike. The staff will be aware of their mentor child's likes and dislikes and will keep a note of them on file. A child will be offered an additional alternative instead, maybe some fruit.

We incorporate dishes from all over the world in our menus to encourage our children to try new tastes, and textures with their food, developing their sensory skills and introducing them to new ingredients.

Staff should talk to the children about the food and the origin of the dishes they are eating, including the ingredients involved. They should also talk to the children about healthy eating and the importance of eating healthy food and exercising. Staff enthusiasm for the meals is very important.

Breakfast

Children should be warmly welcomed as they arrive in the morning and invited to join the breakfast table. The start of the day can be a challenging time for new or settling children so staff should encourage conversation about the transition from home or their plans for the day, reflecting on activities carried out on the previous day or linking up friends. Breakfast time as with any other time in the day can be used for observation of children and also for identifying the things that are of importance to the child.

Children's individual dietary requirement labels should be to hand and displayed at their places.

A selection of cereals, toast and bread based snacks such as croissants or crumpets should be available. Children should also be offered milk or water to drink.

Breakfast is served between 7.30 am and 8.30am

Mid-morning snack

A mid- morning snack of fruit and milk and or water is served to the children. For the older children this should be served as a food bar with children helping themselves and sitting down to eat at tables.

Mid-morning snack is served at 10am.

Lunch and Tea

Tables should be prepared in advance of the children sitting down. Ensure each child's dietary requirement label is in place and sufficient cutlery is available for each child. Older children should take turns to be "monitors" and take responsibility for settling the table as part of their learning and development.

Children should not be sat at the tables until the food has arrived in the room. All children should wash their hands prior to sitting at the table.

Children over two should be encouraged to serve themselves. Fresh drinking water should be available and children over two should be encouraged to pour their own water.

Mealtimes should be a happy social occasions. Children should be encouraged to talk to one another and to staff. Staff sitting with children should eat the same meal as the children and act as a positive role model in relation to social expectations and healthy eating.

Lunch is served to the babies on our routine and toddlers at 11.30am

The 2-3 year olds have lunch at 11.45 am

The Pre-schooler's lunch is served at 12 mid-day.

Special Diets

The Winchmore Hill Preschool aims to support the dietary needs of all children within their care whether religious, cultural or medical. Wherever possible special diets will be provided by the setting or in partnership with the parents to ensure that children are receiving the correct balance of nutrition. Where a diet may affect the balance of foods that a child is receiving the parents may be asked to seek the advice of their GP or a dietician and provide The Winchmore Hill Preschool with a diet sheet for the child. Children who are on a restrictive diet for weight loss must have clear written diet instructions from a GP or hospital.

When a child starts at the nursery parents are asked to complete a form which gives details of any special diets that they may need. This information should be collected from the parents and should be communicated throughout the staff team to ensure that all staff are aware of the needs of the individual. It is the permanent staff team's responsibility to ensure that any new staff or agency staff that may work within the setting are informed of the child's needs to ensure that the correct food is served at all times.

Mentors of children whose **dietary needs are influenced by religious or cultural reasons** should discuss with the parents any restrictions or additions to the diet that may be needed. The mentor should research the child's dietary needs to ensure that she/he is knowledgeable and sensitive and communicate this to the staff team. This is especially important as the child grows as they may ask questions about why their food is different or they cannot have certain items. Every effort should be made to help the child feel included even if the food they are eating is different.

Where the **dietary need is related to food allergy** it is vital that all staff are aware of the details as reactions to food can lead to serious illness or in some cases death. When a child starts at the nursery as a young baby, parents may not be aware of allergies especially if the child has not yet been weaned. Parents who have allergies themselves may want to be particularly careful about the foods that they introduce to their child and the mentor should work with the family to support this caution. Where parents have allergies to foods GPs will sometimes advise that children do not have those foods introduced until a later stage and then that this should be done gradually. If this is the case parents should introduce the foods at home and let the nursery know when their child has had the food without reaction. The child's personal information sheet must be updated, signed and

dated as required. The process of weaning deliberately asks for parents to start introducing foods at home first so that children do not have their first experience at the nursery and any possible allergies or intolerances are experienced at home. Staff need to be vigilant at mealtimes to ensure that children with allergies do not eat food off other children's plates. Wherever possible a full time member of staff should sit next to children with food allergies to ensure they only eat their own food.

Temperature of food served

It is the responsibility of the room staff to ensure that food that is too hot is not served to children without adequate time to cool down. When food arrives in the room, staff are to feel ask themselves and each other if the food is too hot and react accordingly – If you think it's too hot, it probably is. Room staff should use their judgement based on the meal type and age and capability of the children in the room to make decisions around cooling times.