

Healthy Eating Policy

Aim:

To work in partnership with families and other professionals to support children in developing healthy eating practices which will become embedded for life.

Ladybirds promote healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle. Ladybirds has many resources on healthy eating for the children to access, for example books, play food, games etc. To promote a healthy lifestyle, Ladybirds also has an open-door policy in which the children can play indoors or outdoors at any point of their session to encourage physical development. Ladybirds also involves parents in promoting the 5 a day approach to health by asking parents to donate fruit and vegetables for the children to share at snack time. They are also encouraged to provide healthy packed lunches for their children who stay for lunch.

Training:

All staff members that handle and prepare the food are trained in food hygiene level 2 and this training is updated every three years.

Ladybirds do not serve meals or store foods on the premises and therefore it is not a requirement for Ladybirds to register with Environmental Health, however, we do provide lots of cooking and baking activities into the children's learning experiences.

Allergies, intolerance, cultural diet:

When a child starts Ladybirds, a welcome pack is completed by the parents. The pack includes information on our cooking activities and lunch and snack times. Parents are asked to disclose if their child has any dietary requirements with regard to any of the above. This gives the staff all the information they need on each child's allergies and special diets; for example, intolerance, allergy, religious and cultural requirements. When we organise any cooking activities, a sign is put out in our outside learning environment with the ingredients displayed to remind parents to update us with any allergies, intolerances, diets or religious and cultural preferences should they need to.

Snack time Routine:

Where food is going to be eaten or where children are taking part in a cooking activity, a staff member starts by cleaning the table anti-bac spray and a designated cloth.

All staff and children will wash their hands with soap prior to preparing and eating food and drink. All children and adults will wash their hands with soap, after handling food and drink.

The Fruit, vegetables and low salt/sugar bread sticks etc are supplied by parents and are served in sizes as per the government guidance regarding preparing food for young children to prevent choking.

Ladybirds provide free milk and fresh water which children are supported in pouring for themselves.

Parents inform us of their child's preference on admission to nursery.

Fresh water is always available for the children to drink, children are invited to supply a named drinking bottle from home which is stored in the pockets attached to the door to nursery.

Fruit and veg will be washed under running cold water, before the adult prepares it as above.

An adult will sit at the table with the children at snack times and encourage good table manners and will guide the children in making healthy food choices whilst creating a safe and social environment. During snack time staff work with each group of children to explore the textures and flavours of the healthy food. Praise is also used to give the children confidence to attempt new food. The children will then bring their plate and cup to the sink for an adult to wash up and then wash their hands. Finally, the table is cleared and cleaned by a staff member.

Children are required to remain seated when they have food in their mouths or are not finished.

Staff clean the tables with anti-bac and a designated cloth and dried with paper towel.

A packed lunch is provided by the child's parents, no food is prepared on site.

The children wash their hands with soap and then access their own lunch box from the lunch trolley. Children and staff sit together for their lunch.

One member of staff is responsible for ensuring all children have a drink and for helping children open packets etc.

Children are encouraged to tidy up their lunch area and to put their cup in the sink. Staff members will be ready in the outside learning area to welcome children after they have finished their lunch, washed their hands and put their closed lunch box back on the trolley.

Children are encouraged to play outdoors after lunch so that one staff member, with child help (when appropriate) can clean and tidy the lunch area.

The following guidelines for lunch box contents will help parents and ensure health and equality for all children.

Lunch boxes are stored outside in a designated area, it is recommended that in warmer weather ice packs are included in the lunchbox to keep the contents fresh as we have no facilities to refrigerate children's lunches.

Children's lunch boxes should consist of a combination of the main four groups which include:

Starchy carbohydrates

Bread, wraps, pitta bread and other bread items, cereals that are not high in sugar, savoury crackers, potatoes and other root vegetables, pasta and noodles, rice and other grains. Wholemeal options are more nutritious and choose items that are labelled green or low in salt and sugar.

Fruit and vegetables (prepared correctly to prevent choking)

- avoid using dried fruits for snacks, tinned fruit should be in fruit juice rather than syrup

Dairy foods (non-diary alternatives),

- Milk should be whole or semi skimmed or unsweetened alternatives such as oat or soya milk.
- Avoid sweetened yoghurts and fromage frais (including non-dairy alternatives) and choose plain unsweetened options.

- Cheese

Protein - Meat, fish and alternatives such as lentils or soya, avoiding processed foods.

- Beans, pulses and nuts • meat and poultry • fish and shellfish • eggs • meat alternatives
- Limit processed meat products (e.g. sausages, breaded chicken, meatballs), processed fish products (e.g. fish fingers, fish cakes), and products made from meat alternatives (e.g. vegetarian sausages), as these products can be high in saturated fat and salt.

For all foods, avoid foods high in saturated fat, salt, and/or sugars like cakes, sweet and savoury pastries, biscuits, crisps, chocolate and other confectionary.

Avoid artificial sweeteners as they may encourage children to prefer very sweet foods.

Lunch boxes should not include:

- Chocolate
- Cereal bars
- Fizzy drinks/juice
- Nuts
- Biscuits
- Crisps

Any uneaten food will be placed back into the lunchbox so that parents are aware of what their child has eaten at lunch time.

Staff will not withhold food until the child has finished something else first nor will eating everything be rewarded, but we will be supporting children as they make decisions about when they are full or when they would like more. Parents will be advised on packing more or less when necessary.

Any items from the should not include list will be removed from lunchboxes before lunchtime and then returned to parents when they collect their child.

Cutlery will be made available to children at lunch time to provide opportunities for them to practice this skill.

Celebrations/Festivals:

Celebrations and festivals are a great way for children to learn about diverse foods and beliefs. Staff often incorporate cooking activities as a learning opportunity and parents are consulted on how their festival can be appropriately celebrated. When children celebrate birthdays at nursery parents are encouraged to bring in different or unusual type of fruit and vegetable for the children to explore and share at snack time. This is a healthy alternative for the children to enjoy.

We want to work with parents to educate our children about healthy dietary choices. This is to develop the children's understanding of this topic fully and become confident and independent in making healthy choices in the future. We will offer any advice and guidance to parents and carers if required.

Useful Websites:

www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes/healthier_lunchboxes

www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk

https://foundationyears.org.uk/eat_better_start_better/

www.healthysurrey.org.uk/your-health/dental-health/

www.nutrition.org.uk

This policy was updated in June 2025