

Curious Caterpillars Day Nursery Food Policy

Here at Curious Caterpillars snack and meal times are an important part of a child's day and forms part of their daily routine. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and also provides children opportunities to learn about healthy eating. At all our snack and meal times we aim to provide nutritious food which meets the children's individual dietary needs. In order to achieve this we ask parents about their children's cultural and medical needs including allergies and religious requirements as part of our induction process. This information is updated regularly through consultation with parents, and stored in the children's individual files. All dietary requirements are displayed in each room to ensure staff and students are fully aware of them and also within our nursery kitchen. All allergies require a Doctors note and the nursery will then complete a health care plan for each child. Food preferences are not catered for as all children are encouraged to follow a healthy diet, trying a variety of foods to meet their nutritional values for a balanced diet.

To ensure a healthy balanced diet all children must be offered the full menu unless they have an allergy; this also encourages a healthy relationship with food from a young age, avoiding fussy eating and a deficiency in the child's diet. We provide nutritious food for all meals and snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar, salt, artificial additives, preservatives and colourings. Sugar and salt are not added to cooking or offered to the children, this includes during children's baking activities. We include foods from the four main food groups. Care is taken not to provide food containing nuts or nut products and we are especially vigilant where we have a child with any known allergies.

We request that birthday cakes and other foods or drinks are not brought into nursery for children to share as these items may contain ingredients that could be harmful to those children with allergies. We cannot provide children with foods i.e.

cakes that have been made in a kitchen that has not been inspected to EHO standards and that has sugar or salt added to them, which is against our food policy.

All foods will be provided for all children in the nursery, substitutes will be provided for all meals in the case of a cultural dietary belief or allergy. Any prescribed foods will be used in line with the doctor's recommendations and in accordance with our allergy policy.

Meals and snack times are organised so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate. In order to promote independence we encourage children to make choices, try new things, serve food and feed themselves. We provide children with appropriate utensils for their stages of development and take into account eating practices in their cultures. Children are free to access drinking water throughout the day and whole pasteurised (homogenised) milk is given with their AM and PM snacks.

To promote keeping children healthy Curious Caterpillars make every effort to provide children with a fresh home-cooked balanced meal at lunchtimes using fresh fruit and vegetables. At snack times the children are given a selection of fruit and a carbohydrate. Tea time consists of sandwiches and wraps or other suitable alternatives and fresh fruit. A record is kept for parents informing them of what and how much their child has eaten each day; this is done within the daily diary for the babies and is communicated verbally to parents in toddlers and preschool. If a child does not eat their first course the second course will still be offered and we cannot, at a parents request use this as a punishment for not eating the main course. This is to avoid creating anxieties for the child and prevent future problems and potential hang ups with their food.

Parents are requested to provide milk for their babies in line with our bottle making policy; this can be formula, breast milk or a preferred alternative. Staff will liaise closely with parents of babies who are weaning concerning their preferred dietary requirements.

When babies make the transition into toddlers parents are advised that the mealtimes are different as babies are fed at times requested by their parents as part of the home/nursery routine and toddlers eat around the table all together as a social occasion.

To help us keep children safe and healthy, all staff have food hygiene and handling training as part of their induction program with regular refreshers being given and the nursery chef is involved in the planning of the snack, lunch and tea menus, copies of which can be obtained on request and are also on display in each room.

No food products will ever be cut into rounds as this could cause a plug in the throat causing a child to potentially choke. Grapes have already been banned from nursery for this reason and foods such as bananas and carrots would therefore be cut into slices or into rounds but then halved again to avoid this potential hazard. All fruit will be peeled for children under three years old.