



Spinney Pre-School Healthy Eating and Packed Lunch Policy

Statement of intent

At Spinney Pre-School we are committed to promoting the health and well-being of every child by fostering healthy eating habits from an early age. In line with the EYFS statutory framework and the 2025 Department for Education (DfE) nutrition guidance, this policy outlines our approach to food provision and parent-provided packed lunches.

Aims and Objectives

- Encourage nutritious, balanced food choices that support children's growth and development.
- Partner with families to support healthy eating both at home and in preschool.
- Respect and accommodate children's cultural, medical, and sensory dietary needs.
- Ensure all staff understand their responsibilities in supporting children's dietary needs and food safety.
- Promote healthy and positive lifelong relationships with food.

Government-Backed Healthy Eating Principles

Offer a variety of foods from the **four main food groups** each day:

- Fruit and vegetables
- Starchy carbohydrates
- Dairy and alternatives
- Protein-rich foods
- Promote **water and milk** as the appropriate drinks.
- Avoid foods and drinks high in sugar, salt, and saturated fat.
- Serve age-appropriate **portion sizes** and promote **responsive eating** without pressure.

Packed Lunch Expectations

Please Include:

- At least one portion of fruit or vegetables.
- A starchy carbohydrate (e.g., wholegrain bread, pasta, rice).
- A source of protein (e.g., lean meat, eggs, beans).
- Dairy or a suitable alternative.
- **Plain water or milk** (no squash, fizzy drinks or fruit juice.) However, we do say that **at lunch time you are allowed to provide your child with a bottle of watered down juice**. We are also aware that some children with additional needs and those who require special diets may need to drink squash, or juice. If this is the case we ask that this requirement is given to us in a written letter by a medical or healthcare professional when your child starts Spinney Pre-school.

- If your child prefers or wants to eat hot food e.g. soups, noodles, pasta, etc. It is asked that these be first cooked at home and stored correctly to be brought into Pre-School where they will be stored in the fridge if required and safely reheated by a member of staff.

Please Avoid:

- Foods high in sugar, salt, or saturated fat (e.g., sweets, chocolate, crisps, processed meats). **However one or two in moderation is fine or again if dietary requirements require children to eat such foods a letter must be provided to**
- **Pre-school by a health care or medical professional.**
- Flavoured yoghurts or drinks.
- Whole grapes, cherry tomatoes or other choking hazards (must be quartered).
- **Nuts or nut-containing products** (we are a **nut-free setting**).

Mealtime Environment

- Children eat in a calm, supportive environment with their teachers and are encouraged (not forced) to try new foods, children are never left alone at snack and lunch times and will have a member of staff on the table with them.
- Staff model positive attitudes toward healthy eating and **children are never shamed on what they eat and conversations around the importance of eating and drinking all types of food and drink in moderation are always had and at the forefront of all our meal times. As there is no such thing as bad and good foods. It is vital to us in Pre-School that every child builds a healthy and positive attitude and relationship around food and drink, where they know food is fuel.**
- Meals are a social experience, helping children build confidence and independence.

Drinks Provision

- **Fresh drinking water is available to all children throughout the day** via self-access water stations.
- Water is offered at all meals and snack times.
- Children who drink milk are offered **whole milk or semi skimmed milk** or a **calcium-fortified non-dairy alternative** (e.g., oat or soya milk), depending on individual needs and family preferences.
- Other drinks such as fruit juice, squash, fizzy drinks, or flavoured milk are not permitted **(unless dietary or additional needs require them to do so.)**

Respecting Religious and Cultural Food Practices

- We recognise that children and families may follow specific dietary rules based on their cultural or religious beliefs.
- Some families may exclude certain foods or only consume food prepared in specific ways (e.g., vegetarian diets for religious reasons).
- While younger children may be exempt from fasting, we are aware of how such practices can affect family routines.
- We actively engage in open communication with families to ensure that food provided respects these beliefs.
- Traditional foods from various cultures are welcomed and incorporated into snack times where possible.
- Families are encouraged to share recipes or feedback to help us better understand and celebrate dietary diversity.

Children with Additional Support Needs and Special Diets

- We accommodate children with medical, developmental, or sensory-based dietary needs.
- Modifications may include:
 - Texture alterations (e.g., pureed, mashed, chopped)
 - Adaptations to the eating environment (e.g., reduced noise, calm surroundings)
 - One-to-one support for children who require help feeding
- We request written confirmation from healthcare professionals for children requiring a special diet.
- This information is recorded, kept up to date, and shared with all relevant staff.

Managing Dietary Needs Safely

All educators are responsible for:

- Understanding each child's specific dietary requirements.
- Following all **allergy action plans** and emergency procedures.
- Preventing cross-contamination with colour-coded utensils and separate preparation areas.
- Avoiding food-sharing among children.
- Being vigilant during celebrations and activities involving food.
- Monitoring ingredients in all foods and avoiding unsafe items in activities (e.g., play dough, pasta, seeds).
- Teaching children with allergies to ask about ingredients and be cautious.

Communication with Families

- This policy is shared upon enrolment and reviewed annually.
- We offer advice and resources to help families support healthy eating at home.
- Open dialogue is maintained to adapt to changing dietary needs and cultural preferences.

Food Safety and Hygiene

- All foods brought from home are checked for potential allergens.
- Food must be prepared in a way that minimises choking risk.
- Posters from the Food Standards Agency guide staff in safe preparation practices.

Parents/carers are encouraged to:

- Prepare food suitable for their child's developmental stage to prevent choking.
- **Pack perishable items in insulated, sealed lunch bags with ice packs. The '4-hour rule' may be used if refrigeration is not available.**
- Clearly label the lunch bag with the child's name and contents, so we know exactly what each child has to avoid children eating something that does not belong to them.
- Choose items that are safe to store at room temperature.

Special occasions

- Throughout the academic year in Pre-School we celebrate special occasions e.g. Christmas, Coronations, etc. On these days we will usually throw a party in Pre-School where the children will have party food including; sausage rolls, crisps, chocolate and Juice. A letter will be sent out to gain your permission for your child to have this. It is also important to note that children's dietary and allergy care plans will always be followed during this time also.

This policy will be reviewed annually with input from staff and parents to ensure it remains relevant, inclusive, and effective.

This Policy was adopted at a meeting of the Pre-School held on (date) _____

Signed on behalf of the Pre-School _____