



Food and Drink Policy

WATERTON PRE-SCHOOLS

Food and Drink Policy

(Updated for EYFS Nutrition Guidance 2025)

Statement of principle

The sharing of refreshments and food is an important part of the social life of Pre-School as well as reinforcing children's understanding of the importance of healthy eating and providing sustenance.

Our Aims

- To provide nutritious food and healthy drinks taking into account children's individual needs, in a pleasant and safe environment.
- To support the development of healthy eating habits from birth onwards.

Our Practice

Food and Drink

- Children under 12 months may still have milk as part of their daily nutrition. We work with parents and carers to follow their usual routine whilst supporting their individual child's progress towards eating regular meals.
- We support parents and carers who wish to continue breastfeeding. A space is available in our staffrooms for breast feeding. Expressed breastmilk can be provided, stored and handled in line with NHS guidance.
- Where infant formula is provided we accept ready-to-use infant formula cartons. This will be served at room temperature or can be warmed slightly in the child's bottle by standing in a jug of hot water.
- We provide nutritious food for all snacks and meals, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar, salt, additives, preservatives and colourings.
- At snack time a variety of healthy snacks, milk or water are provided by Pre-School.
- We have fresh water constantly available.
- Multi-cultural foods are offered to reflect all children's and to introduce new tastes.
- Menus are planned on a weekly cycle, ensuring variety across the four main food groups. Seasonal produce is included. Substitutions are available for allergies, intolerances, and cultural or religious needs. Menus are displayed for parents and updated termly with parent feedback. We display the menus of meals/snacks for parents to view.
- Where children are having a school meal, parents are able to select the foods from the menu that they would like their children to have. These can be found on our website and displayed in our pre-school cloakrooms.
- Portion sizes are adapted to children's age, stage and appetite. A toddler portion is approximately the size of their clenched fist. Children are encouraged, but not pressured, to finish food.
- Meal and snack times are social occasions in which children and staff participate.
- We use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.
- Parents providing packed lunches receive guidance on healthy eating, safe containers, and avoiding highly processed foods, sweets, and fizzy drinks. Packed food must be cut appropriately (e.g., grapes halved lengthways) to avoid choking hazards and should be sent in insulated containers with ice packs if needed.
- In accordance with parent's wishes, we offer children arriving for the before and after sessions an appropriate meal or snack.
- The dietary requirements of religious groups and also of vegetarians/vegans are sought and recorded and met in appropriate ways.

- We provide children with utensils that are appropriate for their age and stage of development and take account of their eating practices in their culture.
- Food containing nuts or nut products are not used in our settings and parents /carers are encouraged to not provide these products in their child's packed lunches. We are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts.
- Occasional treats brought in by parents/carers for the children will be distributed at the end of the Pre-School session or snack time. If parents request that their child does not have sweets then we will comply with their wishes. However, for celebrations, we encourage families to consider healthy alternatives (e.g. fruit platters) or non-food treats (e.g. stickers, bubbles). If cakes or sweets are brought in, these will be shared in moderation and balanced with healthier options.

Breast Milk Storage and Handling

Storing breast milk

- Breast milk can be stored in a named and dated sterilised container or breast milk storage bag in the fridge for up to 8 days at 4C or lower.
- Breast milk can be stored in a named and dated container for up to 6 months in a freezer at -18C or lower.
- Breast milk that's been cooled in the fridge can be carried in a cool bag with ice packs for up to 24 hours.

Defrosting frozen breast milk

- Frozen breast milk will be defrosted slowly in the fridge. If it is needed straight away it can be defrosted in a jug of warm water.
- Once defrosted, it can be warmed in warm water, given a gentle shake and used straight away.
- The warmed milk will be served in the sterilized bottle provided by the parent or carer.
- Unused defrosted milk will be disposed of. Defrosted milk can not be refrozen.
- Once a baby has started to drink from a bottle of breast milk it should be used within 1 hour and anything left over will be disposed of.

Safer Eating

- Children sit on chairs at tables that are the appropriate size for them ensuring a secure balance with their feet on the floor and their legs and knees at right angles and their backs supported.
- Younger children have a more supportive moulded seat with side arms and a 3-point harness.
- There is always a paediatric first aid trained practitioner with the children whilst they eat.
- We respect and update medical and personal dietary requirements of individual children as identified by their parents and carers.
- We display up to date information about individual children's dietary needs so that all staff and volunteers are fully informed about them.
- We ensure discussions with parents, carers and, where appropriate, health professionals to inform allergy action plans for managing any known allergies and intolerances are ongoing. These are kept up to date and shared with all staff.
- All staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis, the differences between allergies and intolerances and that children can develop allergies at any time, especially during the introduction of solid foods which is sometimes called complementary feeding or weaning.
- Keyworkers will have ongoing discussions with parents and carers about the stage their child is at in regard to introducing solid foods, including to understand the textures the child is familiar with. Assumptions will not be made based on age.
- Food will be prepared in a suitable way for each child's individual developmental needs, working with parents and carers to help children move on to the next stage at a pace right for the child.

- Food will be prepared in a way to prevent choking in line with guidance from the Food Safety - Help for Early Years Providers. **See Road Map to Solid Foods.**
- Children will always be within sight and hearing of a member of staff whilst eating. Choking can be completely silent; therefore, it is important for practitioners to be alert to when a child may be starting to choke.
- With children under two years old a practitioner will sit facing children whilst they eat to make sure children are eating in a way to prevent choking, to prevent food sharing and to be aware of any unexpected allergic reactions.
- Any choking incidents that require intervention, will be recorded with details of where and how the child choked and ensure parents or carers are made aware. The records will be reviewed periodically to identify if there are trends or common features of incidents that could be addressed to reduce the risk of choking. Appropriate action will be taken to address any identified concerns.

Food and Drink Facilities and Preparation

- Our Pre-Schools are registered with the Food Standards Agency and our kitchens are inspected annually and provided with a Food Hygiene Rating certificate.
- We follow the Safer Food Better Business (SFBB) guidelines for food safety management procedures.
- Our kitchen areas are adequately equipped and maintained to provide healthy meals, snacks and drinks for children as required.
- Any surface or table used for food and drink must be sprayed with an anti-bacterial solution, wiped with a yellow cloth and allowed to dry. All cloths must be discarded at the end of each day.
- Children must wash their hands before coming to the table to eat their snack or meal.
- Babies will have their hands washed before eating.
- All practitioners who are responsible for preparing and handling food are competent to do so, they hold level 2 food hygiene qualifications and have received allergen training.
- All practitioners will consult the children's allergy checklists before ordering hot dinners or preparing food.
- Practitioners must wash their hands in the hand washing sink provided and dry with a paper towel before touching any food.
- Disposable plastic aprons and gloves must be worn whilst preparing and serving food.
- Practitioners must cover any cuts with a waterproof plaster and long hair must be tied back.
- Practitioners must check milk cartons to ensure they are in date, sealed and have not been tampered with. Milk will be used in date order.
- Baby formula must be provided in unopened ready to use cartons clearly labelled with the child's name. These will be stored at room temperature until opened. The complete carton will be decanted into the baby's bottle, unused milk will be discarded after each feed.
- Hot meals at lunchtime are procured from the host school where the Trust's provider of choice has undergone suitable vetting and meals are provided by suitably qualified cooks in the Academy Trust's appropriately managed school kitchens.
- Children will be encouraged to discard any unwanted food or wrappings etc in an appropriate bin.
- Waste food is disposed of daily.
- Setting Managers must ensure that allergy lists are updated as new information is received.
- Information about known allergies or intolerances must be gleaned from the parent or carer of any new child before they attend a setting.

Food Poisoning

- Any cases of food poisoning must be reported to the Executive Headteacher.
- The Executive Headteacher will notify Ofsted and the Environmental Health of any food poisoning incidents affecting two or more children cared for on the premises as soon as is reasonably practicable and within 14 days of the incident. We understand that as a registered provider to not meet this requirement is committing an offence.