

Nursery Meal Time Policy



Purpose

At Once Upon A Time Daycare, we recognise that mealtimes are an essential part of every child's day. They provide not only nourishment but also opportunities for learning, independence, and social development. Our approach to food and nutrition follows the **EYFS welfare and nutrition requirements** and is guided by the **Eatwell Guide** to ensure that every child has access to a healthy, balanced diet.

Our Commitments

1. Balanced & Nutritious Meals

- We follow the **EYFS Nutrition Guidance** to ensure all meals and snacks meet the recommended standards for young children.
- We provide meals and snacks that reflect the **Eatwell Guide**:
 - Plenty of fruit and vegetables.
 - Starchy carbohydrates such as bread, pasta, rice, or potatoes at each meal.
 - A variety of protein sources (meat, fish, eggs, beans, pulses).
 - Dairy and dairy alternatives to support bone health and growth.
 - Small amounts of unsaturated fats and spreads.
- Foods high in fat, sugar, or salt are not offered.

2. Safe & Inclusive Mealtimes

- All dietary requirements, allergies, and cultural or religious preferences are respected and catered for.
- Families must make us aware of any **dietary requirements before their child starts nursery**, so that a **Dietary Care Sheet** can be completed. This will be shared with all staff who work with the child or prepare food for them.
- The **Dietary Care Sheet will be reviewed and updated every 3 months**, or sooner if there are changes, to ensure the most up-to-date information is followed.
- At every mealtime, the **chef delivering the food will check with the manager and the room lead** to confirm that all dietary requirements have been catered for. They will **sign to confirm that all food provided is safe** for each child before it is served.
- To provide clear visual safety measures:
 - Children with dietary requirements will be served their meals on a **personalised red plate with a red placemat**.
 - Children without dietary requirements will use a **green placemat**.
 - This system ensures all staff can easily identify dietary needs at mealtimes and avoid errors.
- **In every room, there is a clear dietary display** that identifies children with dietary requirements at a quick glance. Alongside this, each room has a **clipboard with every child's Dietary Care Plan** for easy access, ensuring staff can double-check details quickly and safely.
- Mealtimes are supervised at all times, with staff trained in allergy awareness and safe food practices.

- **Staff will always face children throughout mealtimes**, so they can observe eating, encourage conversation, and quickly respond to any needs or concerns.
- **All staff are paediatric first aid trained**, ensuring children's health and safety are prioritised should any incident occur.
- Children are encouraged to try new foods, but never forced to eat.

3. Positive Mealtime Environment

- We sit and eat together, modelling healthy eating and positive table manners.
- Mealtimes are calm, unhurried, and social, encouraging conversation and interaction.
- Children are supported to develop independence by serving themselves, pouring drinks, and tidying away where appropriate.

4. Hydration

- Fresh drinking water is available to children throughout the day.
- Milk is provided as a healthy option during snack times in line with EYFS guidance.

5. Education & Learning

- Mealtimes are used as an opportunity to talk about food, health, and making good choices.
- Staff encourage children to notice colours, textures, and tastes, helping them to build a positive relationship with food.
- Links are made to the EYFS curriculum, e.g. learning about where food comes from, counting items on plates, or discussing healthy bodies.

Roles & Responsibilities

Staff will:

- Follow this policy, EYFS Nutrition guidance, and support children to make healthy choices.
- Communicate with parents about children's eating habits and any concerns.
- Record and monitor allergies, dietary needs, and mealtime incidents.

Parents will:

- Inform the nursery of any dietary requirements **prior to their child starting**, and keep the nursery updated of any changes.
- Support our healthy eating approach by providing healthy items in packed lunches (if applicable).

At Once Upon A Time Daycare, we believe that healthy eating habits established in the early years help lay the foundation for a lifetime of health and wellbeing.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
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28/06/2025	Rebecca Street	28/06/2026
28/06/2026	Rebecca Street	28/06/2027