Preschool Snacks & Lunchtime

At some point, midway through the morning and afternoon sessions we have a substantial snack. Snack time is a very important part of our preschool routines which promotes learning across many areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The children sit at the table with their Key Worker and are encouraged to pour their drinks, butter their crackers etc.. it is a social time and an opportunity to engage in conversations with the other children at the table, which supports the children in their speech and language and social interactions, whilst ensuring that our children are eating safely, fully supported by the staff team.

The children are offered a choice of drink; during snack time children are offered a choice of milk or water to drink.
We believe that encouraging children to drink milk and water is vital to support children's healthy development; in our experience many children do not consume enough of either of these important nutrients throughout their time with us. Eating and drinking together encourages and promotes opportunities for peer learning to take place.
We are also aware that many of the children are with us for long periods during the day, often attending regularly throughout the week. Therefore, to support our children to regulate their fluid intake, we regularly throughout the day encourage the children to have a drink from their drink bottles, which they have brought in from home. We will refill empty drinks bottles with water during the day as required.

To eat; the choice can be made from a range of healthy snacks, for example, crackers, apples, bananas, oranges, grapes, cheese, seeds (pumpkin & sunflower) and seasonal fruits or vegetables.

From time-to-time food topics may take place for example reflecting on 'the world around us' topic we may look at another countries, perhaps India. As part of that project the children may take part in cooking a dish from that country, which we will prepare and eat at snack time. (During these projects the children may require a later lunch when they return home.)
We aim to enable the children to take part in a cooking activity, in which children are given the opportunity to prepare and cook something, which they can take home at the end of the session. We usually alternate between a sweet and a savory dish.
As part of the keeping healthy aspect of children's learning, the children are encouraged to follow basic hygiene rules when participating in these activities.

As always, the health and safety of our children is paramount, individual children's dietary requirements are met. It is vital that parents and carers keep us informed of their children's health and dietary requirements, to ensure we work together to keep our children safe and well.

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Lunch time

Children sit together with staff at lunchtime to eat the packed lunch, which they have brought in from home. We work closely with the children to understand about the food that they eat and the nutritional benefits.

We support and encourage children to eat the healthy foods in their lunch box first before they consume foods that are not so good for them.

Children are discouraged from eating their cakes, crisps, chocolate etc… until they have eaten the nutritious foods that parents/carers have provided for their child for that day.

Further information about healthy foods for children can be found online for example Healthy Food for Kids - HelpGuide.org

The link below has some good ideas as to how to create healthy packed lunches Lunchbox ideas and recipes – Healthier Families - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

If you would like any further advice or ideas on lunchboxes, please chat to a member of staff, who will be happy to help.

Below are examples of foods that we consider Healthy and foods that you may decide to put in your child's lunchbox as a treat for after they have eaten their healthy lunch.

Healthy foods	Treat foods
• Sandwiches (not chocolate spread) • Wraps • Quiche • Pizza • Pies • Pasta • Humous/dips • Crackers • Cheese • Eggs • Salad • Fruit • Yogurt • Cucumber	• Crisps • Chocolate biscuit/bar • Cake • Fruit bars • Yogurt flakes or raisins • Jelly • Dairylea dunkers

Please Note

We do not accept chocolate-based product eg **Chocolate brioche, chocolate pancakes, chocolate wraps** to be eaten in replace of a healthy option. If a child has these products in their lunch box instead of a healthy food type, we will replace the sweet foods with preschool cheese and crackers.

To support our children to eat a healthy balanced diet, if a child does not have any fruit in their lunch box, they will be given some fruit or cucumber from the preschool to eat with their lunch.

Safer eating

The Early Years Foundation Stage framework requires us to take all necessary steps to keep our children safe and well and this includes our responsibilities for preparing and handling and managing the food that your child consumes during their time at preschool. EYFS pg37
Prior to your child starting at the preschool we will have ascertained whether your child has any allergies or food intolerances or special dietary requirements. The staff members on duty are responsible in ensuring that all foods given to each child on a daily basis meets the individual child's requirements.

Food items will be cut up as appropriate to support the children to eat safely, we will

- remove any stones and pips from fruit before serving
- cut small round foods (like grapes, strawberries and cherry tomatoes) lengthways and into quarters
- cut large fruits (like melon) and hard fruit or vegetables (like raw apple and carrot) into slices instead of small chunks

We will record and review any choking incidents and share with parents, so that we can work together to keep our children safe and free from harm. It is helpful for parents to share with us any information which will enable us to support your child effectively during mealtimes.

Children are well supported during mealtimes by the staff team. Children are seated appropriately and within sight and hearing with staff, so that we can be alert to silent choking and prevent any incidents of food sharing which could endanger life.
All staff hold a current **First Aid** certificate, and practices are in place to ensure that the children are

- seated appropriately during mealtimes
- Insight of a staff member at all times
- No domestic duties are being carried out during mealtimes
- Food is prepared and served safely