



Safeguarding children

1.25.1 Health and wellbeing: policy and procedures

Policy statement

A healthy, balanced diet and regular physical activity are essential for a child's health and wellbeing. The habits established in a child's early years influence that child's physical, emotional and intellectual wellbeing throughout their life.

Healthy eating and physical exercise are central to a child's experience at School House Nurseries.

Why the right nutrition is especially important to the under 5s

Good nutrition is especially important for children under the age of 5 because:

- While they are growing rapidly, children need the right amount of energy (calories) and nutrients to support that growth.
- Too much energy (calories) may lead to weight issues, or even obesity, from an early age.
- Eating a wide variety of foods and developing good dietary habits will stick with the child into later childhood and beyond.

The importance of physical activity for the under 5s

- Regular physical activity – whether that's walking, active play or active games – provides immediate and long-term benefits for children's physical and psychological wellbeing.
- Children who are physically active for at least three hours each day (the recommended amount for the under 5s) are more likely to maintain a healthy weight.
- According to Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children, physical activity in children helps:
 - Increase concentration
 - Improve academic scores
 - Build a stronger heart, bones and healthier muscles
 - Encourage healthy growth and development



- Improve self-esteem
- Improve posture and balance
- Lower stress
- Encourage a better night's sleep
- Provide opportunities to socialise
- It has also been shown that the risk of poor health in later life is higher when a child grows up being inactive. Which is why all children aged under 5 should minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary for extended periods.
- The following slide is taken from a presentation by Loughborough University on how to help the under 5s live active and healthy lifestyles, and explains why physical activity is so important to the overarching wellbeing of a child.

Benefits to the child

The relationship between physical activity and other aspects of learning and development

<p>Cognitive 'thinking'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creativity - discovery, experimentation, developing imagination, thinking in different ways. - Problem solving skills, thinking critically & making choices. 	<p>Health & wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong bones, muscles, heart and lungs. - Feeling well and energised. - Maintaining a healthy weight. - Intermediate and long-term health benefits by establishing good physical activity habits early on.
<p>Physical development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stamina - through continuous bouts/more energetic activity. - Strength. - Mobility. - Stimulating important brain connections. - Motor skills - moving with confidence & control: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • coordinated movement • control • stability (core, shoulder, hand) • agility • hand-eye-foot coordination (the body's ability to coordinate the visual system with the motor system) • rhythm and timing - musicality • balance and spatial awareness. 	<p>Personal, social and emotional outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fair play - knowing how to behave and what is acceptable. - Cooperation - taking turns, sharing, playing by rules. - Language and communication - listening attentively, responding with comments, questions or actions, speaking in a familiar group. - Confidence - trying new activities, working in a group, asking for help if needed. - Optimism - enjoying achievements. - Resilience - coping with stressful situations. - Sense of self belief - 'Can do'. - Valuing oneself. - Behavioural flexibility - adapting emotionally to new situations without becoming stressed.

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Loughborough University

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How dietary needs change as children grow

- Young children are growing quickly and have high energy and nutrient requirements for their size. They also eat smaller amounts than older children and adults, so it is important for them to eat regular meals and snacks that contain sufficient energy and nutrients for their needs.
- In the first 12 months of life, babies' nutritional requirements differ from those of children aged over one year. At School House Nurseries we recognise this by modifying our menu to meet the needs of children under the age of 1.
- For children under the age of 2, a diet with the right energy, fat, iron or zinc, is needed. A low-fat, high fibre diet is therefore not appropriate for this age group.

- Between the ages of 2 and 5, children should gradually move towards the diet recommended for older children and adults, with less energy provided from fat, and more fibre.

Our healthy breakfasts, lunches and afternoon teas

- Every day we serve the children healthy breakfasts, morning snacks, lunches, afternoon snacks, and afternoon teas.
- All the food we serve is in line with the Government's best practise guidelines on food for the under 5s – in other words, it's healthy, age-appropriate and delicious! We keep saturated fat, sugar, salt, artificial additives, preservatives and colourings to a minimum.
- Menus for each meal are planned in advance, rotated regularly and reflect cultural diversity and variation.
- Breakfast, afternoon tea and all snacks are made by the nursery team.
- Lunches are provided by Zebedees, a company that specialises in early years cuisine. Every day they deliver a nutritious, balanced, two-course hot meal that not only includes familiar foods but also introduces the children to new ones too.

At School House Nurseries, eating is a social experience

- Eating represents both a social time and an opportunity for children to learn about healthy eating. Mealtimes should be happy, social occasions for children and staff alike.
- Staff set a good example and sit with the children as they eat, encouraging good table manners.
- During meals and snack times children are encouraged to use good manners and say 'please' and 'thank you'. Conversation is encouraged.

Encouraging fussy eaters to eat well

- Young children can be fussy about what they eat, or how they eat. Fussy eating and fear of new foods are part of development and affect between 10% and 20% of children under five.
- Fear of new foods in children typically starts between 18 months and two years old and it is thought to be a natural behaviour.
- A child who appears to be fussy about their food but is growing well is probably eating a sufficient balance of foods and getting enough energy and nutrients. Severe selective eating is rare and generally starts from early feeding difficulties or significant health problems.
- Fussy eating and fear of new foods can both be helped using similar techniques. If a family is worried about their child's food intake, we will draw up a plan with you to encourage your child to eat well. It is important that the approach used at home and at nursery is consistent and essential that all those involved at mealtimes follow the same strategies. These strategies include:
 - Modelling

- We seat fussy eaters with good eaters at mealtimes – this is very powerful and it has been shown that children will adopt the food preferences of their peers if they eat together regularly.
- Staff sit with children when they eat, talking enthusiastically about the taste and texture of the food. We will also talk about food at other times, when it is natural to do so, like at snack time or circle time.
- Exposure
 - We give children regular and repeated chances to taste new foods, as this increases their liking for and eating of new foods. This may be at meal times, but it might also be at snack times. The child must actually taste the food to change their preferences, and it can take as many as 10 to 15 tastings before they accept it.
 - If children are resistant to trying new foods, we offer them small tastes and make sure the child maintains control of the situation. For example, we give them the opportunity to spit out the food into a tissue if they really do not like it.
- Rewards
 - We praise children for trying new foods.
 - Favourite foods are not used as a reward to encourage children to eat foods they do not like. Foods used in this way simply become even more valued, and it is generally recommended that food should never be used as a reward or punishment. However, stickers or other non-food items can be used as rewards for trying food and may increase a child's liking and consumption of food.
- 'Pressure to eat'
 - While we encourage children to eat their food, we never force them to finish everything on their plate. Children who are made to eat everything they are served learn to dislike the foods they are pressured to eat, and these aversions may last into adulthood.
 - We give children small servings at first, with the opportunity to have second helpings if they finish the first serving, as they may find larger portions off-putting.

Food allergies and individual dietary requirements

- Before a child starts at the nursery we find out from parents about the child's dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies.
- The information on allergies is then shared with the staff. It is printed out on our dietary needs and allergies lists, copies of which are kept
 - in the kitchen
 - in the blue staff folder in the classroom
 - in the Minis room.
- When a child has an allergy, we will carry out a risk assessment and work with parents to put into place an individual dietary plan for their child.

- We give careful consideration to seating to avoid cross contamination of food from child to child. Where appropriate, an adult will sit with children during meals to ensure safety and minimise risks. Where appropriate, age/stage discussions will also take place with all children about allergies and potential risks to make them aware of the dangers of sharing certain foods
- We regularly consult with parents at handover and pick-up to ensure that our records of children's dietary needs are up-to-date.
- We ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and preferences as well as their parents' wishes.
- We take care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products and are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts.
- We require staff to show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. Staff do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child or make a child feel singled out because of her/his diet or allergy.
- In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from bringing in their own food or sharing and swapping their food with one another.

Parental involvement

- We display menus for lunch and tea on the parent noticeboard.
- We also display the list of allergens contained in the food on the parent noticeboard in the corridor.
- For each child under 2, we provide parents with daily written information about dietary and fluid intake.
- For older children we give parents a verbal report of what their child has eaten that day.

Supporting mothers who are breastfeeding

Everyone at School House Nurseries works hard to support mothers who wish to continue to breastfeed while their children attend nursery. We follow the latest Government guidelines on labelling, storing and using expressed breastmilk. We also collaborate with parents on feeding plans to ensure each child is given the nutrition they need to thrive.

How we encourage children to make their own healthy choices

- Staff use meal and snack times to help children develop independence by making healthy choices, serving themselves food and drink, and feeding themselves.
- We provide children with utensils that are appropriate for their ages and stages of development and that take account of the eating practices in their cultures.
- We have fresh drinking water available at all times for the children. We tell children that they can ask for water at any time during the day.

- Children not on special diets are encouraged to eat a small piece of everything.
- Any child who shows signs of distress at being faced with a meal he/she does not like will have his/her food removed without any fuss. If a child does not finish his/her first course, he/she will still be given a helping of dessert.
- Children who refuse to eat at a mealtime are offered food later in the day at snack time.
- Children are given time to eat at their own pace and not rushed.

Celebrating birthdays and special occasions

- Very often we celebrate birthdays at circle time, singing happy birthday and making it a special moment for the child.
- Sometimes we celebrate special occasions with stickers and badges, or by allowing the children to choose a favourite story, to become a special helper, by playing a party game, or by dancing and/or singing their favourite songs.
- We do allow parents to bring in cakes on special occasions like birthdays, but only if the cake is plain (like a fairy cake) and shop-bought (so that we can see the ingredients – obviously we need to ensure that all food brought in from home is safe for all the children).
- When we give cakes to children we do so at mealtimes after the main course to prevent tooth decay and so as not to spoil the children’s appetite.

Trained staff

- All staff who prepare and handle food are competent to do so and receive training in food hygiene.

Health and safety

- No child is ever left alone when eating or drinking.
- In the very unlikely event of any food poisoning affecting two or more children on the premises, whether or not this may arise from food offered at the nursery, we will inform Ofsted as soon as reasonably practicable and in all cases within 14 days. We will also inform the relevant health agencies and follow any advice given.

This policy was updated and reviewed in:

Reviewed date	Name	Signature
September 2015	Stuart Watt	
May 2016	Stuart Watt	
August 2016	Stuart Watt	
September 2016	Stuart Watt	

April 2017	Stuart Watt	
April 2018	Lindy Baldwin	
August 2018	Lindy Baldwin	
April 2019	Lindy Baldwin	
May 2019	Stuart Watt	
January 2020	Stuart Watt	
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