



## Food, Drink and Mealtimes Policy

At St Aidan's, we believe that nutritious food and drink are essential for children's wellbeing.

We provide children with food, drinks and snacks that are healthy, balanced and nutritious.

During meal and snack times, we will always encourage children to gain an understanding of how food and water is an essential part of growing big and strong. Our aim is to meet the dietary and religious requirements to promote children's healthy growth and development.

We ask parents to inform the setting of any dietary requirements before they start nursery (see admission policy). We have dietary procedures in place to manage these requirements and an alternative meal will be provided. This information is displayed in the rooms and in the kitchen.

Nut based products will not be purchased however the incidence of nut traces in food products used, cannot be completely eliminated.

There is a folder in the kitchen and sheets in the room which state any allergen present in any food that we use.

Fresh drinking water is available at all times to all children.

Mealtimes are a social occasion, providing children with a variety of learning opportunities. Staff are to sit with the children and interact and if appropriate, some staff may be served a small portion of the same meal as the children, to encourage and assist the children with their eating. Staff will be a role model for good manners, conversation, new vocabulary and encourage children to try new foods and understand the value of good health and nutrition. Baby room staff however should not eat while feeding the babies as their time must be dedicated to feeding the babies.

Staff must not take this opportunity to eat their own food.

Staff must not walk around while eating.

Pre-school will collect their own cutlery and can serve themselves extra vegetables as a healthy extra.

All food should be cut into suitable sized pieces for the age or stage of development of the child, this includes fruit and vegetables. Food items such as cherry tomatoes and grapes should be cut from top to bottom and then quartered to ensure a choking hazard is avoided.

We have a protected mealtime policy in place whereby we ask parents to avoid dropping off or picking up in the middle of mealtimes so as not to disrupt the children.

We ask parents of children requiring formula milk to bring feeds (milk powder/formula) to nursery measured out. When made, any infant formula that **has not** been used and has been kept at room temperature must be thrown away within 2 hours. Any infant formula left in a bottle **after** a feed should be thrown away immediately. Where a child is weaning we will discuss with the parents their requirements and come up with a joint strategy to meet the needs of the individual child.



Children are encouraged and supported to eat the meal served but if they do not eat anything then an alternative will be offered where possible. We will discuss with parent's relevant strategies to deal with any issues regarding food.

We cannot guarantee an environment free from any food product including nuts.

We comply with food hygiene legislation to ensure food is stored and prepared safely. Staff who prepare and handle food are trained and qualified to do so.

In the event of any cases of food poisoning, we will inform Ofsted and Environmental Health and take appropriate action.

We try as a setting to accommodate all food allergies such a dairy free, gluten free and wheat free however as a busy nursery we cannot offer other alternatives.

Wherever possible, we respect and accommodate individual dietary requirements which are required for medical or cultural reasons. Vegetarian food will be served on a green plate or bowl and dishes that are served for a medical reason will be served on a red plate, so that practitioners can see at a glance what each child is eating.

We encourage birthday celebrations and other celebrations in nursery however any birthday cakes or other party food, party bags or food gifts will be sent home with the parents. This is to meet our strict dietary requirements procedures which is in place to manage the risk to children with food allergies, and also to meet parent's preferences for their child.

Allergens in foods are recorded in the kitchen records as well as the temperature of the fridge and freezer.

All cooked foods are probed to ensure it is at a safe temperature.