



## **Redcastle Family School: Food and Nutrition (Pre-school and Nursery)**

<b>Formally adopted by the Governing Body of:</b>	<b>Redcastle Family School</b>
<b>On:</b>	<b>January 2026</b>
<b>Signed by Chair of Governors:</b>	<b>Heather Pringle</b>
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**Policy Statement** We recognise meal and snack times as an important part of our day. Mealtimes represent a social time where children can learn about healthy eating. We provide snacks and meals which are healthy and meet children's individual dietary needs and recognise that healthy children learn more effectively. We strive to have an impact on issues such as obesity and oral hygiene. We understand that early food experiences can influence adult eating patterns and may influence attitude to eating. We are committed to ensuring that the food provided supports the development of healthy eating practices in the future.

### **Aims**

- The Nursery staff work closely alongside the school cook, who holds the relevant qualifications, to plan, regularly review and adapt a well-balanced three weekly menu.
- Children's individual requirements such as allergies/intolerances and cultural backgrounds are discussed with parents prior to their child starting the setting. The Nursery liaises with the cook to ensure a suitable alternative is provided.
- Our menu is varied to contain meat/vegetarian and fish dishes on a weekly basis. Children also have the option of selecting a cold or hot lunch.
- The Nursery menu includes foods from the four main food groups: - Meat, fish and protein alternatives, dairy foods, grains, cereals and starch vegetables and fruit and vegetables.
- The food provided avoids large quantities of fats, sugars, and salt.
- Children in the older room are encouraged to self-serve during lunchtime. Staff support and model choices made by the children.
- Children are offered fruit such as apples, tangerines, bananas, etc, for morning snack, alongside milk or water. Fresh water is provided during mealtimes. These are prepared and presented to the children in an age appropriate manner to reduce the risk of choking. For example, round fruit cut in half, bread toasted and cut into fingers, large food items cut into small hand sized batons.
- The Nursery provide the children with utensils which are appropriate for their age and stage of development.
- The Nursery uses meals and snack times to help children develop independence through making choices. Staff encourage children to try a bit of everything but not to make a fuss if they do not want to. Children are praised when they try something new.
- Children are never made to eat everything on their plate should they say they have had enough.
- Children who are slow eaters are never rushed to finish their meal.
- Staff model good eating habits by sitting with the children and encouraging table manners, please and thank you, and initiating conversation.
- It is the responsibility of all members of staff to ensure that safe practices are maintained in the preparation of food and snacks, and comply with legislation, training, and policy.

**All snack and mealtimes are supervised by at least two adults at all times.**

### **Drinks**

- The Nursery provides cow's milk for snack times, for children who are lactose intolerant, parents are requested to bring in their child's own milk from home or the child is offered water.

- Fresh drinking water is available throughout the day and children are encouraged to bring in their own labelled drinking bottle that they have access to at all times.
- No other drinks are offered to children other than milk and water. However, if a child is consistently not drinking in nursery throughout the day, we will liaise with parents to offer an alternative but carry on encouraging the child with water and request parents do the same at home.

### **Packed Lunches**

The Nursery recognises that some children may require a special diet that can sometimes be hard for the Nursery to meet. In these cases, parents can provide their child with a packed lunch. Children who attend all day sessions can either be provided with a hot meal at a small cost or bring in their own packed lunch.

- Children eating packed lunches sit alongside the children eating a hot meal and are encouraged in the same way.
- Staff do not throw away any uneaten items so that parents are aware of what their child has consumed whilst in Nursery.
- Parents are encouraged to provide their children with a healthy packed lunch, staff will monitor and discuss any concerns they may have regarding any children who constantly bring in unsuitable options in their packed lunch with parents.
- As the nursery is unable to store packed lunches in a fridge, parents are advised to bring packed lunches in insulated bags, there are a number of ways to keep packed lunches cold such as; commercial gel packs, water frozen in a rigid, leak-proof plastic container, ice cubes in a leak-proof container.
- Packed lunches will be stored on a unit in the nursery cloakroom.

### **Guidance for what to include in packed lunches.**

Every day:

- At least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables.
- Meat, fish, or other source of non-dairy protein such as lentils, kidney beans, hummus.
- A starchy food such as bread, pasta, rice, cous-cous, noodles, potatoes.
- Dairy food such as milk, yoghurt, cheese, custard.

Drinks: Water (still), milk, yoghurt, milk drinks or juice carton.

### **Guidance for what not to include in packed lunches**

- Confectionery such as chocolate bars and sweets. Cakes and biscuits are allowed but must be as part of a healthy balanced packed lunch.
- Fizzy drinks
- Nuts, as we are a nut free setting due to allergies

## **Food Allergies and special dietary requirements**

The nursery follows these procedures to promote healthy eating for children with special dietary requirements/allergies/intolerances. We understand the importance to maintain high standards of safety for children with specific requirements:

Before a child starts nursery, parents provide details about their child's dietary needs and preferences including any allergies.

Where appropriate we will work alongside parents to put into place an individual diet plan for their child to define allergies, while at the same time encouraging parents to get the allergy source confirmed by a doctor.

Individual children's allergies etc are recorded on the child's registration document.

Parents are requested to ensure they inform staff of any changes to their child's dietary requirements, so information is up to date.

The nursery displays current dietary information about individual children on the staff board for all staff to see. The cook is provided with all information regarding children's individual dietary requirements.