



## Food and Drink Policy



### Statement of Intent

Little Jesters regards snack and meal times as an important part of the session/day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children learn about healthy eating. The setting has the National Healthy School Status that ensures the whole school community has access to facilities and participates in activities that encourage both physical and emotional wellbeing.

### Aim

We aim to give all children the opportunity to have fresh, healthy and balanced meals that are prepared and cooked in the school kitchen. We also carry out a rolling snack in the morning, which meets the children's individual dietary needs. Fresh drinking water is available for the children and the children are encouraged to help themselves to water throughout the day. We promote eating together as a time to socialise, share food, learn about healthy eating, develop social skills and provide a family style eating environment where children are encouraged to develop pouring and cutting skills, serve food, develop the confidence to explore new tastes and textures, develop their social skills and promote their knowledge of healthy eating. Little Jesters do not have an afternoon snack time.

### Methods

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we ask the parents to complete a registration form that includes details of their child's special dietary requirements, allergies and significant food and drink preferences.
- This is followed up when the child attends an introductory visit to the setting and the Pre-School Leader and the child's key worker will carry out a discussion with the Parent/Carer to ensure their child's needs are met.
- We regularly consult with parents to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs - including any allergies - are up to date.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all staff are fully informed about them.
- We implement systems to ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and preferences as well as their parents' wishes.
- We display the lunch menu and relevant allergen information for parents to view on the school website and on the information display board within Little Jesters. There is a choice of three healthy options for lunch that parents can select for their child at an additional cost.
- There is a **no nut policy** within the setting and we are especially vigilant where we have children who have known allergies.
- We provide meals and snacks which are healthy, well balanced and nutritious, avoiding large quantities of saturated fats, sugars, salts and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- We ensure that all staff receive food hygiene training.
- We include foods from the diet of each child's cultural background providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.
- 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.
- We organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate.
- We use snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.

- We provide children with utensils that are appropriate for their age and stages of development and that take account of the eating practices in their cultures.
- Children will have opportunities to prepare their own food with close supervision in accordance with our Health & Safety policy.
- We have fresh drinking water available for the children at all times. We talk to the children about how to access drinking water independently and ensure that they know they can ask for water at any time during the day. Children are encouraged and reminded about the provision of water after outdoor play and frequently during periods of hot weather.
- In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- We provide free semi-skimmed milk for all children for snack times in the morning sessions.
- Staff will encourage children to try food and will advise parents and carers if the child refuses. Children will not be forced to eat a food that they don't like. Desserts will not be withheld from a child who has not eaten their main course.

The setting will follow any current government guidelines due to infection control (e.g. Covid), therefore we may have to introduce some changes to the way we prepare and serve snack at Little Jesters. These include:

- Staff wearing visors and gloves throughout the preparation of and serving snack.
- Children are not able to help prepare snack at this time.
- Staff serve the children snack on to their individual plates and ensure they do not touch others plates, food or the serving plate.
- Children are still encouraged to maintain the same hygiene of washing their hands before and after snack and if they are to cough or sneeze during their time sat at the table

### **Packed Lunches**

- We inform parents of our policy on food and drink and encourage them to provide a healthy lunch. We also strongly follow allergy requirements.
- We encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling. We also encourage foods such as fruit and milk-based desserts. We discourage sweet drinks and can provide children with water to drink.
- We discourage packed lunch contents that consist largely of processed foods, sweet drinks, fizzy drinks and sweet products such as sweets or cakes. We reserve the right to return this food to the parent as a last resort.
- The staff are vigilant in ensuring that the **NO nut policy** is adhered to and reserve the right to remove this food and return to parents at the end of the session. This is to ensure the health and safety of all children within the school.
- We ensure that Little Jesters staff stay with the children in the dining room at lunch times to provide consistency and ensure mealtimes are social occasions.

### **Alterations**

Little Jesters will follow any government guidelines due to infectious diseases (e.g. Covid). This may mean we need to introduce some changes to the way lunchtimes operate. These could be:

- Having lunch in the main school hall, alone as a bubble.

Reviewed Spring 2024

To be reviewed Spring 2026