



Nutrition and Mealtimes Policy

Associated policies include

- Caring for babies and toddlers
- Safer Eating Policy
- Allergies and Allergic reactions

Guidance has been sourced from Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance April 2025

At Manor House Nursery School we believe that mealtime should be happy and social occasions for children and staff alike. We promote shared, enjoyable positive interactions at these times.

We are committed to offering children healthy, nutritious and balanced meals and snacks which meet individual needs and requirements.

Parents and carers are regularly provided with our healthy lunch box policy which contains ideas for items that can be included in their child's lunch box. The policy contains food items that we will not provide to children. If the child has items in their lunch box that are not acceptable we will provide an alternative healthy option if the child appears still hungry/not eaten sufficient amount.

Nursery Meals (Parents/carers contribute towards the cost of meals that children are offered at nursery by a consumables charge. If parents do not contribute towards their child's meals and other additional extras not covered by funding they are required to provide all their child's meals, following our healthy eating guides).

The consumable charge contributes towards the following meals

- Breakfast is available 8:00am – 9:00am with a choice of sugar free cereal and toast,
- Snack is offered between 9:30 and 10:45. Children are encouraged to access snack as they wish to allow children to decide themselves when they are hungry (we of course encourage all children to eat and drink something). We provide a selection of fruit and vegetables and items such as breadsticks crackers, rice cakes etc.
- Lunch is provided between 11:30 – 12:30. We can provide a hot meal at an additional cost of £3.00. Alternatively, parents can provide their child with a healthy packed lunch –

We are a nut free nursery so ask parent's not to include any items that contain nuts. A lunch box policy is available on request. We request that parents use ice packs and they label the contents of their child's lunch box to ensure we are able to protect other children from potential allergies/intolerances. Children's lunch boxes are checked prior to giving the contents to ensure any choking hazards are managed.

- Afternoon snack is offered between 2:30 and 3:00. Children are encouraged to access snack as they wish to allow children to decide themselves when they are hungry (we of course encourage all children to eat and drink something). We provide a selection of fruit and vegetables. We provide a selection of fruit and vegetables and items such as breadsticks crackers, rice cakes etc.
- Tea is provided between 4:00 and 4:30pm

Rolling Mealtimes

Children are given the opportunity to eat their meals during a period of time. This includes breakfast, snack, lunch, and tea.

This enables mealtimes to be purposeful and an enjoyable experience for our 2,3 and 4 year olds. We encourage children to let us know when they are ready for their food. Staff will intervene and/or encourage when needed. Children eat in small groups, with their key person, or familiar adult – the children are able to make this decision for themselves. When children have finished eating, they are encouraged to wait for their table to finish (this depends on the age/stage of the children).

Children are also able to help with setting their table and clearing away their plates encouraging independence, communication, team work and fun.

All our under 2's are fed according to their needs and routines rather than a nursery schedule.

We ensure water is available to children all day and offer milk at snack times. Babies and toddlers are offered sips of water during their meal times from an open cup or free-flow cup without a valve. We will use open cups where possible to help babies learn, this is also better for their oral health.

Manor House Nursery School ensures that;

- Menus are planned in advance and in line with example menus and guidance produced by DFE and the Eatwell Guide. These are rotated regularly, reflect cultural diversity and variation and are displayed for children and parents to view on the website and in our reception area. Menus are subject to change on short notice due to issues with deliveries.
- To ensure we provide essential nutrients to help children grow and develop we plan our meals and snacks to include a variety of food and drinks every day from the 4 main food groups (fruit and vegetables; potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates; dairy or dairy alternatives; and beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins)
- All allergens are displayed alongside the menus to show the contents of each meal
- We provide nutritious food at all snack and mealtimes, avoiding large quantities of fat, sugar, salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings

- Only milk and water are provided as drinks to promote oral health. Fresh drinking water is always available and accessible. It is frequently offered to children and babies and intake is monitored. In hot weather staff will encourage children to drink more water to keep them hydrated
- Individual dietary requirements are respected. We gather information from parents regarding their children's dietary needs, including any special dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies that a child has and any special health requirements, before a child starts or joins the nursery. Where appropriate, we will carry out a risk assessment in the case of allergies and work alongside 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, discussions will also take place with children about allergies and potential risks to make them aware of the dangers of sharing certain foods
- Staff show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. They 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
- Staff set a good example and eat with the children and show good table manners. Meal and snack times are organised so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate in small groups. During meals and snack times children are encouraged to use their manners and conversation is encouraged
- Staff use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drinks and feeding themselves
- Staff support children to make healthy choices and understand the need for healthy eating
- Where possible, we provide foods from the diet of each of the children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones
- Cultural differences in eating habits are respected
- 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, they will still be given a helping of dessert
- Children not on special diets are encouraged to eat a small piece of everything
- Children who refuse to eat at the mealtime are offered food later in the day
- Children are given time to eat at their own pace and not rushed
- Portion sizes take account the ages of the children being catered for in line with recommended portion sizes for babies and young children. There are no official guidelines recommending how much food children need. Our portions are appropriate for the child's body size and appetite. An example of portion size for a toddler is roughly the size of their clenched fist.
- We won't make children finish everything on their plate or eat more than what they want
- We avoid offering rewards to children for finishing everything on their plate
- When serving food to children, we always make sure food is cut to a size that's right for the child's size, age and stage of weaning. This helps avoid choking.
- We promote positive attitudes to healthy eating through play opportunities and discussions

- Children are supervised at all times during meals and snacks. Staff must be sat with children and babies in sight and hearing of all children eating and/or drinking to reduce the risk of choking. Staff have received training on dealing with choking as well as foods to avoid to how to prepare.
- We provide parents with advice on weaning and how to avoid choking, including how to prepare food (Food Standards Agency Guidance).
- 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 practical and in all cases within 14 days. We will also inform the relevant health agencies and follow any advice given.
- We provide parents of babies under the age of 2 with a daily record of feeding/meals eaten on their Family app. In our reception area/out the front of the nursery we have a daily menu board for all parents to see and the menu, a copy of the menu is also provided on the FAMILY app. See baby and toddler policy for more information on baby food/bottle.
- All staff that prepares and handles food is competent to do so and receive training in food hygiene. Food hygiene and handling and preparing food safely will be recapped through staff training sessions.
- Our baby room staff receive specific training on cleaning, sterilising and preparing babies bottles and equipment.
- All early years practitioners will carry out food hygiene training through Flexibee, this will be repeated every three years and/or following government guidelines. Any changes to the current requirements will be cascaded down to the nursery team as and when required.
- We will sometimes celebrate special occasions such as birthdays with the occasional treat of foods such as cake, sweets or biscuits. These will be given at mealtimes to prevent tooth decay and not spoil the child's appetite.

Manor House Nursery School follows the following steps during food preparation to avoid choking hazards:

- 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
- do not offer raisins as a snack to children under 12 months – although these can be chopped up as part of a meal
- soften hard fruit and vegetables (such as carrot and apple) and remove the skins when first given to babies from around 6 months
- cut sausages into thin strips rather than chunks and remove the skins
- remove bones from meat or fish
- do not give whole nuts to children under five years old
- do not give whole seeds to children under five years old
- cut cheese into strips rather than chunks
- do not give popcorn as a snack to children

- do not give children marshmallows or jelly cubes from a packet either to eat or as part of messy play activities as they can get stuck in the throat do not give children hard sweets

Food From Home

- We do allow parents to bring in a cake for special occasions we make sure that the food brought in meets the Health and Safety requirements and ingredients that are listed within the Food Information for Consumers (FIR) 2014 and are detailed in the allergens policy and procedure.
- All foods brought in from home should be checked for potential allergens so that the risk of cross contamination is reduced
- All food served to children must be prepared in a way to prevent choking
- Where we have frequent birthdays and celebrations, we consider other alternatives such as celebrating through smiles and praise, stickers and badges, choosing a favourite story, becoming a special helper, playing a party game, dancing and/or singing their favourite song
- Parents/Carers may opt for their child to have packed lunches instead of a hot dinner or tea provided by the nursery. We provide parents with our packed lunch guide which includes best practices from the NHS.
- Food provided by parents/carers must be suitable for their individual developmental needs and prepared in a way to prevent choking. Parents are provided with additional guidance from Food Standards agency on how to prepare foods safely
- All perishable items provided by the parent/carer must be stored in their own insulated lunch bag with an ice pack. Nursery does not have sufficient fridge space to store food brought in from home
- Children's food should be clearly labeled and the contents of the child's lunch/tea should be detailed

At Manor House Nursery we plan for and provide children with food activities. Cooking is a great experience for young children and can help to create a positive relationship with food. We understand that some children have limited opportunities to cook or learn about food at home. We share ideas on fun activities that parents/carers can share with their children at home on our family app/social media accounts.

Manor House Nursery School adheres to all data protection guidelines stated in our UK GDPR policy. Please see our UKGDPR policy on the nursery website – www.manorhousenursery.co.uk

Signed on behalf of the nursery		Date for review
Amy Penny	29/04/2025	April 2026