

09 Early years practice procedures

09.08 Prime times – Snack-times and mealtimes

Children are supervised during mealtimes and always remain within sight and hearing of staff.

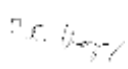
Snack times

- A 'snack' is prepared mid-morning and mid-afternoon and can be organised according to the discretion of the Lead Teacher or team members, e.g. picnic on a blanket.
- Children may also take turns to help set the table. Small jugs are provided with choice of milk or water.
- Children wash their hands before and after snack-time.
- Children are offered full-fat milk or a dairy free alternative for children with a specific diet or intolerance to dairy.
- Fruit or raw vegetables, such as carrot or tomato, are offered in batons, which children should be encouraged to help in preparing. Bananas and other foods are not cut as rounds, but are sliced to minimise a choking hazard.
- Children are encouraged to make healthy choices from a healthy menu on offer through the morning. In the afternoon the selection is reduced, but children still are able to exercise their independence by making choices about their food.
- Children are presented with a menu from where they can choose a variety of foods from all groups, providing a healthy choice of foods.
- Children arrive as they want refreshment and leave when they have had enough. Children are not made to leave their play if they do not want to have a snack.
- Staff join in conversation and encourage children's independence by allowing them to pour drinks, butter toast, cut fruit etc.

Mealtimes

- Tables are never overcrowded during mealtimes. Some social distancing is encouraged even though it is acknowledged that children will play in close proximity for the rest of the session.
- Children may help staff set tables.
- Tablecloths are used and children bring their pack-lunches prepared at home by their parents/carers .
- Children wash their hands and sit down and they are encouraged to wait for each other until everyone is sitting and ready to start.
- Children are encouraged to choose what they want and to take their own helpings from their packed lunches.
- Staff have their lunch with children role-modelling healthy eating and best practice at all times, for example not drinking cans of fizzy drinks in front of the children.
- Children are given time to eat at their own pace and are not hurried to fit in with adults' tasks and breaks. They are not made to eat what they do not like and are only encouraged to try new foods slowly.

- In order to protect children with food allergies or specific dietary requirements, children are discouraged from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- Food is not used as a reward or punishment.
- Mealtimes are relaxed opportunities for social interaction between children and the adults who care for them.
- There are sometimes opportunities for children to eat with friends on other tables.
- After lunch children are encouraged to tidy up their packed lunches clean their place at the table.
- Children are encouraged to wash their hands after lunch. Cleaning teeth might be introduced, no sooner than 1 hour after lunch is recommended where hygiene procedures pose no risk (see procedure 04.05 Oral health).
- Information for parents is displayed on the parent's notice board, including:
 - Ten Steps for Healthy Toddlers https://infantandtoddlerforum.org/media/upload/pdf-downloads/HR_toddler_booklet_green.pdf

This policy was adopted by	St Paul's Pre-school
In	November 2022
Date to be reviewed	November 2023
Signed on behalf of the Management Committee	
Name of signatory	Marie-Claire Kaziewicz
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	Chair