

Nutrition & Mealtimes at Sunflowers.

We are very proud of the food we provide at Sunflowers. We have a 3-week rolling menu and this is updated 3 times a year to reflect seasonal meals and ingredients.

All our meals are 'home-made' here at Sunflowers. We try to limit the provision of processed foods wherever possible. All our meals are free from artificial colours and artificial sweeteners. We also aim to be a 'refined sugar' free nursery. This means that we use ingredients such as honey, dates or maple syrup to sweeten any recipes rather than refined sugar.

The children are offered water or milk to drink. Occasionally we may offer freshly squeezed orange juice as part of a breakfast or snack activity.

All our meat is locally sourced from R & J Meats which is a local supplier. Our milk is delivered twice a week from the Dales Dairy.

We are able to cater for most dietary requirements.

As a rule, we do not allow food to be brought in from home. We can adapt this in exceptional circumstances; however, this is not the norm.

Mealtimes:

Mealtimes at Sunflowers should be delightful. They are not 'a job which needs doing' they are an important and influential point in each child's day.

Full of learning opportunities and of course the opportunity to be nourished and to have a healthy lifestyle endorsed – Mealtimes are a key part of each child's day and should be treated with utmost importance and care.

There are at least 5 opportunities to eat at Nursery each day:

- Breakfast
- Morning Snack
- Lunch
- Afternoon Snack
- Tea

In addition to this, there is the fact that the children should have access to, and be encouraged to drink, their water bottles at all times. The children should be aware of how important it is to 'keep hydrated' and all staff should monitor each child's fluid intake. It is not acceptable for a child to not be encouraged to drink at least at every meal/snack time.

Expectations from all staff during mealtimes:

- Mealtimes should be joyful occasions, chat, discuss, question and comment, laugh, smile and have fun.
- Children must never eat alone - an adult must always be sitting with the children whilst they eat – this is for many reasons, not the least being the heightened risk of choking.
- All children should be spoken to about the food they are eating – it should be named, discussed, where appropriate and the children should be verbally encouraged to eat. Discuss taste, texture, how it is made/grown etc – don't miss an opportunity.
- All staff are expected to take special care and attention to each child's eating patterns – aware of their likes and dislikes, where they need support and what each child has eaten – knowing when they need additional food to ensure their nutritional needs are met each day. This is an important part of our key person approach.
- Each member of staff should always be vigilant. This includes being aware of each child's dietary needs, stage of development and any allergies. There is no excuse – if you are unsure of a child's

individual needs you must ask another member of staff before you are left in a position of responsibility.

- The menu should be read and adapted to meet each individual child's need and stage of development. Make snack time meaningful and relevant.
- Packaging **MUST NOT** be taken into the rooms – food such as biscuits, crackers, breadsticks etc – all food must have their ingredients checked for any relevant allergens in the kitchen and then served on a plate or in a bowl.
- *Re snack and pudding* - The children must always be given plates or napkins/paper towels to eat their food from. Food must not be served directly onto the table.
- A sensible approach must be always taken to minimise waste.
- Snack and mealtimes will be monitored by lead staff to ensure we are doing the best we possibly can do. Feed back to your peers if you have enjoyed watching their snack time. Likewise pass on tips and hints if you can see areas for improvement. Do **NOT** be afraid of doing this!

Nutrition and provision of a balanced diet

We are committed to offering children healthy, nutritious and balanced meals and snacks which meet individual needs and requirements. At all times we will have regard for **EYFS Nutrition Guidance (May 2025)**.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6839b752210698b3364e86fc/Early_years_foundation_age_nutrition_guidance.pdf

A healthy balanced diet for children

Food group	Examples of food included	Main nutrients provided	Recommended serving
Fruit and vegetables	Fresh, frozen, canned, and dried fruit, vegetables, and pulses	Carotenes (a form of vitamin A), vitamin C, zinc, iron, and fibre	At least 5 portions each day Provide a portion as part of each main meal (breakfast, lunch and tea) and with some snacks
Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates	Bread, potatoes and sweet potatoes, starchy root vegetables, pasta, noodles, rice, other grains, breakfast cereals	Carbohydrate, fibre, B vitamins and iron	4 portions each day Provide a portion as part of each meal (breakfast, lunch and tea) and provide as part of at least one snack each day
Dairy and alternatives	Milk, cheese, yoghurt, fromage frais	Protein, calcium, and vitamin A	3 portions each day Provided as part of meals, snacks and drink
Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins	Meat, poultry, fish, shellfish, eggs, beans, pulses, nuts	Protein, iron, zinc, omega 3 fatty acids, vitamins A and D	2 portions each day Provide a portion as part of lunch and tea (two to three portions for vegetarian children)

We will ensure that:

- A balanced and healthy breakfast, midday meal, tea and two daily snacks are provided for children attending a full day at the nursery
- Menus are planned in advance, rotated regularly and reflect cultural diversity and variation. These are displayed for children and parents to view
- We provide nutritious food at all snack and mealtimes, avoiding large quantities of fat, sugar, salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings

Nutrition & Mealtime Policy reviewed August 26 HCK

- Menus include at least **5** servings of fresh fruit and vegetables per day
- Parents and children are involved in menu planning, information is gathered on registration forms, settling in sessions and at various points in the year.
- 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
- 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 say 'please' and 'thank you' and conversation is encouraged
- Staff use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink, and feeding themselves
- Staff support children to make healthy choices and understand the need for healthy eating
- Menus are developed to 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, he/she 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. In addition we will offer a sandwich or cheese & crackers and a piece of fruit to ensure a good balance of calories and nutrients have been eaten during their day.
- Children are given time to eat at their own pace and not rushed
- Quantities offered take account of the ages of the children being catered for in line with recommended portion sizes for babies and young children (see below)
- We promote positive attitudes to healthy eating through play opportunities and discussions
- The nursery provides parents with daily written records of feeding routines for all children in our baby room and 2deloos room.
- No child is ever left alone when eating/drinking to minimise the risk of choking
- We will always work with parents to develop healthy eating habits and support families to make healthy choices outside of nursery.

Portion sizes for children aged 5 and under



Department for Education

Food group	Portion size
A variety of fruit and vegetables (at least 5 portions each day)	
Cooked and raw	40g
Carbohydrates (4 portions each day)	
Cooked rice, pasta and potatoes	80g
Bread	25g
Average sized potato	1
Dairy and alternatives (3 portions each day)	
Milk	150ml
Cheese (sliced or grated)	15g
Cottage cheese	30g
Plain yoghurt	60g
Protein (2 portions each day)	
Baked beans	55g
Egg	55g
Meat, fish and poultry	40g
Most pulses and hummus	40g

Food safety

- Everyone must **WASH THEIR HANDS** when they enter the kitchen.
- Staff must receive a thorough kitchen induction when they start work at Sunflowers.
- All staff who prepare and handle food must be competent to do so and receive training in food hygiene which is updated every three years. This is done online through NoodleNow.
- Our Nursery cook completes the Level 3 Food Safety qualification. This is also done online.
- We follow Safer food Better Business – all staff are aware of this and tasks are completed each day to ensure the food is safe. These tasks include monitoring fridge temperatures, cooked food temperatures and delivery temperatures.
- The kitchen and all their equipment and utensils must have a high level of cleanliness at all times.
- 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.

Food Allergens & Dietary Requirements

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

All our staff are specifically trained to understand how to recognise when food allergens may be present. Training is done on Noodle Now and also during internal face-to-face training sessions. If we have a child who is anaphylactic all staff will receive additional training about administering auto injectors (*such as an Epi Pen, Jext or Emerade.*) before the child starts nursery. If a child receives a diagnosis whilst attending nursery, staff will receive additional training within 7 days. Lead Practitioners and the nursery cook must ensure that Dietary Requirement signs for each child are placed in the relevant room, also the room where they regularly eat (e.g including breakfast) and in the kitchen. The sign will include the child's name and a list of things they must not eat. Lead Practitioners are responsible for regularly communicating with

parents to ensure our knowledge of each child's dietary requirements is kept up to date. All children with allergies or individual requirements for that meal will be served their food with a **RED charger** under their plate. If a child has an allergy but the main meal doesn't contain that allergen, they will be given a **yellow charger**.

The member of staff getting the food from the kitchen must verbally check it is suitable for the child. A second check must take place before the food is given to the 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, age/stage discussions will also take place with all children about allergies and potential risks to make them aware of the dangers of sharing certain foods

Common allergens in food

For example:

Allergen	Often found in
Tree nuts (for example almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, pecan nuts, brazil nuts, pistachios, cashews, macadamias).	In sauces, desserts, crackers, bread, ice cream, marzipan, ground almonds, nut oils.
Peanuts	In sauces, cakes, desserts. Don't forget groundnut oil and peanut flour.
Eggs	In cakes, mousses, sauces, pasta, quiche, some meat products. Don't forget foods containing mayonnaise or brushed with egg.
Milk	In yoghurt, cream, cheese, butter, milk powders. Also check for foods glazed with milk.
Fish	In some salad dressings, pizzas, relishes, fish sauce.
Crustaceans	Such as prawns, lobster, scampi, crab, shrimp paste.
Molluscs	These include mussels, whelks, squid, land snails, oyster sauce.
Gluten (wheat such as spelt and khorasan wheat, barley, rye and oats)	Also check foods containing flour such as bread, pasta, cakes, pastry, meat products, sauces, soups, batter, stock cubes, soy and worcestershire sauces, breadcrumbs, foods dusted with flour.
Celery	This includes celery stalks, leaves and seeds and celeriac. Also look out for celery in salads, soups, celery salt, some meat products.
Lupin	Lupin seeds and flour in some types of bread and pastries.
Mustard	Including liquid mustard, mustard cress, mustard powder and mustard seeds in salad dressings, marinades, soups, sauces, curries, meat products.
Sesame seeds	In bread, bread sticks, tahini, hummus, sesame oil.
Soya	Such as tofu or beancurd, edamame, tempeh, soya flour and textured soya protein, in some ice cream, sauces, desserts, meat products, vegetarian products and vegan products.
Sulphur dioxide (when added and above 10mg/kg in the finished food and drink)	In meat products, fruit juice drinks, dried fruit and vegetables.