Next Steps Pre-school, Elms Vale, Church Road, Dover, CT17 9LW
Tel: 01304 226234
Registered Charity No. 1156391

Healthy Eating, Lunch and Snack Policy

At Next Steps Pre-school, we wish to promote the right environment for our children to understand the importance of making healthy food choices. Lunches and snacks represent at least a third of a child's daily intake of food and nutrients, which presents a great opportunity to promote healthy food choices for children.

Aims

To make sure that the food children bring into the setting is as healthy and nutritious as food that is regulated by national standards.

To give clear guidance to parents, carers, children and staff on how we work together to provide a healthy packed lunch and snack. We believe that a healthy lunch can contribute to children's health and needs to be consistent with the nutritional standards set out in the Early Years nutrition guidance.

This policy applies to all lunches and snacks eaten at the pre-school.

Development of the policy

This lunch policy has been developed through contributions from parents and staff, and in consultation with staff, children and managers. The policy was drawn up using a range of national documents.

The pre-school will continue to work with parents to ensure packed lunches and snacks at Next Steps Pre-school follow this policy.

Content of packed lunches

Packed lunches should include:

- Fruit and vegetables: at least one portion of fruit, vegetables or salad a day (grapes are not allowed at the pre-school as they are a potential choking hazard).
- Carbohydrates: starchy food such as bread, pasta, rice, couscous, noodles or potatoes (not fried).
- Dairy: food such as milk, cheese, yoghurt, fromage frais or soya products.
- Drinks: water, pure fruit juice (no added sugar), milk, yoghurt drinks or smoothies.
- An un-iced cake or a small packet of biscuits (not containing chocolate).
- Sandwich fillings should be savoury only – no jam, honey or chocolate spread.

- All lunches should be age-appropriate, so that the child can eat as independently as possible.
- Age-appropriate crisps or snacks.

The following should not be included in lunches or snacks:

- Fried food.
- Chocolate, including chocolate spread and chocolate chips.
- Nuts or nut products.
- Fizzy or sugary drinks in cartons, bottles or cans (including diet drinks, and energy drinks, which contain high levels of caffeine and other additives that are not suitable for children).
- Confectionery such as chocolate bars, chocolate-covered biscuits and sweets.

Please note that cooked food, such as pasta, rice or meat, cannot be reheated on the premises.

Special diets and allergies

We ask parents for information about their child's diet and any allergies so that we can cater for each child individually. For this reason, children are not permitted to swap food items. As some children at the pre-school may have nut allergies, we do not buy any products that contain nuts.

Staff

To support a whole pre-school approach, staff are encouraged to follow this policy when bringing in lunches and eating with the children.

Facilities for lunches and snacks

We will:

- store all snack products in the fridge until they are used, and check dates each time a snack is served;
- make sure all children have access to drinking water at all times (an Early Years Foundation Stage requirement); and
- provide semi-skimmed cow's milk at snack time for all 2- to 5-year-olds (provided by Next Steps Pre-school).

Snacks

Snacks will be offered between meals to ensure children receive appropriate levels of energy and nutrition, for example mid-morning and mid-afternoon.

Monitoring

To promote healthy eating, we will regularly monitor the content of lunches and snacks. We will talk to parents/carers where necessary and offer

guidance on healthy lunches and snacks. If lunches are not considered to meet nutritional standards, parents will be advised on the changes that need to be made. Water and milk will be provided. As a provider, we follow the Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance.

Birthdays and other celebrations

We welcome the sharing of birthdays but do not have cakes in the setting because of the diets and allergies of some children.

Working with parents and carers

We hope that all parents and carers will support this lunch and snack policy. We will offer advice and guidance to parents and carers on lunches and snacks if required, through a range of support such as information sheets, meetings, workshops and emails. Children on special diets following verified medical advice will be given due consideration.

This policy was adopted in September 2026.

Next review: September 2027.

Signed on behalf of the management committee

Name of signatory: Virginia McCarthy

Role of signatory: Manager