



## Food and Drink Policy

At ACE we provide the children with a healthy menu of snacks, lunch, high-tea and drinks. Our food menus change each term to include dishes from around the world and seasonal ingredients, providing a tasty and varied diet. The food menus are displayed in the entrance area and on our website; the recipes are available to parents/carers upon request.

Mealtimes are a social occasion providing children with a variety of learning opportunities. Staff role model good manners, mealtime etiquette, conversation, new vocabulary and promote children to try new foods and understand the value of good health and nutrition.

Children are encouraged to serve themselves independently and clear away their plates and bowls with assistance where required. Children have the opportunity to be 'helpers' by helping to lay the table, carry appropriate items to the kitchen gate where the children can interact with the cook. Children will be provided with a child sized knife, fork and spoon and encouraged and supported to use these. Where it is part of a child's culture to eat with their fingers or other utensils, this will be encouraged and supported. Staff will give the children plenty of time to eat.

Staff prepare the food to make sure it is age and individually appropriate for the children. Good communication with the parent/carer enables us to plan our meal times and inform our nursery cook of any specific requirements i.e. if children have their food pureed.

When children join ACE, we require the parent/carer to complete a dietary requirement form, this enables all the staff including our cook to be aware of any individual requirements a child may have. We ask if any dietary requirements change while your child is at ACE, please make sure you tell your key person.

Our food menus allow the children to participate in the cooking/preparation of meals. Each week the children will have the chance to make something for their lunch or tea i.e. bread rolls to go with soup, fruity flapjacks for their pudding or choosing their pizza topping for tea. Staff and children look after our vegetable and herb garden and will use home grown foods when possible.

We try our best to follow the menus but on some occasions items of food may not be available when we shop on a Monday at the local Supermarket. If we are unable to purchase food our menus may change slightly. At the end of each term before the holidays, we like to use up the food items in the kitchen, so not to waste anything; this may also result in the menu changing.

We do not provide any formula milk but we are very happy to give formula milk to your child if you bring it in from home. The formula must be named and if your child prefers to drink it from a bottle; please can the bottle be named too.

We encourage birthday celebrations at ACE and we welcome parents/carers to bring in a birthday cake for their child. This cake must be vegetarian and nut free.

Throughout your child's time at ACE, they may go through different stages with their food, maybe because of their stage of development, changes at home, behaviour challenges or becoming use to different tastes of new foods. Your child's key person and the nursery manger are available if you have any concerns or questions. Staff will try and accommodate for individual routines and requests where possible. Staff will chat to parents and carers if they feel that their child is not eating well. Food is not used as a reward or withheld as part of disciplining; children are encouraged and supported to eat the meal served. Children will still receive one helping of pudding if they refuse their main course.

ACE is registered with Cambridge City Council Environmental Health Services and all staff upon induction complete

on-the-job training regarding food hygiene. ACE will notify Ofsted and Cambridge City Council Environmental Health Services of any food poisoning which has affected two or more children.

### **Snacks**

Free flow snack is provided for the children in the morning. Children can choose from a selection of fruit/vegetables and a cracker/bread and twice a week a food item containing protein will be served i.e. cheese or houmous. A choice of cow's milk or water is offered and different types of milk i.e. soya and goats' milk can be provided on request if this relates to a child's dietary requirement.

### **Lunch**

A hot vegetarian main meal and a fruit/milk-based pudding is served at 12pm along with water to drink. Children will be allowed second helpings of lunch and a second helping of the fruit/milk-based puddings if they would like. The lunch is prepared by the nursery cook who is fully trained with level 2 Food Safety in Catering.

### **Tea**

At 4.00pm a high-tea is served, this is prepared by staff who have an award in Food Safety in Catering or who been trained in house using the safer food better business training pack. High-tea isn't a full evening meal but it is more substantial than a snack and is served with water to drink.

Over meal times, one helping of a treat such as a piece of homemade cake or a birthday cake at snack will be offered and staff educate the children that one helping of these types of foods are healthy.

### **Drinks**

Drinking water is always provided for the children. Each child has their own named water bottle on a tray and the water bottles are refilled half way through the day with fresh water.

On warm days a tray is positioned on a low stool at the children's level with water and cups, so water can be accessed in the garden also. When the children show interest in having a drink staff will help the children fill their cup/beaker with fresh water. Staff will also encourage children to drink water throughout the day.

Should a child request a snack in between the set meal/snack times, savoury crackers and fruit are available.

**Policy adopted:** Spring term 2024

**Signed:** *Sharon Meen*

**Signed:** *Hanna Ochalik-Baca*

**Review date:** Spring term 2025

**Nursery Cook:** Sharon Meen

**Position:** Manager