



Barnett Wood Pre-School

Food, Drink and Packed Lunch Policy (Including Healthy Eating)

Aim

Barnett Wood Pre-School regards snack and mealtimes as an important part of the Pre-School's session/day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. We aim to help children develop a positive and healthy attitude to food and their diet, raising awareness of the difference between nutritious and non-nutritious food. The preschool has regard for the EYFS nutrition guidance, 2025.

"Where children are provided with meals, snacks, and drinks, these must be healthy, balanced and nutritious."
(EYFS, 2025)

Objectives

- To ensure that the food eaten by the children at Pre-School is healthy, balanced and nutritious.
- To ensure that snack/lunch times become an enjoyable and social part of the session.
- To raise awareness of healthy eating and oral hygiene and to develop positive attitudes to diet and health

Procedures

At settling meetings parents are asked for information regarding their child's feeding stage and specific information is collected regarding the consistency of the foods their child can manage. This information is shared with the manager and plans put in place should a child not be able to manage 'normal' food consistency.

Allergies

Before a child starts at the Pre-School, parents/carers are asked to complete and sign the registration form detailing any allergies etc. During their settling session, the child's key person will consult with the parent/carer regarding the child's dietary needs, including any cultural/religious requirement and any allergies. If the child has a special diet, they will be required to fill out a special diet form, informing us whether it is due to an allergy, signs and symptoms and the procedure that needs to be followed should the child come into contact with the food.

Whilst it is the responsibility of parents/carers to update the setting regarding any changes to their child's dietary requirements, a summary of each child's registration form is printed out once a year for parents/carers to check and sign that the information is correct.

Allergies are recorded on the child's registration card which is used during snack and mealtimes. The registration card has a photograph of the child and lists any allergies/dietary requirements. Registration cards are also colour coded to further alert staff of allergies / dietary requirements (see appendix 1). There is also a list of children with allergies in the kitchen and in both registers.

The Pre-School is a nut-free zone and parents/carers are made aware of this in the setting's Terms and Conditions. Any products found to contain nuts will not be given to the children and instead will be disposed of in a safe manner or stored in the office.

All staff at Barnett Wood Preschool must complete training on allergies and anaphylaxis. The setting also has specific snack and meal time procedures which staff must adhere to at all times.

Snack Time

The Pre-School provides the children with snack twice a day consisting of a variety of fruit/vegetables as well as savory carbohydrates. The fruit/vegetables are prepared by staff (sometimes with the help of children) and made available for all children to share during snack time. In addition, the Pre-School provides a choice of milk or fresh drinking water to drink.

There is a designated “snack table” in the setting where the children can come and help themselves to snack and a drink when the snack bar is open. This area is supervised by a member of staff who holds a paediatric first aid certificate, and is responsible for checking ingredients, remaining in sight and sound of the children eating at all times.

We use snack time to help children to develop independence through making choices, helping themselves to food (using tongs) and pouring their own drinks (using small jugs) as well as feeding themselves. Children will be encouraged to try food that they may not normally eat at home but will not be forced to. In order to help prepare the children for good eating habits children are asked to take a reasonable portion the first time and will not be given second helpings.

Staff prepare fruit for snack in the setting’s kitchen and have procedures to follow regarding food hygiene/food preparation. Protective gloves and aprons are provided or hands must be thoroughly washed prior to preparing food. All cups, bowls etc used during snack are washed in a dishwasher. Members of staff who are responsible for serving snack to the children or for undertaking cooking activities with the children have undergone training in food hygiene.

Packed Lunches

Children who have lunch at Pre-School are asked to bring their lunch in a suitable named container. Parent/carers are made aware that the lunches are not stored in a refrigerator and are encouraged to bring the lunches in an insulated bag with ice packs for freshness.

The Pre-School’s policy regarding packed lunches has regard for the EYFS nutritional guidance 2025. It states that children need a variety of foods to ensure they are given a good balance of nutrients. A healthy diet for children aged 1-5 is based on the four food groups listed below:

- Starchy foods (breads, pastas, potatoes)
- Fruit and vegetables
- Meat, fish, eggs, beans or other non-dairy protein source
- Milk and dairy

Young children also need fat in their diet to ensure they get enough energy. However, it is important that children do not eat too much sugar and salt.

In line with other early years settings we have a strict no nuts policy (this includes pesto). We also do not allow children to have chocolate or sweets of any kind in their packed lunch.

Parent/carers are urged to be responsible in ensuring that packed lunches are as healthy as possible. Due to children who may have special diets and allergies children are not permitted to swap any food items.

Parents/carers are also asked to keep portion sizes realistic to their child’s appetite and to ensure that food is prepared in such a way so as not to be a choking hazard (i.e. Grapes cut in half lengthways). Any food which does not conform to the policy, or that staff consider to be a choking hazard, or that a child has simply left as they are no longer hungry, is left in the lunch box so that parents/carers are aware of what and how much has been eaten.

Pre-School Practitioners will regularly review packed lunches. If a child regularly brings a packed lunch that does not conform to the policy, then the Pre-School will speak with the parents/carers to discuss this.

Staff are required to sit at the tables with the children and consistently supervise their safety always ensuring that children are within both sight and sound when eating. At least one member of staff in the room will be trained in pediatric first aid.

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to make alternative arrangements if their child arrives at Pre-School without his/her packed lunch.

Environment

Children sit together to enjoy their packed lunch along with a member of staff at each table. A member of staff is always on hand to ensure safety and that good table manners are used and conversations encouraged between the children.

Access to Drinking Water

Parents are asked to provide a water bottle with fresh water for their child each day. These are stored in designated areas. When a child first starts at Pre-School, staff will show them where they can access their water bottle.

Throughout the session children are reminded that they can help themselves to water at any time and are encouraged to drink plenty of fluids (particularly in hotter weather).

Children are particularly encouraged to have a drink whilst eating. A choice of water or milk is provided at snack time and water is given at lunch.

At the end of each session, all cups, bowls and jugs are washed thoroughly, either by hand or in the dishwasher. Water bottles are sent home for cleaning and refilling for the child's next session.

Oral Health

Children are provided with cups to drink from. In exceptional circumstances, if a child needs to drink from a lidded cup, the parent/carer will be asked to provide one.

The setting provides sessional care for children, and therefore there is no need for children to brush their teeth at the setting. However, the importance of brushing teeth is promoted when covering topics such as "Health & Exercise" and "People who Help us".

In line with the Early Years Foundation Stage the setting is committed to promoting good oral health habits with the children in their care. We aim to educate families about the importance of oral health from a young age. As part of our responsibility staff plan activities throughout the year to promote oral health self-care and healthy eating. Activities may include (but are not limited to):

- Visits from a dentist
- Stories about teeth brushing
- Discussions and activities about healthy food and drink

Birthdays

Children's birthdays are celebrated at the setting. However, Barnett Wood Pre-School does not allow children to distribute food to celebrate a child's birthday.

Rewards

The Pre-School does not use food-based rewards.

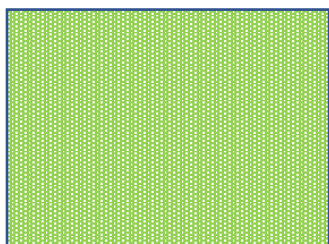
Food related activities

Staff will plan structured cooking activities for small groups of children. When planning these activities the staff will have regard for allergies and other dietary requirements.

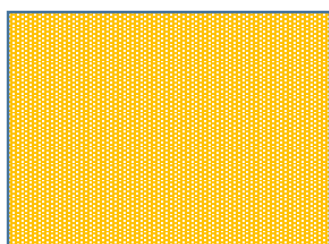
On occasion other food items may be used as part of our messy/sensory play provision. Again, staff will have regard for allergies and dietary requirements. Children are not permitted to eat any of the food used during messy/sensory play.

Policy written July 2025

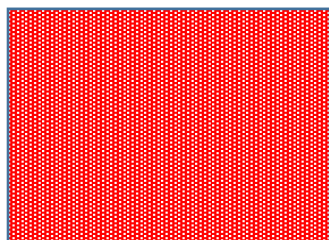
Registration Card Colour Coding



No allergies or dietary requirements



Child has mild allergies or dietary requirements



Child has severe allergies