



01	At First Steps, we believe that mealtimes should be happy, social occasions for children and staff alike. We promote shared, enjoyable positive interactions at these times.
02	We are committed to offering children healthy, nutritious, and balanced meals and snacks which meet the needs and requirements of children, ensuring a cultural and nutritional balance is always maintained. Seasonal menus are displayed on our parents/carers information board outside the front of the setting and shared electronically with our families.
03	Under no circumstances will a child be forced to eat food by any member of staff. The child will be encouraged to taste the food and if no progress is made, the food will be removed and the next item provided.
04	A balanced and healthy breakfast, midday meal, tea and two daily snacks are provided for children attending a full day at the setting.
05	We promote nutritious food at all snack and mealtimes, avoiding large quantities of fat, sugar, salt, and artificial additives, preservatives, and colouring. Practitioners support children to make healthy food choices and understand the need for healthy eating. This is also reflected in our daily provision, promoting positive attitudes to healthy eating through play opportunities and discussions.
06	Fresh drinking water is always available and accessible to children to ensure they stay hydrated. Children can freely access chilled water throughout the day from water machines provided by Glastonbury spring water.
07	Individual dietary requirements are respected and catered for where possible. Health care plans are provided to parents to complete and return for any children with specific dietary needs/requirements, preferences, or any food allergies before a child enrolls at First Steps. These are updated annually or when individual needs change.
08	We carefully consider seating arrangements 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. No child is ever left unsupervised when eating/drinking to minimise the risk of choking.
09	Where appropriate, discussions will also take place with all children about allergies and potential risks to make them aware of the dangers of sharing certain foods.
10	All children are encouraged to sit together at tables during mealtimes, with younger children strapped into secure feeding chairs with an accessible food tray to place their plate/bowl on. All children are expected to wash their hands thoroughly with soap and warm water before and after their meal and are encouraged to ask to leave the table when they have finished.
11	Staff use snack/meal times to help children to develop independence through supporting practitioners with the preparation and cutting up of fruit and vegetables, making food/drink choices, self-serving food and drink where appropriate and feeding themselves using age-appropriate utensils.
12	Occasionally we celebrate special events such as birthdays with a treat like cake, sweets, or biscuits.

OUR HEALTHY EATING GUIDLINES/
LINKED TO OUR SAFEGUARDING POLICY

13	All staff who prepare and handle food are competent to do so and receive training in food hygiene which is updated every three years. Practitioners hands must be washed prior to food preparation, and aprons worn at all times during snack and mealtimes.
14	In the unlikely event of any food poisoning affecting two or more children on the premises, whether this may arise from food offered at the nursery, we will inform Ofsted as soon as possible and in all cases within 14 days. We will also inform the relevant health agencies and follow any advice given.

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