

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 needs and requirements ensuring a cultural and nutritional balance is always maintained. Menus are displayed on our parents/carers notice board and shared electronically with our parents. We also invite parents to share ideas for our menus on a regular basis.
03	First Steps does not permit parents to bring in pack lunches, Juice cartons/bottles or snacks. We do not have the facilities to monitor or store these safely. Juice is not permitted.
04	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.
05	A balanced and healthy breakfast, midday meal, tea and two daily snacks are provided for children attending a full day at the setting.
06	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 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.
07	Fresh drinking water is always available and accessible. Children can freely access chilled water throughout the day. This is provided through Glastonbury Spring water, to ensure our children keep hydrated during their sessions. Children also have the option to choose milk or a dairy free milk alternative during snack times.
08	Individual dietary requirements are respected. Allergy/intolerance forms are provided to parents for any children with specific dietary needs, requirements, preferences, or any food allergies, before a child starts or joins First Steps. All staff are aware of allergies, and these are clearly displayed in both our rooms and in the kitchen.
09	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. No child is ever left unsupervised when eating/drinking to minimise the risk of choking.
10	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.
11	All children are encouraged to sit together at mealtimes. All children sit at the table and the younger children sit in specially designed seats incorporating a feeding tray. All children are expected to wash hands thoroughly with hand soap before and after their meal and also ask to leave the table when they have finished. We encourage good manners at these times and remind children to say please and thank you to the staff and other children during meal and snack times.
12	Staff use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through supporting practitioners with the preparation and cutting up of fruit and vegetables, making choices, self-serving food and drink, where appropriate and also to feed themselves using age-appropriate tools.
13	We will sometimes celebrate special occasions such as birthdays with the occasional treat or foods such as a cake, or biscuits. We consider our menu on these days to ensure any sweet treats are limited on these days. Foods bought in from home to celebrate this event MUST contain clear contents of ingredients. First Steps is a NUT Free setting.

14	All staff who prepare and handle food are competent to do so and receive training in food hygiene which is updated every three years.
15	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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