

St Matthew's Bloxam C of E Primary School



Early Years Food Policy 2024

At St. Matthew's Bloxam C of E Primary School Nursery we provide a well-balanced daily diet. This includes:

- Meals and snacks are offered at regular intervals throughout the day.
- Portions of fresh fruit and vegetables and foods from 3 other main food groups: Meat and fish, Dairy, Bread, cereals, potatoes and pulses.
- We provide low sugar and low salt foods and drinks that are prepared and cooked on the premises.
- Fresh drinking water is available and children who are developing independence are encouraged to help themselves to a drink of water regularly.
- Individual and cultural dietary requirements are respected and alternative foods are prepared that appear similar to the food offered to other children.
- During snack time children are encouraged to help themselves to milk or water and fruit or vegetable snack choice.
- Snacks will be offered that reduce the risk of tooth decay and raise blood sugar levels slowly.
- Menus are rotated and reviewed regularly so that they contain seasonal foods and foods that can be sourced locally.
- We use free range products and will offer organic foods wherever practically possible.
- During cooking activities, children are encouraged to make healthy choices and cook healthy foods. The children will take part in preparing, weighing and mixing ingredients.
- Children's cookery is included on a regular basis in staff and meal planning.

Food items and meals provided from home

- 1) The nursery strictly only offers snack foods, cakes, sweet biscuits, sweets and squash or "pop" on very special and rare occasions. We expect parents / carers to follow the same standard, therefore we ask parents / carers to refrain from sending such foods into nursery.
- 2) Where children attend nursery alongside others with a known nut allergy, nut products must be avoided. It is the responsibility of parents / carers to alert staff if their child has a food allergy by completing an "additional needs" form that clearly advises first aid action that may need to be taken or medical attention that might be required. It is the responsibility of staff to alert other parents to any need to avoid potentially "risk" foods that may be sent in to nursery from home (see item 3).
- 3) We aim to be fair to children who are not offered consumable "treats". Therefore, if any "snack" foods that do not comply with our healthy eating policy are found in home food boxes, they will be returned to parents / carers at the end of the day.
- 4) We advise parents / carers to pack healthy filled sandwiches, cereal bars, plain cake, cheese portions and fruit only, if children are consuming home food in nursery. (see guidance on healthy packed food for children on the following website: see: <http://www.firststepsnutrition.org.uk>.)
- 5) All home food boxes must be insulated to keep food fresh that is being brought into nursery (note: we do not have the capacity to store food in fridges.)
- 6) If parents / carers wish to bring cakes and sweets into the nursery to celebrate a special occasion, please ask the nursery staff in advance so that permission may be sought from other parents / carers to offer such foods.

MEALTIME MANAGEMENT POLICY

Aims:

We foster a mealtime atmosphere that is an enjoyable social occasion. St. Matthew's C of E Primary School Nursery is committed to providing a nutritionally well balanced daily diet that includes mainly freshly cooked food and portions of fruit and vegetables every day.

In accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) we respect children's rights to indicate their preferences and express their opinions. We listen to and respect children's opinions about the food that they are offered and (where in the best interests of the child) will respond to their choices. All children will be offered all food that is prepared for them (even if only in tiny portions) in order to encourage adventurousness in taste. All children will be encouraged to eat the fruit and vegetables on offer. Children will be given crockery to eat from and encouraged to use open cups and knives and forks.

General Procedures:

- All children will wash their hands before consuming food.
- Individual dietary requirements are respected and catered for.
- All children will be offered dessert after attempting to try at least a little of their savoury main course.
- Any child who shows signs of distress at being faced with a meal he/she does not like will have his food removed without any fuss after initial encouragement to try small amount. (Note: As there is only a short space of time until the next meal or snack (meaning that no child refusing food will be left hungry) alternatives are not offered immediately following refusal. This should encourage children to be more adventurous in attempting to try unpopular foods.)
- Staff will set a good example of good table manners.
- Cultural differences in eating habits will be respected.
- Children will be encouraged to say 'Please' and 'Thank you'.
- Friendly conversation will be encouraged
- Children not on special diets will be encouraged to eat a small piece of everything.
- Children who refuse to eat their food at mealtime will be offered food later in the session.
- Children who eat slowly will be given reasonable time to finish their food.
- Quantities will take into account individual appetite and a child's age.
- Older children will be encouraged to serve themselves and clear away their plates.
- Menus will be rotated regularly.

FOOD INTOLERANCE AND CULTURALLY EXCLUDED FOODS

At St. Matthew's Bloxam C of E Primary School Nursery, we follow the Government's Food Standards Agency (2014) advice concerning the 14 most common allergens, identifying the ingredients in all of our purchases and in our menus (see link for further information)

<https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=4&cad=rja&uact=8&sqi=2&ved=0ahUKEwi0lc-c6vvTAhUXOsAKHdFvApcQFggzMAM&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.food.gov.uk%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Ftop-allergy-types.pdf&usg=AFQjCNFAvm47FEjFrYVDZzBv2Q5J6Evvjw>

If a child presents with a food allergy or intolerance, staff will complete a form with the parent(s) that details the nature and severity of the intolerance or allergy. This form must be taken to a relevant health professional for verification and for obtaining further medical advice about how to manage the intolerance or allergy.

- Staff must maintain a visible record of children who have known food intolerance or who must avoid certain foods for religious reasons.
- Children's food intolerance details are displayed in nursery rooms and the kitchen.
- It is the responsibility of the senior person in each unit to ensure that only regular staff serve food to and/or feed a child who must not have certain foods.
- Any students or relief staff must be directly supervised if giving food to such children.

Food Education

Food Play

At St. Matthew's Bloxam C. of E. Primary School, we ensure any food we use for play with the children is carefully supervised. We will also use the following procedures to ensure children are kept safe:

- Choking hazards are checked and avoided.
- We will not use whole jelly cubes for play. If we do use jelly to enhance our play, then all jelly will be prepared with water as per the instructions and then used.
- All allergies and intolerances will be checked, and activities will be adapted to suit all children's needs, so no child is excluded.
- Children's allergies will be visible to staff.

Growing & Gardening

At St. Matthew's Bloxam C. of E. Primary School, we aim to provide opportunities for children to learn about seasonal produce and experience growing their own foods. We ensure that:

- All children have regular access to the garden.
- Seasonal fruits and vegetables are grown within pots and planters.
- Children can help to plant and care for crops within the Early Years garden.
- We aim to teach children about what seasonal means in terms of food.
- Produce grown is used in cooking or eating activities (where appropriate.)
- We encourage children to take part in growing activities which they start at Nursery / Reception and then can take home to plant.

Cooking

At St. Matthew's Bloxam C. of E. Primary School, we aim to provide opportunities for children to explore, taste and cook a range of foods from various cultures. We ensure that:

- Where appropriate, learning themes have a food-based activity linked.
- These activities are age appropriate to the children and consider the dietary needs of all the children.
- Food activities are seasonal and try to incorporate seasonal produce.
- A balance of sweet and savoury recipes are explored.
- Children can try new flavours and textures.
- Food from a variety of countries and cultures are celebrated.
- Children learn about making healthy choices through cooking activities.
- Health and hygiene routines are taught through cooking.

- Children learn about the benefits of eating five portions of fruit and vegetables a day.
- Food items are shared with families or sometimes just sampled at nursery.
- Cooking activities are often linked to festivals or cultural celebrations.

Farming

At St. Matthew's Bloxam C. of E. Primary School, we aim to teach children about the provenance of food and offer opportunities to learn about farming. We aim to:

- Have a visit to a farm or have a farm visit us on site.
- Have experiences of touching and feeding animals.
- Teach children about animals that give milk and eggs.
- Engage with farmers and / or gardeners who grow crops on a large or small scale.
- Teach children about organic methods of farming (growing.)
- Learn about some of the processes involved in food going from farm to fork.

Parental & Family Engagement

At St. Matthew's Bloxam C. of E. Primary School, we aim to include families in our food education as well as the children. We ensure that:

- Information about food related activities is written on weekly letters and included on our class page on the school website.
- Seasonal recipes are shared with Families.
- Families are invited in to share festivals and celebrations where food forms part of the learning.
- Stay and Play sessions are offered regularly so that families can take part in food related activities and see the routines that we have in Nursery / Reception around snack and lunch times
- Families are invited to special celebrations where the children have helped to prepare the food.

This policy will be reviewed in 3 years time (Summer 2027).