

Twyford Playgroup

Mealtimes and Safer Eating Practices policy 2025

Date Reviewed: September 2025

Manager Signature: Rachel Knott

Chair of Committee Signature: Pamela Lawrence

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At Twyford playgroup our mealtime policy emphasises providing regular, balanced meals and snacks, with food offered at least every 1.5 to 3 hours to meet children's high nutritional needs. Playgroup foster a calm, social eating environment by having practitioners sit with children, share meals, encourage conversation, and offer age-appropriate portions. We aim to adhere to all nutritional guidelines, promote healthy eating habits, and ensure food hygiene and safety protocols are followed.

Regular & Balanced Nutrition:

- Offer snacks daily.
- Have water and milk available to all children.
- Ensure food is balanced and meets nutritional guidelines for healthy growth and development.
- Provide a variety of foods from all four main food groups: fruits and vegetables, starchy carbohydrates, dairy, and protein.

Healthy Eating Environment:

- Create a calm, relaxed, and social eating environment where practitioners eat with the children.
- Encourage conversation and role-model good manners and eating behaviours.
- Use age-appropriate portion sizes, allowing children to ask for more if they are still hungry.

Child-Led Approaches:

- Do not force children to eat or deny them food if they are still hungry.
- Allow children to decide which foods they eat from the options offered.

- Encourage intuitive eating by giving children ample time to eat at their own pace.

Food Safety & Hygiene:

- Implement strict food hygiene and safety measures, such as proper storage and preparation.
- Ensure all staff are trained in food preparation and safety.

Supervision & Safety:

- Always supervise children during mealtimes to prevent choking. All staff will be in hearing and sight of all Children during snacks and mealtimes, even on outings.
- All staff are aware of food allergies and plan and record appropriately.
- A paediatric first aid trained staff member must be present at all mealtimes and snack times
- Staff will prevent the sharing of food between children
- Staff will cut all food appropriately to prevent choking
- Staff will ensure all children are seated when eating.
- Encourage parents to provide packed lunches that can be stored securely and hygienically.