

03 Food safety and nutrition procedures

03.04 Meeting dietary requirements

Snack and mealtimes are an important part of the day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. Little Doves CP aims to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs and preferences.

- Staff discuss and record children's dietary needs, allergies and any ethnic or cultural food preferences with their parents/carers. A child's special dietary requirements are recorded on registration to the setting and information is shared with all staff.
- Information about each child's dietary needs or ethnic and cultural food preferences is recorded on their 09.01b Registration, Sessions Requested and Permission Form and parents/carers sign the record to signify that it is correct.
- If a child has a known food allergy, procedure 04.04 Allergies and food intolerance is followed.
- Staff regularly consult with parents/carers to ensure that the records of their children's dietary needs - including any allergies - are up-to-date. Parents/carers sign the up-dated record to signify that it is correct.
- Up-to-date information about individual children's dietary needs is displayed so that the kitchen assistant, all staff and volunteers are fully informed.
- Staff ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and cultural or ethnic preferences, as well as their parent/carer's wishes.
- A typical menu of the healthy snack is displayed on the website for parents/carers to see (www.littledovescp.org.uk/info/health).
- All food labels are checked for allergens and staff are aware of any food allergies or intolerances.
- Staff aim to include food diets from children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.
- Through on-going discussion with parents/carers and research reading by staff, staff obtain information about the dietary rules of the religious groups to which children and their parents/carers belong, and of vegetarians and vegans, as well as about food allergies. The kitchen assistant and staff take account of this information when providing food and drink.
- The kitchen assistant/staff provide a vegetarian alternative when meat and fish are offered and make every effort to ensure Halal meat or Kosher food is available to children who require it.
- Where it is not possible to source and provide Halal meat or Kosher food, a vegetarian option is available; this will be discussed and agreed with parents/carers at the time of the child's registration.

- All staff show sensitivity in providing for children's diets, allergies and cultural or ethnic food preferences. A child's diet or allergy is never used as a label for the child, they are not made to feel 'singled out' because of their diet, allergy or cultural/ethnic food preferences.
- Fresh drinking water is available throughout the day. Staff inform children how to obtain the drinking water and that they can ask for water at any time during the day.
- Meal and snack times are organised as social occasions with staff participation.

Fussy/faddy eating

- Children who are showing signs of 'strong food preferences, or aversions to food' are not forced to eat anything they do not want to.
- Staff recognise the signs that a child has had enough and remove uneaten food without comment.
- Children are not made to stay at the table after others have left if they refuse to eat certain items of food.
- Staff work in partnership with parents/carers to support them with children who are showing signs of 'strong food preferences, or aversions to food' and sign post them to further advice, for example, How to Manage Simple Faddy Eating in Toddlers (Infant & Toddler Forum)
<https://infantandtoddlerforum.org/health-and-childcare-professionals/factsheets/>