

Our approach to Healthy Eating

At Bedford Nursery Schools Federation, we believe sharing food should be a happy, social occasion for children and staff alike.

We promote positive interactions when sharing food, which includes breakfast and tea club, lunch time, accessing snack and food tasting at group times.

Staff will:

- help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink, and feeding themselves.
- support children to make healthy choices and understand the need for healthy eating.

Our curriculum includes the provision and preparation of food from different cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones. Quantities offered take account of the ages of the children being catered for in line with recommended portion sizes for young children.

Snack

We offer children healthy, nutritious snacks which are based on the 'Eat well guide' sections relating to fruit and vegetables, carbohydrates and dairy. <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/the-eatwell-guide/>

We will ensure that:

- A balanced and healthy daily snack is provided morning and afternoon. (See typical snack menu and breakfast/tea menus attached).
- Fresh drinking water and milk is always available and accessible. It is frequently offered to children and in hot weather staff will encourage children to drink more water to keep them hydrated.
- Individual dietary requirements are respected. We gather information from parents regarding children's dietary needs, including any special dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies as part of our registration process. Where appropriate, we will carry out a risk assessment in the case of allergies, and follow any care plans which have been issued.
- The nursery school is a nut-free school.

We request that parents/carers do not send in any food, sweets or drink in your child's bag. This is to ensure the safety of all children, and to ensure food intake is monitored.

Lunches

Lunches are currently provided by Heart Academy and the menu is published on the school website

Lunch times are arranged in 'family style dining' where children and staff sit as a 'family' and are able to talk to each other. Children are encouraged to use their manners and say 'please' and 'thank you'. We understand that this can be a daunting time for some children and a child who begins to get upset at being faced with a meal they do not like, will be encouraged to try a small piece of everything, but never forced to eat. If a child does not finish their main course, they will still be given a helping of dessert. Children who refuse to eat at the mealtime are offered food later in the day.

Breakfast and Tea

Breakfast and Tea club is available to those families who require additional hours at nursery school. At breakfast we offer a choice of healthy options including; non sugary cereals, for example Rice Krispies or Corn Flakes. Wholemeal toast and spreads are also available.

At tea club we offer a 'light' tea at 3.45 – 4.00pm. This may be a sandwich made with wholemeal bread, beans on toast or pasta and sauce. The children are encouraged to sit at the table 'family style' with an adult and discuss their day at nursery.

Celebrations

Birthday celebrations are valued and we will make sure that your child feels very special on their day (in accordance with your own values). We sing Happy Birthday and encourage your child to talk about their day. If parents/carers wish to, we do allow cakes to be brought in on special occasions, providing that they are shop-bought and not home-made. This is to ensure that we are fully aware of all the ingredients and can cater to any dietary restrictions and allergies.

Cake and any other treats will be sent home with the children. We would encourage your child to eat such treats close to mealtimes and clean their teeth afterwards. We would also encourage you to consider healthy alternatives, with reduced sugar and fat content.

Oral hygiene

Children's first teeth have a crucial role in supporting good nutrition, speech development and dental health. We frequently take part in Bedford Borough's 'My Smiles' program and can provide a toothbrush and toothpaste, as well as a brushing chart to encourage good habits at home.

We encourage you to register with a local dentist.