Nutrition and Mealtimes Policy

At **Young England Kindergarten** we believe that mealtimes should be happy, social occasions for children and staff alike. We promote shared, enjoyable positive interactions at these times.

We are committed to offering children healthy, nutritious and balanced meals and snacks, which meet individual needs and requirements, following the Department for Education nutrition guidance[1].

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Allergies and allergic reactions policy.

Our approach to food and healthy eating

- V& Me provide a balanced and healthy lunch and two daily snacks are provided for children attending a full day at the nursery and a morning snack for children just staying until midday.
- Menus are planned in advance and in line with example menu and guidance produced by the Department for Education (copies can be provided on request). These are changed every six weeks, reflect cultural diversity and variation and are displayed for children and parents to view on the Ovivio system.
- Menus include at least 4 servings of fresh fruit and vegetables per day
- We provide nutritious food at all snack and mealtimes, avoiding large quantities of fat, sugar, salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings
- Quantities offered take account of the ages of the children being catered for, in line with recommended portion sizes for babies and young children.

Sustainability

- Please see V&Me's sustainability policy.

Mealtime environment

- No child is ever left alone when eating or drinking to minimise the risk of choking, and a qualified paediatric first aider is always present during meal and snack times
- Staff set a good example, eat with the children, and demonstrate good table manners. Meal and snack times are organised so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate in small groups. During meal and snack times children are encouraged to use appropriate table manners and staff promote conversation to support social development
- Staff use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drinks, and feeding themselves
- Children not on special diets are encouraged to eat a small piece of everything
- Children who refuse to eat at the mealtime are offered fruit later in the day
- Children are given time to eat at their own pace and are not rushed.

[1] https://bit.ly/EYFS_nutrition_guidance

Drinks

- Only milk and water are provided as drinks to promote oral health
- Fresh drinking water is always available and accessible. It is frequently offered to children, and intake is monitored
- In hot weather staff will encourage children to drink more water to keep them hydrated.

Management of food allergies and dietary needs

- All allergens are displayed alongside the menus to show the ingredients of each meal
- Individual dietary requirements are respected. Before a child joins the nursery, we gather information from parents regarding their children's dietary needs, including any special dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies that a child has, and any special health requirements. All information is shared with staff involved in preparing and handling food
- Parents complete a 'notification of allergy' form once their child starts with us.
- Where appropriate, we will carry out a risk assessment in the case of allergies and work alongside parents to put into place an individual dietary/allergy plan for their child. This will be regularly reviewed and any changes shared with all staff
- 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
- At each meal and snack time, we ensure a nominated practitioner is responsible for checking that the food being provided meets all the requirements for each child
- Where appropriate, discussions will also take place with children about allergies and potential risks to make them aware of the dangers of sharing certain foods
- Staff show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. They do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child, or make a child feel singled out because of their diet or allergy.

Provision for cultural and dietary preferences

- Where possible, we provide foods from the diet of each of the children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones
- Cultural differences in eating habits are respected.

Learning about food and cooking with children

- Staff support children to make healthy choices and understand the need for healthy eating
- We promote positive attitudes to healthy eating through play, growing, shopping and cooking opportunities and discussions.

Celebrations and special occasions

- We will celebrate special occasions with sugar free treats; we are a sugar free school. Products containing refined sugar are not permitted in school.
- We do not allow parents to bring in cakes on special occasions

- We ensure that all food brought in from parents meet health and safety requirements and that ingredients are listed, following the Food Information for Consumers (FIR) 2014.

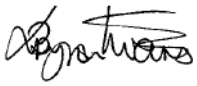
Food safety and hygiene

- All staff who prepare and handle food are competent to do so and receive training in food hygiene which is updated every three years
- All staff are trained in preparing foods safely to avoid the risk of choking, following the Foods Standards Agency guidelines
- All staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis
- All staff are aware of the differences between allergies and intolerances, including that they need to maintain vigilance as children can develop allergies at any time
- In the very unlikely event of any food poisoning affecting two or more children on the premises, whether or not this may arise from food offered at the nursery, we will inform Ofsted as soon as reasonably practical and in all cases within 14 days. We will also inform the relevant health agencies and follow any advice given.

Food brought from home

- We do allow children to bring packed lunches into the setting if they are struggling to eat the school meals for an extended period of time (at least two weeks). We provide parents with guidelines for nutritious content and signpost to the NHS packed lunch guidance: https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes/
- We share the Food Standards Agency choking hazards guidance to support parents to prepare foods to reduce choking hazards
- We request parents use ice packs
- We do not provide reheating services for children's packed lunches
- Children's lunch boxes are checked prior to giving the contents to the children to ensure any risks from potential allergens or choking hazards are managed.

Our policy is developed in partnership with parents, staff and children and reviewed on a regular basis.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
January 2026	 *Lucinda Byron Evans (Principal)*	*January 2027*