

# Little VIPs Food and Nutrition Policy



At Little VIPs Day Care, we believe mealtimes should be happy, social occasions for both children and staff. We aim to promote positive interactions, where every child feels included, supported, and valued.

We are committed to providing healthy, nutritious, and balanced meals and snacks that meet children's individual needs. This policy follows the Department for Education Early Years Nutrition Guidance (May 2025) and should be read alongside our Allergies and Allergic Reactions Policy.

## Our Approach to Food and Healthy Eating

- Children attending a full day at nursery are offered a balanced midday meal and two daily snacks, with the afternoon snack being more substantial.
- The tea-time snack is a nutritious option, sufficient to sustain children until they go home.
- Menus are planned in advance, rotated regularly, and reflect seasonal produce and cultural diversity. Menus are displayed on the school website, the School Money app, and within the nursery.
- Daily servings of fresh fruit and vegetables are included at every meal and snack.
- Food avoids high levels of fat, sugar, salt, and artificial additives, preservatives, or colourings.
- Portion sizes are age-appropriate and follow recommended guidance for children under five.
- Children are encouraged to develop independence at mealtimes, including pouring their own drinks from mini jugs and helping to cut and prepare fruit where appropriate with staff support.
- Children sit together at tables laid with tablecloths, helping to create a calm and social eating environment and clearly showing the change of purpose from playtime to mealtime.

## Snack Guidance (Aligned with EYFS 2025)

All snacks:

- Contain at least one of the four food groups: fruit & vegetables, starchy foods, dairy/alternatives, or protein.
- Are free from added sugar, excessive salt, and artificial sweeteners.
- Are served in appropriate textures and sizes to reduce choking risks.

### Examples of Suitable Snacks (DfE 2025):

Food Group	Examples
Fruit & Vegetables	Apple slices, pear, banana, melon, berries, carrot sticks, cucumber, peppers
Starchy Foods	Wholemeal toast fingers, wholegrain crackers, rice cakes, breadsticks
Dairy/Alternatives	Cubes of cheese, plain yoghurt (unsweetened), soft cheese with pitta
Protein	Hummus with veg sticks, boiled egg (cut appropriately), lentil or bean dip

## Drinks

- Only milk and water are offered.
- Fresh drinking water is always available, and staff encourage regular drinking.
- Full-fat milk is provided to children under two; semi-skimmed milk may be introduced from age two if appropriate.

## Mealtime Environment

- Mealtimes are calm, sociable occasions with staff sitting alongside children to model manners.

- Children are encouraged to develop independence, serving themselves and making choices.
- Conversation is encouraged to support social and language development.
- Children eat at their own pace; no child is rushed.
- Children are never left unsupervised while eating or drinking.

## Babies and Weaning

- Babies follow their individual feeding patterns, agreed in consultation with parents/carers and reviewed regularly to reflect the child's changing needs.
- Breastfeeding is fully supported, and appropriate facilities are available for parents who wish to breastfeed. Expressed breast milk can be stored and handled safely in accordance with NHS food safety guidance.
- Infant formula is prepared safely following current NHS guidelines and parents' instructions. Bottles are clearly labelled and prepared hygienically.
- Weaning is introduced in partnership with parents, respecting each child's stage of development, textures, timings and home feeding practices. Staff follow NHS guidance on introducing solid foods and monitor children closely while eating to reduce choking risks.
- School meals are not provided for babies under 1 year old. Until a child reaches their first birthday, parents/carers must provide suitable food for their baby in line with their stage of weaning and dietary needs.

## Allergies, Cultural and Dietary Needs

- Allergens are clearly identified and managed. Children with allergies or dietary needs have an individual Health Care Plan in place, developed in partnership with parents/carers and, where appropriate, health professionals.
- Individual dietary requirements are respected, and staff follow each child's Health Care Plan to ensure the safe preparation and serving of food.
- Allergy information is clearly displayed for staff. Allergy posters are displayed in the kitchen for the cook when preparing meals, and in each room to support staff when serving food to children.
- We are a nut-free school and early years setting. Nuts and products containing nuts are not permitted anywhere on the premises to reduce the risk of allergic reactions.
- Seating arrangements and serving procedures are carefully managed to minimise the risk of cross-contamination.
- Staff handle allergies sensitively, ensuring children are not labelled or singled out because of their dietary needs.
- All staff are paediatric first aid trained and are trained to recognise and respond to allergic reactions, including the safe use of EpiPens and emergency procedures where required.
- The setting also has staff trained in the use of LifeVac equipment as part of emergency choking response procedures.
- Cultural, religious, and family dietary practices are respected, celebrated, and considered when planning and providing meals.

## Learning About Food

- Children learn about food through play, gardening, cooking, and tasting.
- Staff encourage healthy choices and promote positive attitudes to eating.

## Celebrations and Special Occasions

- Special occasions may include a small treat (e.g., cake), served at mealtimes to protect oral health.
- Parents may not bring cakes or other foods from home for birthdays.
- Alternative celebrations include stickers, badges, dancing, party games, or choosing a special story.

## Food from Home

- Children may bring packed lunches if required.

- Parents are given guidance aligned with NHS healthy lunchbox advice.
- Lunchboxes are checked to manage allergens and choking hazards.
- We are a NUT FREE nursery.

## Food Safety and Hygiene

- All staff who prepare and handle food are trained in food hygiene, updated every three years.
- Food is prepared and cut to minimise choking hazards.
- In the unlikely event of food poisoning affecting two or more children, Ofsted and health agencies are informed within 14 days.

This policy ensures Little VIPs meets both our values and the latest government guidance, promoting healthy, safe, and inclusive mealtimes for all children.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
April 2026	Hayley Fassam – Nursery Manager	April 2027