



# The Mulberry Bush

## CASTERTON

PRIVATE DAY NURSERY FROM 6 MONTHS - 4 YEARS

### Eating Well Policy

Mealtimes should be a happy, social occasion for children and staff alike. Positive interactions should be shared at these times and enjoyed. The Mulberry Bush is committed to offering children healthy, nutritious and balanced meals and snacks which meet individual needs and requirements.

What children eat affects their health both now and in the future. They need a balanced diet to grow properly, keep healthy, fight off illness and tackle problems such as diabetes and obesity.

Nursery food has an important role to play in developing children's social and personal attitudes and behaviours around food.

We will ensure that:

- Two daily snacks are provided for children attending a full day at the nursery, one for children attending for half day.
- A healthy, balanced midday meal will be provided for children.
- Menus will be planned in advance, rotated regularly and reflect cultural diversity and variation. These will be displayed for children and parents to view
- We provide nutritious food at all snack and meal times, avoiding large quantities of fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings
- Menus (including snacks) will include at least 3 servings of fresh fruit and vegetables per day for a child who attends all day.
- Fresh drinking water will be constantly available and frequently offered to children and babies. Milk is also available at snack times.
- Individual dietary requirements will be respected. We will gather information from parents regarding their children's dietary needs including any allergies. 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 plan for their child

- Staff will show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. They would not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child, or make a child feel singled out because of her/his diet or allergy.
- Staff will set a good example and eat with the children and show good table manners. Meal and snack times will be organised so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate in small groups. During meals and snack times children will be encouraged to use their manners and say 'please' and 'thank you' and conversation will be encouraged.
- Staff will use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink, and feeding themselves. Staff will support children to make healthy choices and understand the need for healthy eating.
- 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 will be respected.
- Any child who shows signs of distress at being faced with a meal he/she does not like will have his/her food removed without any fuss. If a child does not finish his/her first course, he/she will still be given a small helping of dessert. Children not on special diets will be encouraged to eat a small piece of everything.
- Children who refuse to eat at the mealtime will be offered food later in the day.
- Children will be given time to eat at their own pace and not rushed.
- Quantities offered will take account of the ages of the children being catered for.
- We will promote positive attitudes to healthy eating through play opportunities and discussions.
- The nursery will provide parents with daily written records of feeding routines for all children.
- No child is ever left alone when eating/drinking to ensure that there is no risk of choking.

### **Snacks**

Snacks are available at 10am and 2.45pm. Nursery aims to provide appropriate snacks for each age group and encourage children to choose where appropriate to promote independence. Snacks available include:

- Dried fruit (raisins, apricots)
- Fresh fruit (apple, pear, banana, grapes, melon etc)
- Fresh vegetables (carrot, cucumber, pepper, tomatoes)
- Crackers, breadsticks and cereals
- Cheese
- Toast
- Biscuits (limited to one per child)

## **Meals**

Nursery meals are included in the price when booked in for a morning or full day sessions. All meals are served with vegetables and there is either a pudding or a starter.

- 1 portion of protein rich food
- 1 portion of grains or potatoes
- At least 1 portion of vegetables

Examples of our meals are:

- Spaghetti Bolognaise
- Cottage Pie
- Chicken Curry and Boiled Rice
- Sausage and Mash
- Beef Stew and Crusty Bread
- Vegetable Rice

A vegetarian option is always available.

## **Dietary requirements**

We take all dietary requirements into consideration when preparing the menus. We consult the parents on managing such requirements and work alongside them to create menus, procedures of preparing and cooking of the food items.

## **Baby led weaning**

Guidelines recommend that babies start to eat solid food at 6 months, starting with small amounts of food and increase this gradually as the child gets older. Food consistency and variety should also gradually increase as the child gets older, as should the number of times that the child is fed; the World Health Organisation (WHO) Guidelines recommend 2-3 meals per day for infants 6-8 months of age and 3-4 meals per day for infants 9-23 months of age, with 1-2 additional snacks as required.

Baby Led Weaning means letting the child feed themselves from the very start of weaning, rather than taking food from a spoon offered by an adult. Baby led weaning means no purees, no ice cube trays, no food processor, no potato masher and no baby rice. This is a way of introducing solid foods, by letting babies choose what they eat and feed themselves when they are ready. This means it is more likely to tie in with their ability to take food into their mouth, move it around and swallow safely. The nursery discusses this with parents as part of the settling in process and supports the routines already set up with the parents at home. Food is provided by the nursery (please see above) however, if parents want to bring in food from home they are more than welcome to do so.

All staff are aware of baby led weaning and understand the difference between gagging and choking. Please refer to the Safety and Well-being section of this policy for more information about First Aid.

### **Lone working**

All children sit down in their room to have their meals. Ratios **must** be maintained at all times during this time, lone working is kept to a minimum during snack and meal times, and is only when another staff member is within hearing, this is to ensure the safety of all children. Please refer to the Lone Working Policy

### **Safety and Well-being**

Should a child become ill or require First Aid during meal times there will always be at least 2 members of staff supporting the children during snack and meal times. All staff are Paediatric First Aid trained and we ensure staff are confident in knowing what to do in an emergency. The First Aid procedure must be followed in the event of an emergency during snack or meal times, this is discussed in regular staff meetings to ensure staff confidence and competence. Please refer to the Accidents and First Aid, Messy Play and Weaning Policy.