



09 Early Years practice procedures

09.08 Prime times – Snack-times and mealtimes (older children)

Children are supervised during mealtimes and always remain within sight and hearing of staff.

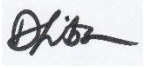
Snack times

- A 'snack' is prepared mid-morning and mid-afternoon and can be organised according to the discretion of the setting manager.
- Children may also take turns to help set the table. Small, lidded plastic jugs are provided with choice of milk or water.
- Children wash their hands before and after snack-time.
- Children are only offered full-fat milk until they are at least two years old because they may not get the calories they need from semi-skimmed milk. After the age of two, children can gradually move to semi-skimmed milk as a main drink, as long as they are eating a varied and balanced diet.
- Fruit or raw vegetables, such as carrot or tomato, are offered in batons, which children should be encouraged to help in preparing. Bananas and other foods are not cut as rounds but are sliced to minimise a choking hazard.
- Portion sizes are gauged as appropriate to the age of the child.
- Biscuits should not be offered, but toast, rice cakes or oatcakes are good alternatives.
- Staff join in conversation and encourage children's independence by allowing them to pour drinks, butter toast, cut fruit etc.

Mealtimes

- Tables are never overcrowded during mealtimes.
- Children help staff set tables.
- Children wash their hands and sit down as food is ready to be served.
- Children are encouraged to eat the healthier items (food from the four food groups first) in their packed lunch/ hot meal before eating items such as crisps and chocolate. No child will be forced to eat what they do not want, and uneaten items will be replaced into their lunch boxes, so parents can see what has not been eaten. The key person will let the parent know if their child indicates they do not like an item of food they have been given.
- Staff have their lunch with children. Staff who are eating with the children role-model healthy eating and best practice at all times, for example not drinking cans of fizzy drinks in front of the children.

- Children are given time to eat at their own pace and are not hurried to fit in with adults' tasks and breaks. They are not made to eat what they do not like and are only encouraged to try new foods slowly.
- In order to protect children with food allergies or specific dietary requirements, children are discouraged from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- Mealtimes are relaxed opportunities for social interaction between children and the adults who care for them.
 - Children go to the bathroom and wash their hands after lunch. Information for parents is displayed and may include the daily menus including identification of any foods containing allergens.

This policy was adopted by	Blackberry Lane Pre-School & Nursery	
On	March 2025	
Date to be reviewed	March 2026	
Signed on behalf of the provider		
Name of signatory	Mrs D Gibson	Ms C Lawrence
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	Manager	Director