



## ABERDEEN PARK NURSERY

Childhood  
Not just childcare

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## FOOD POLICY

*"Mens sana in corpore sano"*

A **healthy diet**, **hydration** and **regular exercise** are essential for children's health and wellbeing which is at the heart of APN's approach to food and nutrition.

### Our aims are:

- To provide all children attending APN with a nutritionally balanced and varied diet to develop their health, growth, stimulate learning and well-being.
- To encourage children to socialise together, sharing food and gaining independence.
- To develop, encourage and support good healthy eating habits in early years.
- To establish healthy hydration habits.

### Providing a varied diet:

At APN we believe children should eat a varied balanced nutritious diet. The wider the variety of foods eaten, the better the balance of nutrients provided. A varied, balanced and nutritious diet is associated with better health.

The main food group that we provide food from are as follows:

- Carbohydrates: They give you energy. We find them in sugary and starchy foods like: potatoes, rice, cereals, pasta, bread and some fruit and vegetables.
- Proteins: They help your body grow and repair itself. You find them in meats, poultry, fish, dairy products, eggs and beans.

- Fats: They provide energy and help in building. You find them in dairy in dairy products, red meats, some poultry and fish.
- Fibre: It helps you digest your food. We find fibre in lots of food like cereals, fruit, bread and vegetables.
- Minerals: Minerals are in lots of foods but are especially in fresh fruit vegetables.
- Vitamins: Are mostly found in dairy products (milk, eggs and butter) fresh fruit and vegetables.

These foods will provide all the nutrients the body needs to grow and maintain good health.

### **Development and implementation of the food policy:**

At APN we take food seriously and implementation and ongoing development is based upon the following key principles:

- We consult with parents/carers and children to keep informed about issues related to food and drink.
- We plan varied menus for meals and snacks in advance, which include different tastes, colours and textures of food taking into consideration seasonality, sustainability and the impact on the environment.
- We provide meals and snacks that are planned so that they meet the national best practice in food and drink guidelines.
- We cater for the dietary requirements of all children wherever possible.
- We have a positive and welcoming eating environment, to encourage children to develop good eating habits and social interaction.

Before a child starts the nursery staff and parents/carers share information about each child's special dietary needs, preferences and food allergies that the child has, and any special health requirements. Parents/carers of children who are on special diets or who have allergies will be asked to provide as much information as possible about suitable foods and will keep the nursery staff up to date with any changes. We elicit feedback from staff, children, parents (i.e. observation, questionnaires) which is used to inform menu, planning and food related activities.

### **When and who the policy applies to:**

We are very much aware of the importance of establishing healthy eating habits within our setting. This applies to all members of staff including students, trained staff, cook, parents, visitors and children. We actively encourage parents sharing food experiences with us through food events within the setting; sending pictures of dishes cooked at home, recipes exchange etc.

All staff are involved in the practical implementation of the policy which is yearly reviewed.

### **Food and drink provision:**

At APN we employ a cook who comes in every day to prepare our meals from scratch. Our menus are seasonal, a four weekly seasonal menu cycle have been implemented and approved by a registered nutritionist. Week menu is displayed in all the rooms within the setting and sent by e-mail to all parents weekly.

**At APN we understand that establishing healthy hydration habits from an early age it is important for the health and wellbeing of young children as they grow through life.**

Children have access to drinking water freely throughout the day indoors and outdoors. The children are encouraged to have between 6-8 (100-150ml) drinks each day. Staff actively encourages children to drink fluids at regular intervals to help increase the total amount of fluid drink.

### **Menus:**

Meals and snacks are offered throughout the day. Food is provided at the following times:

8am-8.30am: Breakfast. Selection of non-coated sugar cereals or porridge and water/milk offered daily.

9.30am: Morning Snack. (See Menu)

11.45: Lunch. (See Menu)

2.15pm: Afternoon Snack. (See Menu)

3.30pm: Light afternoon tea. (See Menu)

All menus are planned in advance using fresh seasonal produce and are change seasonally. We do not use salt when cooking and refine sugar is reduced to a minimum.

Appetites in young children vary. We will encourage them to eat healthy foods according to their appetites. Staff are aware of appropriate portion sizes and follow the guidance for this from the Voluntary Guidelines for early year's settings in England.

Fresh food and vegetables are on offer in our snacks and menus daily. Water and full fat milk are the only drinks served within the setting.

At APN we actively encourage children to feed themselves independently and use crockery and cutlery appropriately for their stage of development.

### **Babies:**

Breastfeeding is welcome in our premises. We have adopted the Islington breastfeeding scheme.

**“Weaning”** is the term often given to the introduction of foods other than breast milk or infant formula to an infant. In the UK it is recommended that the weaning process starts at about 6 months of age.

At APN your key person will meet you in order to discuss your baby's requirements as to when and how to wean them.

APN supports and encourages “baby-led weaning” where babies are encouraged to explore for themselves all the food on offer to them and to eat whatever they can get into their mouths independently.

Bottle to cup policy is in place. We aim to have all our babies drinking by an open cup by the age of 12months.

## **Communication with children and families:**

Including parents/carers and children is a fundamental aspect of APN nutritional approach. Our aim is to be fully inclusive and supportive of all families. We achieve this by in a number of ways:

- Provide information for parents and carers on the daily routine for meals and snacks, to help them plan child's routine at home.
- Share our food policy with parents/carers when their children start to attend and consult them when updating.
- Key person gives parents/carers regular feedback on how well, and what the children are eating while at Nursery.
- Display of menus for meals and snacks for parents and carers to see in all rooms. Weekly menu sent by e-mail every week.
- Consult with parents and carer about food we provide, and ask them out feedback on menus as they are developed and introduced i.e. parents meetings, questionnaires, e-mail.
- The cook regularly chats informally to parents about food and is also involved in cooking with the children.
- The cook asks the children for daily feedback regarding meals served that information helps to plan future menus.
- Events are organised throughout the year i.e. open day, cooking workshops, garden parties and cultural occasions. Children may be involved in planning menus informally in discussions with staff and formally through the monthly assessment by the cook which creates a link between the nursery and the kitchen.

## **THE EATING ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL ASPECTS OF MEAL TIMES**

Creating a relaxed and unhurried environment for eating is essential in encouraging social interaction. Positive role modelling by staff is a key element in establishing this and also in developing positive healthy eating messages during meal times. We aim to do this by:

- All rooms have appropriate size tables, chairs, plates, bowls, cups and cutlery which help children to eat independently.
- Adults encourage children to choose the fruit they are going to eat for themselves, and to try new foods-smell, touch and taste approach.
- Children are not expected to finish everything on their plate, and are able to have their dessert even if they haven't finished their main course. Children have an opportunity to have a second helping.
- Food is never used as a punishment, or as a reward.
- Adults always engage with children at meal times, children are never left alone while eating. Meal times are sociable occasions and a valuable time to talk to children about food.

- Adults sit around tables to eat their meals and snacks, as this supports children to develop their social skills and good eating habits.
- Children are involved in helping to set up and clear away tables before and after meals, the older- children serve themselves.
- Adult eat with the children to act as a positive role model and encourage conversation during meal and snack times.
- Water is available at all meals time.

### **Celebrations/special occasions and providing food for all:**

We understand that food and drink play an important role in special occasions and events and we plan that children are involved in learning from different religions and cultures around the world (e.g. "Diwali", "Chinese New Year") throughout the year. As part of the curriculum, we ensure that food related activities are planned into the weekly menus to ensure that children are having a balanced diet and still meet the needs of the individual child. This can be evidenced in staff planning, menus and children's individual learning journeys.

### **Encouraging fussy eaters to eat well:**

Young children can be *fussy* about what they eat, or how they eat. *Fussy eating* and *fear of new foods* (food neophobia) are part of development and affect between 10% and 20% of children under five. Fear of new foods in children typically starts between 18 months and two years old and is thought to be a natural behaviour. A child who appears to be fussy about their food but is growing well is probably eating sufficient balance of foods and getting enough energy and nutrients. ***APN adopts some simple strategies to manage fussy eating:***

1. Meet with child's parents/carers to develop a plan so that a consistent approach can be adopted.
2. Modelling. Seat "fussy eaters" with "good eaters" at meal times.
3. Staff eat with children, and talk positively about the taste and texture of the food.
4. Give children regular and repeated chances to taste new foods, as this increases their liking for and eating of new foods. The child must actually taste the food to change their preferences and it can take as many as 10 to 16 tastings before they accepted. *Smell-touch-taste-approach*.
5. - If children are resistant to trying new foods, offer them small tastes and make sure the child maintains control of the situation.
6. - Praise children for trying news foods.
7. - Never force children to finish everything on their plate. Children who are made to eat everything they are served learn to dislike the foods they are pressured to eat, and this aversions may last into adulthood.
8. - Give children small servings at first, with the opportunity to have second helpings if they finish the first serving, as they may find larger portions off-putting.
- 9.- Encourage children to serve themselves.

### **Food brought in from home:**

Occasionally APN will ask parents to bring some food to share with others when hosting social events. Parents must be made aware of not using nuts when cooking. Parents with children with special dietary requirements and/or allergies will be asked to provide a dish that their children can eat.

### **Learning about and through food:**

Children are encouraged to learn about food processes, tastes and textures through well planned activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage such as growing, cooking, tasting and exploring different foods and ingredients. Any cooking activities that are carried out with children who have special dietary requirements must be carefully planned and prepared so the child does not come into contact with any food or drink items that they are not allowed to have.

### **Food safety and hygiene:**

APN follows food safety guidelines from Better Food Safer Business information pack and we are inspected by the environmental health agency every year. Food is stored, prepared and presented in a safe and hygienic environment; all rooms have a designated food and drink area where children can access snacks, drinks and meals. Suitable sterilisation equipment for babies is available. Staff might be occasionally involved in the planning and preparation of meals and snacks. **All staff hold a Level 2 food safety certificate.**

It is also important that children are taught basic hygiene themselves, such as not eating food that has fallen on the floor, and washing their hands with soap and water before eating meals or snacks and after going to the toilet. Adults support children in their understanding of the reasons why they need to have good personal hygiene by giving children explanations of why they must wash their hands and show them how to wash their hands properly.

### **Protecting children's health**

Our approach to food and drink follows the advice of "Eat better Guidelines" for children and Voluntary Food and Drinking Guidelines for Early Years Settings in England to ensure that we are meeting the needs of all children in our care. Everyone at APN has a responsibility to protect children's health which includes helping to maintain a healthy weight as they grow. If staff have concerns about a child's weight or eating behaviour we would talk to the child's parents/carers and suggest they meet with other health professionals (i.e. doctor, health visitor, dieticians etc). Our staff have received training in **Oral Health** and are equipped to give consistent and evidence-based information and advice on oral health to children and families. Children are encouraged to have an understanding of healthy dental practices through planned activities within the setting. E.g. Role Play.

APN is a "**Breastfeeding friendly space**". We offer facilities for mothers attending or visiting the nursery and/or visitors to breast feed and provide appropriate facilities for storing breast milk if necessary. We refer parents to their health visitor if they have concerns around breast feeding.

We have links with the local health visitors and we are members of the "*Change4Life*" programme which also supplies us with useful information and guidance.

### **Evaluation and review of the setting's approach to food and drink provision:**

- We evaluate short, medium, and long-term planning linking to the to the EYFS learning outcomes for children.
- Using the Code of Practice Checklist to evaluate the settings approach to food and drink provision termly.
- Getting feedback from parents, cares and children through questionnaires, "suggestions box".
- Keeping up to date with current good practice, meeting the welfare requirements for food and drink.
- Regularly review staff training and development plans for food safety, hygiene and nutrition.
- Reviewing the food policy once a year.
- The nursery chef regularly gets direct feedback from cooking with and by asking daily feedback from the children.
- Through appraisals with staff, individual development plans are reviewed an updated.

### **Equal Opportunities:**

All children and their families should be respected as individuals and their food preferences and religious requirements should be accommodated. This is done through the different festivals and celebrations and by including meals that reflect APN's "cultural make up" within our weekly menu. And by encouraging families to share how they celebrate the festival and the foods with which it is associated with. We value the contributions made by the different cultures and nationalities to the variety of foods we can eat. When encouraging the children to try different foods we will be aware of any special diets/allergies that children may have.

### **Birthdays and Leaving Parties:**

At APN we encourage the celebration of birthdays. Parents are welcome to bring in a cake bought from a shop, but ensure that the listed ingredients are checked (e.g. nut free) and/or they can request to have one made by our in-house cook. We encourage the parents to buy a fruit base cake low in sugar.

IF YOU DO NOT WANT YOUR CHILD TO ATTEND THE CELEBRATION PLEASE INFORM YOUR KEY PERSON, AS YOUR CHILD WILL NEED TO BE COLLECTED BEFORE THE PARTY BEGINS/and/or to make alternative arrangements.

### **Please note. Special Diets:**

Some children have special dietary requirements. Every effort must be made for all the children to enjoy the party and what is on offer. If parents cannot provide suitable birthday food the nursery cook will provide food that meets the specific requirements.

**Please note:**

**APN must notify OFSTED of any food poisoning affecting two or more children cared for on the premises. Notification must be made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but in any event within 14 days of the incident.**

**OFSTED:**

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