



Document review date: 2027

## Food Policy

*The Governing Body of Oliver Thomas Nursery School adopted this Policy March 2025*

### Purpose of this policy

We are based in Newham and the numbers of children in our borough who are both underweight and who are obese exceed the national figures and tooth decay in the under 5's is the second highest in London.

We provide an environment that promotes healthy food and eating and enables children to make informed choices about the food they eat. This policy covers all aspects of food and drink at nursery school.

The policy was formulated through consultation between members of staff, governors, and parents/carers. The policy is communicated to the entire nursery community. It is adhered to by everyone involved with the teaching/serving/cooking of food/drink in nursery during the day. The nutritional principles of this policy are based on current evidence based findings; and the 'eat well plate' is the agreed model for ensuring a healthy balanced diet. We use the 'eat better start better' guidance and look to the Caroline Walker trust for guidance on under fives nutrition and portion size.

[www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/eatwell-plate.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/eatwell-plate.aspx)

<https://foundationyears.org.uk/eat-better-start-better/>

<https://www.cwt.org.uk/>

Standards for safe school food throughout the school day are in place.

### FOOD POLICY AIMS

The main aims of our nursery food policy are:

1. To enable children to make healthy food choices through the provision of information and development of appropriate skills and attitudes
2. To provide healthy, balanced, nutritious food/drink choices throughout the school day and ensure food brought into nursery is safe and healthy.
3. To ensure that all aspects of food and drink in school promote the health and wellbeing of pupils, staff and visitors to our nursery
4. To ensure that children are helped to understand the importance of physical activity and to make healthy choices in relation to food.



**Oliver Thomas Nursery School Children's Centre**  
Mathews Avenue, East Ham, London, E6 6BU  
020 8552 1177 | [info@oliverthomas.org.uk](mailto:info@oliverthomas.org.uk)  
[www.oliverthomas.org.uk](http://www.oliverthomas.org.uk)



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These aims are in keeping with the Statutory Framework for the EYFS

The Department for Education legislation (September 2015) stipulates that nutrition education is embedded in the curriculum. There are numerous opportunities in the Oliver Thomas curriculum for children to develop knowledge of food and health, examples are cooking or preparing food from a range of cultures.

Children are involved in cooking and food preparation every day in the Nursery School, they pour their own drinks and prepare their own snacks under supervision. We promote healthy eating habits that will lead to lifelong health and well-being. We recognise that healthier children learn more effectively. We aim to have an impact on health related issues such as children being over or under-weight and having poor dental health which are such significant factors in Newham.

## **FOOD AND DRINK PROVISION THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL DAY.**

National Nutritional Standards for food in schools became compulsory in June 2014. Food and Nutrient based Standards covering all aspects of school food, form the basis for all food offered and eaten in nursery throughout the nursery day. Together they apply to all food and drink served in school.

## **SNACKS**

The snacks we offer are carefully planned according to nutritional guidelines for under-fives so they offer a mix of carbohydrate, protein and fruit or veg. Snack is offered on a rolling program twice a day. Food is washed and brought to the table by staff and children are involved in preparing their individual snack and clearing up the cutlery, plates etc. All plates, cups etc. are washed in a dishwasher after use. Snack photos are displayed to promote healthy eating and hand washing is encouraged for hygiene by the team.

## **HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES**

Lunch for those children staying all day, is provided by parents. Parents and carers provide children with packed lunches that complement the nutritional standards. This is achieved by promoting healthy balanced packed lunch options. We provide a leaflet to show parents examples of what a 'healthy packed lunch' may look like. Lunchtimes are used to engage children in talking about making healthy food choices. We use these times to talk with children about specific dietary requirements, too. This helps them to develop an understanding that some people have allergies, some people make ethical food choices (e.g. they are vegetarian or vegan) and some people make food choices because of their faith (e.g. halal)

## **STAFF ROLE**

Staff working at the snack/lunch areas model eating as a social occasion. Mostly, children are encouraged to try new items without putting pressure on them to eat, to help themselves. We want snack and lunch time to be based on children being independent and helping themselves to fruit and pouring their own milk or water.



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## CHILDREN'S CENTRE

Drinks and Snacks are offered during sessions in the Children's Centre, water and milk are available to drink in 'Stay and Play' sessions. Whenever possible a small healthy snack is served. This may consist of fruit, salad vegetables, bread sticks and similar items.

The quarterly Children's Centre Leaflet provides detailed information on the services available. The Centre promotes evidence-based Healthy Eating messages in a range of ways. Children's Centre staff will raise concerns and signpost families to the appropriate Early Intervention Service for example the health visitor, as needed.

The Children's centre staff are all trained in promoting breastfeeding and we are committed to supporting breastfeeding mothers to feed anywhere they choose in the nursery. We offer sessions to support mother's breastfeeding and these sessions are well attended.

## BIRTHDAYS

When children start at Oliver Thomas their parents are made aware that we celebrate birthdays but we only accept fruit or veg platters, plain popcorn, breadsticks or rice cakes.

The relationship between the parent and the child's key person is central to the way we operate in the Nursery. Key persons meet regularly with parents and will raise and follow up on any issues or concerns relating to health or diet. If concerns continue about a child's health staff can raise this with senior staff or with Children's Centre staff

## DRINKING WATER

The National Nutritional Standards for Healthy School Lunches recommend that drinking water should be available to all children, every day. The nursery encourages all staff and children to consume water as their primary fluid intake.

We provide drinking water at snack time along with milk and encourage children to drink at frequent intervals throughout the day. Drinking water is provided at lunchtime on each table and children are invited to pour their drinks themselves from freshly prepared water jugs. Additional water is provided outside in hotter weather.

## SPECIAL DIETS - MEDICAL & Allergies

We recognise that some children may require special diets that do not allow for our food policy to be exactly met. In this case parents are asked to make us fully aware of this. Individual care plans are created for children with special dietary needs/requirements. These document symptoms and adverse reactions, actions to be taken in an emergency, and emergency contact details, along with any particular food requirements.

When children start Nursery school parents are asked some general questions about their child's health and dietary requirements including the name of the child's doctor and dentist. They complete information forms





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which include a question on dietary requirements and food allergies. Health Care Plans are kept centrally in the headteacher's office and copies in each classroom. Medication is clearly labelled with the child's name and kept in the class cupboards

## ALLERGIES

When children start Nursery school they have a home visit from their key person and a separate meeting with a senior member of the staff team. At one of these

If a parent tells us that their child has an allergy to certain foods we discuss this with them and ask if they have medical confirmation of allergies. If this is the case we use an appropriate form to take all the relevant details. Copies of these health care plans are kept centrally by the Headteacher and duplicated in the classrooms for staff to access. The team are trained on the procedures to be followed when using an EpiPen and the administering of the medication. We discuss with the parent any measures we need to take within the school to keep the child safe such as being particularly careful about washing hands after handling any food which may cause an allergic reaction. We are a nut free school. We have a spare nursery epi pen in case of EpiPens malfunctioning and a salbutamol inhaler. These would only be used with children who have a health care plan detailing their use. All staff revise the health care plans every Friday afternoon.

## FOOD SAFETY

Appropriate food safety precautions are taken when food is prepared or stored. These vary depending on the food on offer and include:

ensuring that adequate storage and washing facilities are available; Food and fridge temperatures are checked daily. Any food safety hazards are identified and controlled. We recently had a food hygiene inspection and scored a '5' which is the top mark (January 2025)

## THE FOOD AND EATING ENVIRONMENT

The nursery provides a clean, sociable welcoming environment for children to eat their lunch. Lunch time staff will help to ensure a safe, enjoyable experience at lunchtime and encourage healthy eating.

Staff may eat lunch in the staff room away from any areas being used by families. The staff kitchen has facilities for making hot drinks, a fridge for the staff to store food and a microwave for heating lunches.

## CONSULTATION/MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This policy was written in accordance to the most recent government guidance and support the policy and its impact is reviewed on an ongoing basis. The policy is communicated to the entire nursery community and new families/staff to our nursery are made aware of its importance.

