GEMS TINEY HOME NURSERY

HOME FROM HOME CHILDCARE

Nutrition and Healthy Eating Policy

Purpose

We offer healthy, balanced and age-appropriate food at Gems tiney Home Nursery and help children build a positive relationship with eating. We have regard to the current EYFS nutrition guidance, following it unless there is good reason not to, and work with parents to meet individual needs safely.

Meals snacks and drinks

We provide meals and snacks appropriate to the hours children attend, using regular opportunities to eat while responding to individual hunger and feeding needs. Menus offer variety across the week, including vegetables and fruit, starchy foods, protein sources and dairy or suitable alternatives.

We use fresh, frozen or appropriately chosen tinned ingredients and limit highly processed, salty and sugary choices. Dried fruit is offered as part of meals rather than a between-meal snack. Meals can include meat-free options; vegetarian and other dietary arrangements are planned to remain nutritionally suitable.

Fresh drinking water is available and children are supported to drink regularly. Plain age-appropriate milk is offered; sugary drinks are not provided. Babies' breastmilk and formula needs are respected. Milk alternatives are agreed with parents according to age, allergy and nutritional needs; rice drinks are not offered to under-fives.

Positive mealtimes

Adults provide calm, supervised meals, sit with or face children where possible and model conversation and enjoyable eating. Children are encouraged to explore unfamiliar

food without pressure. We respect signs of hunger and fullness and do not force eating, require a clean plate or use food as reward or punishment.

Children practise age-appropriate independence such as pouring, serving or using utensils with adult support. Portions suit the child and more may be offered where appropriate. We avoid labelling children as fussy or judging family diets. Persistent feeding difficulties are discussed sensitively with parents.

Allergies and individual needs

Before attendance, parents provide information about allergies, intolerances, dietary preferences and medical needs. We update this through ongoing discussion and agree written care and emergency arrangements where required. Relevant adults receive the information securely; sensitive details are not displayed where visitors can read them.

Ingredients and product labels are checked, including substitutions, and allergen cross-contact is controlled. An identified adult checks the food for each child at every meal and snack. Emergency medication and staff training must be in place where required. We follow the child's plan and call 999 for suspected anaphylaxis.

We respect cultural, religious and personal diets and discuss safe nutritious options rather than assume that a single alternative suits everyone. Food provided by families follows the same allergy and food safety arrangements.

Babies weaning and safer eating

We discuss feeding and developmental readiness with parents regularly and support safe progression in textures rather than relying on age alone. Breastmilk, formula, bottles and other feeding equipment are stored and prepared safely under our Food Safety Policy and current NHS advice. Honey is not given to under-ones.

Children eat seated safely, within sight and hearing of an adult throughout. A person with a current full paediatric first aid certificate is in the room. Food is prepared for each child's abilities: round foods such as grapes are quartered lengthways, hard foods softened or suitably sliced and bones or stones removed.

We do not offer whole nuts to under-fives or give young children popcorn, marshmallows, hard sweets or raw jelly cubes. Adults prevent food sharing and observe mouthfuls without rushing children. Choking incidents receive immediate trained action and are recorded and shared with parents.

Food safety learning and partnership

Food handlers have appropriate training, knowledge and supervision. We follow our Food Safety Policy for storage, cooking, cooling, hygiene and illness. Children wash hands before eating and food activities and are supervised around tools and ingredients.

Cooking, growing food, stories and meals from different traditions help children explore food. Parents receive relevant information about food offered and intake and can share preferences, concerns and professional advice. Optional food charges and free alternatives for funded places follow our Funded Hours Policy.

Review and references

Gemma reviews menus, feedback and individual needs and updates this policy annually or sooner when guidance changes. References: Department for Education EYFS nutrition guidance and Food safety guidance; current EYFS childminder framework; NHS infant feeding advice; Food Standards Agency guidance.

Policy owner: Gemma Bayley
Reviewed: November 2026
Next review due: November 2027