All Silver Stars Day Nursery policies will be subject to any future change according to Government legislation and guidelines to maintain the safety of all children, families, staff and visitors.

1.06

Food and Drink

Policy statement

At Silver Stars Day Nursery, we regard snack and mealtimes as an important part of the day. These occasions are social opportunities for children and adults, promoting positive relationships and teaching children about healthy eating habits. We provide nutritious meals and snacks that meet children's individual dietary needs, support cultural and religious preferences, and encourage independence

Procedures

Food and Drink Provision

- Only milk and water are offered throughout the day; filled water bottles are not accepted on arrival.
- Meals and snacks are rotated on a 3-week menu cycle to provide variety and balance.
- Meals avoid large quantities of saturated fat, sugar, salt, and artificial additives.
- Foods are offered from the four main food groups:
    1. Meat, fish, and protein alternatives
    2. Dairy foods
    3. Grains, cereals, and starchy vegetables
    4. Fresh fruit and vegetables (tinned fruit not acceptable)
- Processed foods (e.g., sausages, fish fingers) are limited to once per week.
- Culturally appropriate foods, vegetarian and vegan options are provided.
- Children under 1 are given extra milk if needed; snacks are not provided until after 1 year.

Food Preparation and Hygiene

- Hands must be washed before mealtimes:
    - Babies under 18 months use a portable water station.
    - Children over 18 months wash hands in the bathroom.
- Food is prepared according to each child's developmental stage, especially during weaning or complementary feeding.
- Staff ensure food is cut, cooked, or pureed appropriately to prevent choking.

Mealtimes and social development

- Staff sit with children at all meals and snacks to:
- Encourage social interaction
- Support independence in serving, feeding, and using utensils

- Utensils are age-appropriate; children over 18 months are encouraged to use a fork and spoon.
- Portions are based on the child's appetite and body size, starting small with options for seconds.
- Children are not forced to finish food and are not rewarded for doing so.

Packed Lunches (Funded Hours)

Where meals are not purchased during funded hours, parents/carers must provide a packed lunch for their child. Packed lunches must support the nursery's healthy eating approach and comply with allergen safety procedures. Plain/natural yogurt for pudding can be provided for pudding or a piece of fruit.

Packed lunches must include:

- A suitable lunch item that can be eaten cold and does not require reheating
- One portion of fruit
- A second snack item that aligns with the nursery's weekly menu expectations.

The following items are not permitted in packed lunches:

- Eggs or egg-containing foods
- Processed foods
- Sweet treats, including chocolate, sweets, cakes, and biscuits
- Flavoured yogurts
- Foods requiring heating or preparation by staff

To minimise the risk of cross-contamination with allergens:

- All packed lunches will be stored separately in the church fridge
- Children eating packed lunches will be supervised during mealtimes in the hall space due to severe allergens within the setting

Staff will continue to promote positive mealtime experiences by encouraging independence, social interaction, and healthy eating habits for all children, regardless of whether meals are provided by the nursery or brought from home.

Portion Sizes

There are no official guidelines on exactly how much food children need. Portions should be appropriate for a child's body size and appetite.

For toddlers, portion size is usually roughly the size of their clenched fist. About half a piece of fruit (cut appropriately) or a tablespoon of vegetables is a good portion size for a snack. You should monitor a child's appetite and adjust portion sizes to make sure they get enough energy and nutrients. It can be helpful to start meals with small servings (they can always ask for more if they are still hungry).

Settings must avoid:

• making children finish everything on their plate or eat more than they want to
• offering rewards to children for finishing everything on their plate (e.g. stickers or dessert).

DfE's help for early years providers website has a guide to portion sizes.

When serving food to children, always make sure to cut food to a size that's right for a child's size, age and stage of weaning. This helps avoid choking.

Choking

- Children are seated safely in highchairs or age-appropriate chairs.
- Distractions such as screens, stories, or toys are not permitted during meals.
- Choking risks are minimised by:
- Cutting harder fruits and vegetables into small pieces
- Cooking fruits for babies as needed
- Removing apple and pear skins
- Preparing sausages, tomatoes, berries, and grapes in safe shapes and sizes
- Staff with paediatric first aid training supervise children at all times during meals.
- Any choking incidents are recorded and reviewed to identify trends or preventative actions.

Oral Health

- We support children's **oral hygiene and health** as part of their overall wellbeing.
- Activities, circle times, and parent workshops promote:
- Brushing teeth at least twice daily with fluoride toothpaste
- Understanding the impact of diet, bottles, and dummies on teeth

- Oral health support helps achieve the **five Every Child Matters outcomes**:

1. Staying safe
2. Being healthy
3. Enjoying and achieving
4. Making a positive contribution
5. Achieving economic well-being

Legal framework

- Regulation (EC) 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Hygiene of Foodstuffs.

This policy was adopted by	Silver Stars Day Nursery
Date	April 2026
Review date	April 2027
Name of signatory	Mrs Jenifer Capper
Role of signatory	Proprietor

Signed: Date:	 April 2026