

ROMPERS PRIVATE NURSERY

HEALTHY MEALS AND SNACKS POLICY

Policy Statement:

At Rompers we understand the importance of nutrition in the early years and the role we play as a childcare provider in shaping both current and future eating patterns in young children in Scotland. Quality early years' experience can have a fundamental impact on all aspects of development including physical, emotional and intellectual. We value that food is a good way to express care and promote a nurturing environment. Healthy eating also helps to promote independence, language and social skills during mealtimes and snack times. The food and drink being offered will be appropriate for all children and will meet individual dietary requirements.

All staff at Rompers follow the guidance from the '*Setting the Table*', '*Food Matters*' and the '*Eatwell Guide*' to help support healthy eating in our setting.

UNCRC Articles: 24, 31

Aims of this Policy:

- To ensure all food is nutritious and meets current recommendations for children under five years.
- To ensure children have suitable food and drink made available to them.
- To ensure a wide range of food is offered providing a tasty and varied diet.
- To ensure high levels of food safety and hygiene are always maintained.
- To ensure eating times are also learning opportunities which allow for children to develop their independence, and social skills.
- To ensure fruit and vegetables are served with all meals and snacks.
- To ensure children always have access to fresh water throughout the day.
- To ensure children obtain 30% of nutritional requirements from a main meal; 20% from a light meal and 10% of nutritional requirements from a snack.

Procedures:

1. Nutritional Standards and Food Groups:

All meals and snacks provided will meet the nutritional requirements set out in the Setting the Table guidance, which is based on the principles of a balanced diet. We ensure that children's meals include:

- **Fruits and Vegetables:** At least one portion of vegetables or fruit at every meal and snack, aiming for a variety of colours and types.
- **Protein:** A range of protein sources, including plant-based options such as legumes, tofu, and eggs, as well as meat, fish, and dairy.
- **Carbohydrates:** Whole grains and starchy foods, such as whole grain bread, rice, pasta, and potatoes, as the primary source of energy.
- **Dairy and Alternatives:** A variety of dairy foods or fortified non-dairy alternatives to ensure adequate calcium and vitamin D intake.
- **Healthy Fats:** The inclusion of healthy fats, such as those from olive oil, avocado, and nuts (where appropriate and safe for allergies).

2. Portion Sizes:

- Portion sizes will be appropriate for the age and developmental stage of each child, in line with the guidance in Setting the Table to prevent overeating or underfeeding. Staff will be trained to assess children's hunger cues and encourage them to eat at their own pace.

3. Allergen Management and Dietary Restrictions:

We are committed to catering to children's individual dietary needs and allergies. We will:

- Ensure that all food allergens are clearly communicated and managed, with staff trained to identify and respond to allergic reactions.
- Provide alternative meal options for children with specific dietary needs, including vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, halal, kosher, and other cultural or medical requirements.
- Work closely with parents and carers to develop a personalised care plan for children with food allergies or intolerances.

4. Safe Food Handling:

To ensure the health and safety of all children, all food preparation and storage will follow strict hygiene and safety protocols from *The Food Safety Act*, including:

- Compliance with food safety regulations and regular monitoring of kitchen practices.

- Ensuring that food is prepared, served, and stored at appropriate temperatures.
- Providing clean utensils, equipment, and surfaces for meal preparation and serving.
- All staff have up to date Food Hygiene training, documented in their CPD folders.
- Hand washing routines are in place in all rooms after toileting and before meal and snack times.

5. Mealtimes as Learning Opportunities:

Mealtimes are treated as learning opportunities for children through appropriate supervision at all times. We will:

- Encourage children to try new foods and flavours through a '*nursery taste*' and involve them in food preparation and discussions about healthy eating.
- Provide a calm, positive environment during mealtimes where children are encouraged to interact socially and develop healthy eating habits.
- Model healthy eating behaviours by ensuring staff are role models for children.
- Independence and choice are promoted throughout mealtimes. All snacks and aspects of main meals and light meals have elements of choice to ensure children feel empowered to make choices about their food.

6. Hydration:

- Water will be freely available to children throughout the day. In addition to water, we may offer limited portions of full fat/semi skimmed milk or non-dairy alternatives at mealtimes.

7. Snack Times:

Snacks will be offered in a free-flow manner and will include a variety of healthy options. All snacks provided will:

- Include a combination of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and dairy products.
- Be portion-controlled and follow the principles outlined in Setting the Table to avoid sugar and salt overload.
- Avoid highly processed snacks that are high in sugars, fats, or artificial additives.

8. Food Education:

We will promote food education in collaboration with parents, carers, and external professionals, teaching children about:

- The importance of healthy eating habits.
- How different foods support growth, energy, and health.
- The environmental and cultural significance of food.

9. Parent and Carer Involvement:

- We encourage open communication with parents and carers to support children's dietary needs and preferences.
- Parents are invited to share any cultural or dietary requirements or restrictions during their first visit to Rompers, and we will work together with the nursery cook to ensure that the meals provided align with children's home routines and values.

Monitoring:

- Review menus regularly to ensure they meet current recommendations and guidance.
- Review procedures for gathering and recording information about dietary requirements monthly – see management audit timeline.
- Analyse menus at the beginning of each season to ensure they meet the needs of each child, and that suitable food and drink is available.
- Observe children's development at snack, light meal and main mealtimes regarding their self-help skills and social skills.
- Determine the level of support and practical help required and highlight any changes to be made.

Review:

Date	Management	Track of Changes
August 2021	P. Guthrie	none
February 2023	Room Champions	UNCRC articles added
July 2023	TL - K	No changes. Awaiting updated Setting The Table document.
January 2025	TL - K	Updates following Setting the Table Guidance update October 2024
October 2025	Team Leaders	No changes, will be updated after training for nutrition for under 5's