



Weaning Policy

It is the policy of *Oaklea Montessori* to encourage the highest standards of health, hygiene and safety. At around the age of 6 months, Oaklea staff will support parents as they introduce solids into baby's diet whilst following government guidelines. Oaklea staff will work alongside parents who must keep us up to date and informed of any changes.

It is the responsibility of parents and carers to inform the nursery of any food preferences (allergies, intolerances, dietary, religious or cultural requirements).

EYFS: Key Themes & Commitments

- Children learn best when they are healthy, safe, and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them... create high quality settings which are welcoming, safe and stimulating, and where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence.
- Each child must be assigned a key person. Providers must inform parents and/or carers of the name of the key person, and explain their role, when a child starts attending a setting. The key person must help ensure that every child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs. The key person must seek to engage and support parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home.

Weaning methods

There are two main weaning methods to support children to explore tastes and textures, become confident in eating (building the skills to scoop up food and get it into their mouths can take time and be messy along the way) and get the nutrients they need.

Traditional weaning

Traditional weaning involves spoon-feeding your baby with pureed food, later building up to mashed, then lumpy, then solid foods.

Baby-led weaning

In baby-led weaning, parents provide a variety of foods for their baby to choose from and feed themselves. This could be a selection of finger foods or what the parents are eating.

Starting Weaning

The Nursery understands and respects that all babies and children develop differently and at different paces, and it can be a worrying and confusing time for parents/carers during this time. We aim to make this transition as smooth as possible by ensuring our key persons work closely with you to discuss any dietary requirements your child may have and make appropriate provisions to accommodate any additional needs parents may have.

The introduction of new foods is a gradual process. For babies weaning from breast milk or formula, Oaklea nursery will work with the parents, to ensure that the food provided is suitable for the baby's requirements. We will help babies become familiar with a great range of tastes and textures. Key persons will aim to help babies progress toward solid food and encourage all children to experience a variety of different foods.

When children join Oaklea Montessori nursery, parents are required to complete an All about me Form, before their child begins nursery stating what stage of weaning their child is at and what foods they are already having so at Oaklea we can continue this.

Parents must also record any (known) food intolerances, food preferences or allergies their children may have so we can alert all practitioners involved in preparing and serving meals. Management will carry out a risk assessment in the case of allergies and work alongside parents to record the dietary needs for their child.

Oaklea visibly displays Dietary Needs Lists throughout the nursery and continue to regularly communicate with parents regarding their child's progress.

Oaklea staff will carefully supervision and will ensure that children are gradually taught how to chew and begin to eat independently at a calm, steady pace with a supportive person there to help them.

Nutrition and Mealtimes

Mealtimes should be a happy, social occasion for children and staff alike. Positive interactions should be shared at these times and enjoyed. At Oaklea, staff are committed to offering healthy, nutritious and balanced meals and snacks which meet individual needs and requirements.

At Oaklea, staff will ensure that:

- Oaklea staff may offer baby healthy snacks, with a parents/carers' consent, in the form of rice cakes, toast and fruit, and plain biscuits.
- Drinks other than breast milk, formula or water are discouraged.
- At Oaklea we provide nutritious food at all snack times and mealtimes, with NO nuts, large quantities of fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives or colourings.
- Fresh drinking water is constantly available and accessible. It is frequently offered to children and babies.
- Meals and snack times are organised so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate in small groups. During meal and snack times children are encouraged to use their manners to say 'please' and 'thank you' and conversation is encouraged.
- Oaklea staff use meal and snack times to help children develop independence through making healthy choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves

These practices help children to develop healthy eating habits and social skills. Baby chairs will be placed so babies can sit alongside the other nursery children, practitioners will provide babies with age suitable bowls and cutlery to encourage and support baby's self-feeding skills.

- Oaklea staff will ensure that packet baby cereals or normal cereals are made with boiled water, formula milk for breakfast. Staff will ensure that babies aged 6 months – 24 months have milk readily available: where necessary milk formulas are provided and will substitute milk to meet a child's dietary needs.
- Babies can have breast milk. Oaklea staff advise parents to bring breast milk to nursery in a sealed and labelled container, with the date it was expressed, which will be kept in the fridge. The change from breast milk/ formula to cow's milk is encouraged from after one year of age.
- Oaklea nursery will provide parents with daily records of feeding routines for all children under two via Parentzone.

N.B: Milk feeds for babies are based on a baby's individual needs, so babies have access to milk as required throughout the day