



Hillbury House Nursery

Registered Day Nursery (130690)

81 Denmark Villas, Hove, East Sussex, BN3 3TH

Telephone: 01273 730004

Email: hihospaces@gmail.com

Promoting Positive Mealtimes Policy

At Hillbury House Nursery, we promote calm, social and positive mealtime environments where children can enjoy nutritious food and develop a healthy relationship with eating. Mealtimes are viewed as valuable learning opportunities that support children's independence, confidence, and communication, in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). This approach reflects our home-from-home ethos, where children feel secure, valued, and encouraged to explore food in a relaxed setting.

Developing Positive Relationships with Food

Our team has attended a practical workshop with nutritionist Viola from 'Peas & Love' on attitudes towards mealtimes and how to help create confident and happy eaters. We follow the principle of the 'division of responsibility' in feeding:

- Our job: to decide when, where, and what foods are offered.
- The child's job: to decide whether and how much to eat.

Our Practice in the Nursery

Some children attending our setting bring in food packed from home, while others receive meals provided by our outside catering company, Little Tums. At lunch and tea times, children are provided with all of their food when seated, and they choose what and how much they want to eat. They independently select their cutlery and pour their own water or use their bottle/cup.

We avoid controlling feeding methods and instead encourage relaxed, engaging conversations between children about their day or their food – its colour, shape, and smell. Staff model positive language and encourage children to listen to their bodies and understand their hunger cues. We support children to learn the natural consequences of not eating, rather than using food as a form of punishment (e.g. withholding pudding).

We provide toast in the morning and an afternoon snack. Children take turns helping to prepare foods, supporting their sense of belonging and confidence. It's important that children are familiar with their food and involved in the full holistic eating experience.

Meals and snacks are offered at routine times, so children know they will have the opportunity to eat again, helping create a calm and secure atmosphere. We also provide opportunities to try new



foods during snack times or planned activities, with children taking the lead to explore tastes and textures.

Health, Safety and Inclusion

Staff are vigilant about children's dietary needs, allergies, and cultural or religious food preferences. We work closely with parents and our catering provider to ensure all food provided is safe, appropriate, and inclusive for every child.

Links to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Our approach to positive mealtimes supports the EYFS principles of:

- A Unique Child – recognising each child's individual needs, choices, and independence.
- Positive Relationships – encouraging social interaction, communication, and cooperation at the table.
- Enabling Environments – creating calm, predictable mealtime routines that promote comfort and confidence.
- Learning and Development – building skills across Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED), Communication and Language, and Physical Development.

Our Commitment

By fostering a relaxed and positive attitude to food, we help children build lifelong healthy habits and a sense of wellbeing around eating. Our goal is to nourish children physically and emotionally, nurturing confidence, curiosity, and community through shared mealtime experiences.