



## Winton Pre-School Little Explorers

### 09 Early years practice procedures

#### 09.7 Mealtimes

Feeding and mealtimes are key times in the day for being close and to promote security and is a social time as well as for exploration and learning. We understand the importance of a healthy balanced diet for young children. At mealtimes staff check that the food that has been provided by parents, to ensure that the healthy nutrition guidance is followed, no sharing/cross contamination occurs and allergies/dietary requirements are always adhered to.

##### **mealtimes**

- Children all sit together for mealtimes, whilst eating, children are always within sight and hearing of a member of staff, wherever possible staff member sits facing the child whilst eating.
- There is a paediatric First Aider present at mealtimes.
- Staff who are eating with the children must role-model hygiene, healthy eating and best practice at all times, for example not drinking cans of fizzy drinks in front of the children.
- Staff arrange the table, by placing children's lunch boxes before children sit down, promoting independence in finding their own belongings.
- Children's hands are washed clean before their meal.
- Children are not discouraged from eating with their fingers; this exploration of their food with their hands is the beginning of self-feeding. When they have finished, they may wish to 'play' further with any remaining food. It is fine for them to get a bit messy; they, and their table can be cleaned afterwards.
- Children are given time to eat at their own pace and are not hurried to fit in with adults' tasks and breaks.
- Mealtimes are relaxed opportunities for social interaction
- In order to protect children with food allergies or specific dietary requirements, children are discouraged from sharing and swapping their food with one another.