



Waltham Pre-School

Weaning

Policy Statement

Allergies are an increasingly recognised problem, particularly in children.

Whilst it has been recognised for decades, it is clear that the proportion of children affected has increased dramatically in recent years. It is believed that 1 in 50 children suffer from the severest types of allergies that on occasions can kill, and that those who die from allergic reactions have not necessarily had severe reactions before to warn them clearly of the danger.

Therefore, Waltham Pre-School has a policy regarding the weaning of all children in the baby room.

For the majority of infants weaning should commence around 6 months of age. We have used guidelines from the NHS and would recommend all parents visit <http://www.nhs.uk/start4life> which contains valuable information on weaning children.

While the origins of food intolerances often remain unclear, it would appear prudent to delay introduction of the foods most commonly associated with atopic reactions. The usually accepted list of allergenic foods are gluten containing cereals (wheat, barley, rye, and oats), cows' milk, egg, fish, soybean, and nuts.

The introduction of new foods in a gradual process, using a few pureed semi-solid foods followed by an increasing familiarisation with a greater range of tastes and textures right through to the beginning of self-feeding. This process should take at least six months.

Good nutritional practice followed by the Nursery, incorporating all of the above, is compatible with guidelines that include:

- The initial use of baby rice mixed with the infant's normal milk
- The gradual introduction of vegetables and fruits in puree form
- Packet baby cereals or normal cereals made with either boiled water or cow's milk for breakfast
- Pureed vegetables at tea time
- After the introduction of fruit and vegetables we progress on to cheese, yoghurt or fromage frais, and lean meat, all in pureed form from 6 months
- At 7–8 months of age, more texture is increasingly introduced into all foods, together with soft finger foods
- Nut products would not be included in the diet by the Nursery but food containing nut traces cannot be ruled out UNLESS a child is at risk of anaphylaxis
- Salt (sodium chloride) is not added to any infant foods or the cooking medium
- Meat, including Beef and Beef products, or iron fortified weaning foods are introduced early to increase iron intake
- Meat, pulses, dairy products, wheat, and rice are included as appropriate to increase zinc intake
- The change from breast milk/formula to cows' milk for drinking is delayed until after 1 year of age
- Drinks, other than breast milk, formula, cow's milk and water, are discouraged

Parents who do not agree to the adoption of this policy with their child, or individual items of the policy should notify us in writing at the earliest opportunity in order that we can keep their wishes on file. In order to make this process easier we have developed a form that every parent will be asked to sign.

Should parents change their minds about individual items of the policy then they must complete a new weaning agreement.

Should parents become aware of an allergy that may result in anaphylaxis then we have a protocol that we have adopted at the nursery.

We will work together with parents to support other approaches such as Baby Led Weaning. We will always try to mirror the child's routine from home but as you can understand this can take time.