

HOLLINS WOOD *Childcare*

Meal Time Routine

Meals and snacks are a very important part of the day here at Hollins Wood. Children can benefit greatly from the experience of sharing meal times with their peers and the staff. We have developed a routine for the children so that they can be involved in the preparation of meals and snacks. This helps them to develop a sense of responsibility and independence as well as learning about numbers, etc.

All children are taken to the bathrooms prior to meals and snacks, and supported if required to wash their hands. We talk to the children about why we wash our hands before meals so that they understand the importance of this routine.

Children then sit at tables. Once all the children are settled a child is chosen from each table to count with the support of the staff and their peers on their table how many children are at their table. They then come up to the trolley and ask for the correct number of plastic cups, return to the table and distribute them. Another child is chosen to do the same task with plates and another with the cutlery. We have found that the children very much enjoy this activity and it provides great opportunities for numbering and turn-taking.

Wherever possible children are given choices at meal and snack times. Staff support the children with this and with eating their meals. They are able to sit with the children and help them to cut up food and provide assistance for those less able to feed themselves. We provide a range of cutlery and beakers with or without lids to enable children to be as independent as possible.

Conversation is encouraged around the table during meal times and children are also supported to develop good table manners — saying “please” and “thank you”, eating with their mouths closed, etc.

When the children have finished they are supported to return their plates to the trolley. Once again this encourages responsibility and independence.

We believe that meal times should be enjoyable and provide opportunities for social interaction, learning and development of independence.

If you have any concerns about our meal time routine or how your child will cope with it please do not hesitate to contact us.

