

Food and Nutrition Policy

This policy has been drawn up inline with the Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance April 2025. This sets the standards that early years provided must meet to ensure children learn, develop well and are kept healthy and safe. From September 2025, there will be a requirement in the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS that providers 'should' have regard to this nutrition guidance. This means providers **must** take this guidance into account and should follow it unless there is good reason not to. This policy has also considered views from parents, staff and children.

Aims

Our setting is a suitable, clean, and safe place for children to be cared for, where they can grow and learn. We meet all statutory requirements for food and drink 3.55 – 3.57 and fulfil the criteria for meeting the relevant Early Years Foundation Stage Safeguarding and Welfare requirements.

We aim to work together with parents/carers/families/children to promote healthy food/drink choices through the day and positive attitudes towards food and healthy eating. Children's early experiences with food can shape future eating habits. This can impact children's long-term health including maintaining a healthy weight, and good oral health.

Gathering Information on Nutrition

Before your child starts at preschool you will be asked to complete information on dietary requirements and allergies. This information needs to be kept up to date and it is the parents responsibility to do this, please inform us if there are any changes so we can update our records. Regular reminders about this go out in newsletters and during parent catch up meetings.

Food/Drink provided by Preschool

- **Breakfast club** – a selection of cereals is on offer, semi skimmed milk and water are available to drink. Allergies are taken into account.
- **Snack** – fruit snack is provided by parents, if children forget snack, we will provide them with cereal to eat.
- **Lunch** – packed lunch is provided by parents, if this is forgotten parents will be contacted to drop food into setting.
- **Forest School** – food during forest school is provided, this includes things like fruit, vegetables, biscuits, hot chocolate, crumpets. Allergies are taken into account so all children can be included.
- **Milk** – each child gets 189ml semi skimmed milk free each day they're in
- **Water** is the only other drink we provide, and it is available and accessible by all children throughout the day.

The Mealtime Environment and Social Aspects of Mealtimes

Snack and mealtimes are an important part of the day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. Children will be sat together in small groups. The children will have opportunities to pour drinks and help get snack tables ready/clear away. Staff will sit at a table to eat with children at lunchtime.

Management of Food Allergies and Dietary Needs

- Food allergies Food allergies can be life threatening conditions for some children and should be taken very seriously.
- Allergy and dietary requirements are recorded on registration forms, signed by parents and discussed before children start at preschool and on an ongoing basis.
- There is a list of symptoms to look out for and what to do if a member of staff suspects a child is having an allergic reaction.

- Children can be allergic to anything but there are 14 common allergens, and they are displayed in setting for staff.
- Staff have all had online allergy training.
- All staff are paediatric first aid trained, and this includes training on allergic reactions.
- We are a nut free setting and will ask parents to not bring in any foods we know there are known allergies to.
- It is the parents' responsibility to keep us up to date with any allergy and dietary requirement changes.
- If children have a food allergy, we will carry out an individual risk assessment.
- Allergies and dietary requirements are displayed on the cupboard door for all staff to see.
- Children are supervised at snack and mealtimes to make sure they are only eating their own food.
- Staff ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and cultural or ethnic preferences, as well as their parent's wishes
- **Lunchboxes, snack and drinks bottles must be clearly labelled at all times.**

Food Intolerances

Food intolerances Food intolerance is different to food allergy and usually occurs when the body has difficulty digesting certain foods or ingredients in food.

We follow any food intolerances on the registration forms; these must be clear and any changes to these must be put in writing.

Cooking with children

- Before undertaking any cooking activity with children, members of staff should check for allergies and intolerances by checking children's records.
- Children are taught basic hygiene skills such as the need to wash hands thoroughly before handling food, and again after going to the toilet, blowing their nose or coughing.
- Aprons should be worn
- The area to be used for cooking is cleaned before use
- Utensils provided are for children to use only when cooking, including chopping/rolling boards, bowls, wooden spoons, jugs, and are stored in the kitchen.
- Members of staff encourage children to handle food in a hygienic manner.
- Food ready for cooking or cooling is not left uncovered.
- Cooked food to go home is put in a labelled food bag and stored correctly until home time
- Food play activities are suspended during outbreaks of illness.

Food for play

- Food for play may include dough, corn flour, pasta, rice, food colourings or flavourings.
- Children with allergies do not play with food which may trigger their allergies.
- Staff are constantly alert to the potential hazards of food play, in particular choking hazards and signs of previously undetected allergies.
- Pulses are not recommended as they can be poisonous when raw or may choke.
- Raw flour is not used for activities as it may contain bacteria such as E.coli
- Use of raw vegetables for printing is done occasionally and in line with the EYFS.
- Raw vegetables/fruits may be used in the mud kitchen, these must be washed before use
- Dried food that is used for play should be kept away from food used for cooking.
- Foods that are cooked and used for play, such as dough, have a limited shelf life and must be replaced regularly.
- Cornflour is always mixed with water before given for play.
- Cornflower and cooked pasta are discarded after an activity due to high risk of bacteria forming.
- Utensils used for play food are washed thoroughly after use
- Jelly (including jelly cubes) must not be used for play

- When using food for play, it must be risk assessed against the top 14 allergens (celery, cereals, crustaceans, eggs, fish, lupin, milk, molluscs, mustard, nuts, peanuts, sesame seeds, soya, and sulphur dioxide), with an individual risk assessment undertaken for children with known specific allergies.

Food brought in from home

- Please see Food from Home Policy for further details
- We have a regulatory obligation to encourage healthier food choices for packed lunches.
- Snack must be a piece of fresh fruit or vegetable item
- Packed lunches must be healthy, balanced and nutritious
- All food served to children must be prepared in a way to prevent choking (see poster)
- We do not have refrigeration so lunch boxes **must** contain an ice pack
- Lunchbox, snack items and drinks **must** be clearly labelled and contents detailed
- We will not reheat any food items
- All food brought from home will be checked for risk of choking and potential allergens
- No sweets
- Foods will be sent home if not suitable
- **We are a nut, kiwi, shellfish/crustacean and sesame free setting**

Choking

Food must be chopped inline with the choking guidance poster to prevent choking; this is the responsibility of the parents/carers. Staff will check before food is offered.

Children are closely supervised at snack times, and a member of staff will sit at each lunch table. All staff are Paediatric First Aid Trained.

General

- We ensure that children are supervised at meal and snack times
- All staff have up to date certificated training on food safety and or it will be completed as soon as possible after starting
- Staff must use correct chopping boards and prepare any food safely
- Food Allergy and Dietary Needs sheet is on cupboard door for all staff
- The Risk Assessment for Allergies is clearly displayed and shared with all staff.
- All staff have completed the online allergy training
- All staff are paediatric first aid trained
- We will notify Ofsted of any food poisoning affecting two or more children looked after on the premises. Notification will be made as soon as possible and within 14 days.
- Care is taken to follow food preparation and storage procedures whilst handling food.
- Children are encouraged to try new foods but are never forced to eat anything they don't want to
- Children will have the opportunities to try different foods and learn about healthy eating
- Any food shared by the setting will be checked for potential allergens.

Children with additional support needs and other special diets

Children may need additional support with eating; this can be discussed with health care practitioners and suitable procedures can be put in place.

Information on the needs of an individual child must be provided in advance of them starting at the setting.

Celebrations and special occasions

Any cake/biscuits etc brought into preschool for celebrations such as birthdays or party days must be shop bought so we have a full list of allergens that may be present. All celebration food

brought into preschool will be checked for allergens. Food platters and non-edible items such as bubbles or stickers are a good alternative to celebrate birthdays.

Reviewed May 2024

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