



Food Safety and Nutrition Policy

Policy statement

Our setting regards snack and meal times as an important part of the day. Eating and drinking together represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. We promote healthy eating in our setting and aim to provide nutritious snacks which meet the children's individual dietary needs.

Procedures

We follow these procedures to promote healthy eating in our setting.

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we find out from parents/carers their child's dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies. These are updated on an on-going basis. This information is shared with all staff.
- We record information about a child's atypical dietary needs on her/his registration form and parents/carers sign the form to signify that it is correct.
- We regularly consult with parents/carers to ensure the child's dietary needs – including any allergies - are current.
- We display current information about individual children's atypical dietary needs and allergies on staff notice boards so that all staff and volunteers are fully aware. This information can also be found on our Blossom Educational online system.
- We ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and preferences as well as their parents/carers wishes.
- We provide nutritious food for snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat; sugar; salt; artificial additives; preservatives and colourings, to promote health and reduce the risk of obesity and heart disease that may begin in childhood
- We take great care and try to avoid providing food containing nuts or nut products and are especially vigilant when we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts.

- Through discussion with parents/carers and research reading by staff, we obtain information about vegetarians and vegans; food allergies and the dietary rules of the religious groups to which children and their parents/carers belong. We take account of this information in the provision of our snacks and drinks.
- We require staff to show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. Staff do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child or make a child feel singled out because of her/his diet or allergy.
- We organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate.
- We ensure children are supervised at mealtimes and that children are within sight and hearing of a member of staff.
- We use snack and meal times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.
- We provide children with utensils that are appropriate for their ages and stages of development and that take account of the eating practices in their cultures.
- We have fresh drinking water always available for the children. We explain to the children that they can ask for a drink of water at any time during the day.
- For children who drink milk, we provide semi-skimmed pasteurised milk.
- A list of children with known allergies, intolerances or dietary needs is updated at least once a term. This is displayed to all staff.
- If a child chokes at meal/snack time and intervention is given. We record details of the incident and ensure that parents/carers are informed.
- We refer to Help for early years providers : Food safety and Eat Better, Start Better - Foundation Years.
- We do not allow food such as cake or sweets to be brought in from home to celebrate birthdays.
- We notify Ofsted of any food poisoning affecting two or more children in our care as soon as possible and at least within 14 days.

Packed lunches

As our setting does not have the facilities to provide cooked meals at lunch time our children are required to bring packed lunches;

We encourage parents/carers to provide healthy packed lunches which should include the following foods: -

- A carbohydrate food, such as bread, rolls, pitta bread, naan bread, potatoes, pasta, noodles, bagels.
 - A good source of protein, iron and zinc such as meat, fish, beans, or eggs.
 - A good source of calcium such as milk, cheese, yoghurt or fromage frais (or milk alternative).
 - Fruits
 - Vegetables
- These will provide all the other needed vitamins and minerals. We encourage parents/carers to provide a varied lunch box as no single food contains all the essential nutrients the body needs to be healthy and function efficiently.
 - We inform parents/carers that crisps, cakes, chocolate (including chocolate spread), biscuits, sweets, jam and popcorn should not be put in packed lunch boxes due to high sugar, saturated fat and salt levels.
 - We inform parents/carers that lunch boxes must not contain nuts and peanuts (including peanut butter) due the high risk of allergic reactions.
 - We inform parents that their child needs to be provided with a daily water bottle to have with their packed lunch. Only water is allowed in these bottles.
 - We inform parents that we do not have refrigeration facilities for lunchboxes and therefore ask them to provide an insulated lunch bag and to include ice packs during warmer weather.
 - We ensure practitioners sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.
 - We ensure children are supervised at mealtimes and that children are within sight and hearing of a member of staff.
 - We promote the Food Standards Agency Early Years Food Choking Hazards advice to our parents/carers. Practitioners should check that food in lunchboxes are prepared safely to avoid choking, they should take action if required.
 - In order to protect children with food allergies, we do not allow children to share and swap their food with one another or practitioners.

Staff

- All staff dealing with food preparation must have up to date training on food safety.
- All staff dealing with food preparation refer to Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance (2025) which contains guidance on menu planning, food safety, managing food allergies and reading food labels

- All staff responsible for preparing food have undertaken the Food Allergy Online Training CPD module available at <http://allergytraining.food.gov.uk/>

Purchasing and storing food

- Food is purchased from reputable suppliers.
- Pre-packed food (any food or ingredient that is made by one business and sold by another such as a retailer or caterer) is checked for allergen ingredients
- Parents/carers are requested not to bring food that contains (or may contain) nuts. Staff check packets to make sure they do not contain nuts or nut products.
- Bulk buy is avoided where food may go out of date before use.
- All opened dried food stuffs are stored using airtight clips or airtight containers.
- Food is regularly checked for sell by/use by dates and any expired items are discarded.
- Bottles and jars are cleaned before returning to the cupboards.
- Items are not stored on the floor; floors are kept clear so they can be easily swept.
- Soft fruit and easily perishable vegetables are kept in the fridge at 1- 5 Celsius.
- Packaged frozen food should be used by use by dates.
- Fridge and freezer thermometers should be in place. Recommended temperatures for fridge 37 degrees Fahrenheit (3 degrees Celsius), and freezers 0 degrees Fahrenheit (-18 degrees Celsius). Temperatures are checked and recorded daily to ensure correct temperatures are being maintained.
- Freezers are defrosted every 3 months or according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Fruit and vegetables stored in the fridge are washed thoroughly before refrigeration to reduce risk of pests and E.coli contamination.
- Staff's own food or drink should be kept in separate designated area of the fridge.
- Items in fridges must be regularly checked to ensure they are not past use by dates.

Preparation of food

- Food handlers check the content of food/packets to ensure they do not contain allergens.
- Food handlers must wash hands and cover any cuts or abrasions before handling food.
- Separate boards and knives are used for chopping food.

- All vegetables and fruit are washed before preparing.
- Food left out is covered, for example when cooling down
- Food cooked/prepared for vegetarians does not come into contact with meat or fish or products.
- Food cooked/prepared for different religious dietary needs and preferences, such as Halal or Kosher meat is cooked/stored and served separately.
- Food prepared for children with dietary needs and preferences is clearly labelled and every effort is made to prevent cross-contamination.
- We follow the Food Standards Agency Early Years Food Choking Hazards advice

Serving Food

- There is a named person who is responsible for ensuring that the food being provided meets all the dietary requirements for each child.
- Staff check children allergies before serving any food. Children with allergies/food preferences are not made to feel 'singled out' by the methods used to manage their allergy/food preference.
- Staff risk assess the likelihood of children with dietary restrictions accessing the food of other children and must take appropriate action to prevent this from happening, for example:
 - check the list of children's dietary requirements displayed in the food preparation area
 - coloured place mats
 - other methods as agreed by the setting manager
- Food served to children with identified allergies is checked by the key person to ensure that the ingredients does not contain any of the allergens for that child.
- Children who are showing signs of 'strong food preferences, or aversions to food ' are not forced to eat anything they do not want to.
- Staff recognise the signs that a child has had enough and remove uneaten food without comment.
- Children are not made to stay at the table after others have left if they refuse to eat certain items of food.
- Staff are always present when children are eating.
- Tables are cleaned before and after, with a suitable non-bleach product.
- Members of staff serving food wash their hands and cover any cuts with a blue plaster.

E.coli prevention

Staff who are preparing and handling food, especially food that is not pre-prepared for consumption e.g. fruit and vegetables grown on the premises, must be aware of the potential spread of E.coli and must clean and store food in accordance with the E.coli 0157 guidance, available at:

www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/guidancenotes/hygguid/ecoliguide#.U7FCVGIOWdI

Food in play

- We use food for play, it may include dough, corn flour, pasta, rice, food colourings/flavourings.
- Food for play is risk assessed against the 14 allergens referred and is included in risk assessments undertaken for children with specific allergies.
- Staff are constantly alert to the potential hazards of food play, in particular choking hazards and signs of previously undetected allergies.
- Foods that are cooked and used for play, such as dough, have a limited shelf life.
- Cornflour is always mixed with water before given for play.
- Cornflour and cooked pasta are discarded after an activity as high risk of bacteria forming.
- All flour including cornflour and flour is raw until the point it is heated or cooked, and should not be used for play.
- Only playdough that has been cooked or made with precooked flour should be used.
- Only cornflour that has been cooked or made with precooked flour should be used.

Children's cooking activities

- Before undertaking any cooking activity with children, members of staff will 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.
- We ensure the area to be used for cooking is cleaned.
- We ensure that 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.
- We ensure that food ready for cooking or cooling is not left uncovered.
- Cooked food to go home is put in a paper food bag.
- Children should wear aprons that are used just for cooking.
- Food play activities are suspended during outbreaks of illness.

This policy was updated on 24th July 2025 by Susannah Townley, Manager.

This policy is due to be reviewed on 24th July 2026.