



## **Food and drink**

### **Policy statement**

We regard snack and meal times as an important part of our day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults, and helps children to learn about healthy eating. At snack and meal times, we aim to provide nutritious food, which meets 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 ask their parents about their dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies. (See the Managing Children who are Sick, Infectious or with Allergies Policy.)
- We record information about each child's dietary needs in the Registration Form and parents sign the form to signify that it is correct.
- We regularly consult with parents to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs – including any allergies - are up-to-date. Parents sign the updated record to signify that it is correct.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all our staff and volunteers are fully informed about them.
- We implement systems to ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and preferences, as well as their parents' wishes.
- We display the menus of snacks for parents to view.
- We provide nutritious food for all meals and snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- We include foods from the diet of each of the children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.
- We take care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products and we are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts.
- Through discussion with parents and research reading, we obtain information about the dietary rules of the religious groups to which children and their parents belong, and of vegetarians and vegans, as well as about food allergies. We take account of this information in the provision of food and drinks.
- We show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. We 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 snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and adults participate.
- We use snack 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 give parents who provide food for their children information about suitable containers for food.



- In order to protect children with food allergies, We discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- For young children who drink milk, we provide whole pasteurised milk.
- We ask parents to send in healthy food and only water for lunch.
- Water is accessible for all children throughout their session
- We store up-to-date information about special dietary and health requirements due to: food allergies and intolerance; religious reasons; preference or starting solid foods, which - will be obtained before a child attends the setting.
- We promote and support healthy eating, ensuring mealtimes are a positive experience where children are encouraged to develop good eating habits.
- We ensure children are within sight and hearing of a member of staff while eating.
- We provide advice to families who choose to bring in food from home or who may want advice around, diet, nutrition and supporting children's eating.
- Food hygiene instructions including storage and labelling is recorded in English.
- All staff and families are made aware if we have a child in the setting that has a severe food allergy, which could lead to anaphylaxis, and what we are doing to prevent this.
- We detail any allergens that are present in the food prepared for children in accordance with EU Information for Consumers Regulation 2014 and detailed on [www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk).
- Our staff ensure food is stored safely to avoid cross contamination.
- We are aware of our responsibilities under food hygiene legislation. This includes registration with my Local Authority Environmental Health Department.
- All meals, snacks and drinks are healthy, balanced, and nutritious.
- Fresh drinking water is available, and accessible to all children at all times.
- Food preparation areas are adequately equipped and maintained to provide healthy meals and snacks, with suitable facilities and systems in place to enable hygienic food preparation and storage.
- We ensure suitable sterilisation and storage of equipment for babies.
- We encourage and support children to develop good hygiene practices, self-help skills and independence at mealtimes.
- We notify Ofsted of any outbreak of food poisoning that affects two or more children within 14 days, including incidents which occur outside of childcare business hours.
- We ensure details of food and drinks provided for children are available to parents/carers.

## **Packed lunches**

Where we cannot provide cooked meals and children are required to bring packed lunches, we:

- ensure perishable contents of packed lunches are refrigerated or contain an ice pack to keep food cool;
- inform parents of policy on healthy eating;
- inform parents that we don't microwave food.
- encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk based deserts, such as yoghurt or crème fraîche, where we can only provide cold food from home. We discourage sweet drinks and can provide children with water;
- discourage packed lunch contents that consist largely of crisps, processed foods, sweet drinks and sweet products such as cakes or biscuits. We reserve the right to return this food to the parent as a last resort;
- ensure that adults sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.

**Updated: August 2026**