Safer Eating & Nutrition Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that children in our care are provided with a safe eating environment that supports healthy eating, minimises food-related risks, and ensures compliance with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, including the changes introduced in September 2025.

This policy should be read alongside **The Allergic & Allergic reactions policy.**

Key Principles

- Ensure all meals and snacks are nutritious, well-balanced, and cater to the individual dietary needs of children.
- Promote healthy eating habits from an early age.
- Safeguard children from food-related risks, including choking hazards and food allergies.

Safer Eating Practices

To minimise the risk of choking and ensure safe eating environments for young children, the following practices are implemented:

- Supervision: All children are supervised during mealtimes and snack time. Children will be within sight and hearing of a member of staff whilst eating. Where possible, staff will sit facing children whilst they eat so they can be sure children are eating in a way to prevent choking and so they can prevent food sharing and be aware of any unexpected allergic reactions.

- Choking Hazards: Staff will prepare food in a way to prevent choking and be vigilant to ensure foods sent in packed lunches have also been prepared safely. Firm, spherical foods like grapes and cherry tomatoes must be sliced into quarters or segments. Cylindrical foods such as cucumber, carrots and cocktail sausages must be cut lengthways into thin batons. This guidance on food safety for young children – https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/safeguarding-and-welfare/food-safety includes advice on food and drink to avoid, how to reduce the risk of choking and links to other useful resources for early years settings. If a child experiences a choking incident that requires intervention, staff will record details of where and how the child choked and parents and/or carers made aware. The records will be reviewed and risk assessed alongside other accidents / incidents at nursery on a half-termly basis. Appropriate action will be taken to address any identified concerns.

- Age-Appropriate Food Types: Foods will be served in a manner suitable for the child's developmental stage (e.g., food will be cut into small, manageable pieces for younger children). Popcorn, marshmallows, jelly cubes and hard sweets are never permitted for children under 5.

- Mealtime Environment: Children will sit down and remain seated while eating and be given time to chew and swallow their food properly. Children are discouraged from talking loudly at mealtimes / snack time. Other distractions such as toys at the meal table are, wherever possible, discouraged. Food sharing is not allowed.

Baby feeding and weaning

- We follow babies' individual feeding patterns following conversations with parents. We regularly review these to ensure they continue to meet the baby's needs
- We feed babies responsively according to their needs and support mothers with breastfeeding, through providing suitable places to breastfeed in the setting and making provision for expressed breastmilk
- We prepare infant formula milk if required, following NHS guidelines
- Weaning is introduced in collaboration with parents, including discussions about the stage their baby is at, the types of foods and textures their baby is eating at home and how these are presented to the baby; no assumptions are made based on the age of the baby. We follow the NHS Best Start in Life weaning guidance[1]
- The nursery provides parents with daily written records of feeding routines for children under 3.

Commercial baby food and drink

- We provide fresh food for babies and do not use pre-made commercial baby food or drinks
- We do not permit parents to provide commercial baby food or drinks.

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Healthy Eating and Nutrition

We aim to support the health and wellbeing of all children by promoting healthy eating habits:

- Snack Time: We offer the children a mid-morning snack during their session. This consists of fresh milk or water, a selection of fresh fruits and vegetables and toast or crackers. We will always encourage the children to eat healthily.
- Packed Lunches: Parents are advised about safe storage of packed lunches and given information about providing healthy packed lunches.
- Educational Opportunities: We will engage children in learning about food, nutrition, and healthy eating through age-appropriate activities and discussions.

Mealtime Hygiene and Safety

To ensure the safety and hygiene of food, the following procedures will be followed:

- Food Storage and Preparation: All food will be stored at the correct temperature, in compliance with food safety regulations. Food preparation areas will be kept clean, and staff will adhere to strict handwashing procedures before handling food.
- Safe Utensils and Equipment: All kitchen utensils and eating equipment will be safe and age-appropriate for the children. Any broken or damaged items will be immediately replaced.
- Hand Hygiene: Children will wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. Staff will ensure that all children have clean hands before meals and snack are served.

Training and Awareness

Staff will receive regular training in paediatric first aid, food safety, allergy management, and safe eating practices. This includes:

- First Aid and Emergency Procedures: All staff will be trained in first aid procedures specific to food-related incidents, including how to handle allergic reactions and choking. Whilst children are eating there will be at least one member of staff with a valid full paediatric first aid certificate present in the room. Paediatric First Aid will be updated at least every three years as a minimum.
- All staff are required to complete training as part of their induction covering food hygiene and allergy awareness. All staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis, the differences between allergies and intolerances and that children can develop allergies at any time
- Ongoing Training: Staff will undergo refresher courses on food hygiene and allergy awareness every two years as a minimum.

Parent and Carer Involvement

We believe that parents and carers play a key role in the nutritional care of their children. We encourage parents to share any concerns or preferences related to their child's diet, and we will maintain open lines of communication regarding food and mealtimes.

- Special Occasions: For special occasions or celebrations (e.g., birthdays), we will work with parents to ensure that any treats brought in align with our safer eating and allergy policies.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
September 2026	Reanna Porter	*September 2027*