

Safer Eating Policy.



Safer Eating Requirements In line with the Early Years Foundation

Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, we have a duty to ensure that children are provided with safe, healthy and age-appropriate food and drink, and that staff take all reasonable steps to prevent accidents, choking, allergic reactions and other food-related harm. This applies to all staff, students, volunteers and visitors involved in food preparation, serving or supervision of children during meals and snacks.

We aim to:

- Safeguard children by minimising risks associated with eating and drinking.
- Promote safe eating habits that are developmentally appropriate for each child.
- Ensure that all dietary requirements, allergies and cultural or religious needs are identified, recorded and strictly adhered to.
- Create calm, positive mealtime experiences that support children's physical development and emotional wellbeing.
- Ensure staff are knowledgeable, vigilant and confident in responding to eating-related risks, including choking and allergic reactions.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers to ensure consistency and safety.

How We Will Achieve This

Risk Assessment and Environment

- Mealtimes and snack times are risk assessed regularly
 - Children are always seated appropriately when eating and are supervised by staff at all times
 - We use low highchairs and chairs and appropriate tables to eat safely whilst sat. The children are familiar with the location of the eating area and there are minimal distractions
 - Food is prepared and served in line with food hygiene standards
 - Cutlery, crockery and seating are suitable for the age and stage of development of the children
- Safe Food Preparation and Serving

- Staff follow clear [EYFS Food Safety guidance](#) on food preparation, serving and safety. We prepare all food in accordance with this.
- Foods known to present a higher choking risk are avoided or adapted appropriately
- Hot food and drinks are allowed to cool before serving and are never accessible to children unsupervised

Allergies and Dietary Requirements

- All allergies, intolerances and dietary requirements are obtained from parents on admission and updated regularly.
- Allergy information is clearly displayed in every room for staff (while maintaining confidentiality)
- Staff accessing the kitchen to prepare food have Food Hygiene Level 2
- Measures are in place to prevent cross-contamination
- Staff are trained to recognise and respond to allergic reactions, including the use of emergency medication such as EpiPens where applicable
- Each child with an allergy will have the appropriately completed [BSACI allergy action plan](#)

Supervision and Staff Practice

- Staff sit facing the children during meals and snacks to actively supervise and support safe eating and choking risks.
- All staff are Paediatric First Aid trained.
- One person in each room is responsible for ensuring that the food served meets the requirements for each child
- Children are encouraged to eat at their own pace and are never rushed or forced to eat
- Staff model positive and safe eating behaviours
- Children learn that they must stay at the table whilst eating and must not walk around

Training and Awareness

- All staff receive safeguarding training that includes safer eating and choking risks.

- Paediatric First Aid training is maintained, including responding to choking incidents
- New staff, students and volunteers are inducted into safer eating procedures before working with children.
- Parents and all staff are directed to find out more information about [Food Allergies \(NHS\)](#) and treatment of [Anaphylaxis](#)
- Staff are aware of the differences between [Food Allergies](#) and [Food Intolerances](#)
- Staff are aware that any choking incident must be recorded and reported with parents being notified.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

- Food is discussed with parents at the Welcome Meeting, any allergies, intolerances or dietary needs are discussed with allergies possibly necessitating a separate meeting with the manager, key person and room leader
- Any concerns or incidents related to eating are communicated promptly and recorded appropriately
- Once a term, we contact all parents whose children have an entry on the allergy list and ask them to give any necessary updates.

Babies

- We ask parents of babies for information relating to where they are in their weaning journey consistency of their food and what foods they have already tried before starting with us
- We ask for regular updates and monitor carefully as allergies can start at any time under the age of one year.
- We signpost to [Baby Weaning NHS](#) information Monitoring and Review.
- Any eating-related incidents are recorded and reviewed to inform practice.
- This is reviewed regularly, or sooner if guidance or legislation changes This should be read alongside our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Health and Safety Policy and Food and Nutrition policy.

The children's individual needs will be discussed with parents to ensure that they are met.

Weaning:

- The nursery introduces first solid food to the child with the parent's direction.

- Food will not be given before the recommended age without consultation with the child's Health Visitor.
- There will be special considerations for children who are born prematurely and we will consult with professionals regarding this.
- The nursery provides fresh, fruit and vegetables, soft, cooked meat such as chicken and beef mince, fish, pasta, noodles, toast, lentils and rice. Also, full fat dairy products such as yoghurt, fromage frais or custard (we choose products with no added sugar or less sugar). Cows' milk can be used in 2 of 2 or mixed with food from 6 months. Our menu reflects and supports our food and nutrition policy.
- The child will be introduced to more coarse textures and finger foods at the appropriate development stage (not by their age) according to weaning guidelines.
- Any weaning plans the parents wish their child to follow will be followed by the nursery.
- Childhaven provide an adapted version of the full nursery menu to suit the first stages of weaning.
- At the end of the weaning process the child moves on to the nursery menu taking in to account any special dietary requirements.
- Childhaven Nursery offers advice and support to any parents that would like it, throughout the weaning process.
- Childhaven have a support document available containing advice from NHS and NDNA as well as signposting to alternative websites.

Staff Responsibilities

- At each mealtime and snack time the **lead member of staff** will be responsible for checking that the food being provided meets all the requirements for each child.
- Lead staff will have ongoing discussions with parents/carers where appropriate, health professionals to develop allergy action plans for managing any known allergies and intolerances. The information will be kept up to date and shared with **ALL** staff.
- Individual dietary requirements required for medical or cultural reasons will be respected and where possible catered for. We will gather information from parents regarding their children's dietary needs. Where appropriate we will carry out a risk assessment in the case of allergies and work alongside parents to put into place an individual diet plan for their child.

During meals, the adults will:

Make mealtimes an enjoyable, social occasion.

Use meal and snack times to help promote children to develop independence by:

- Setting the tables,
- Participating in the preparation of meals and snacks when appropriate.
- Making choices, serving food and drink, and feeding themselves.
- Encourage children to eat the 'healthy' components of their meal before any 'treats' and talk about the difference between savoury and sweet.
- Model good eating habits by sitting talking and at times eating meals with the children.
- Encourage lots of conversation, table manners, and use of words such as 'please' and 'thank you'.
- Use photographs as a discussion point at the table to encourage further conversations whilst eating together.

Policy put in place by Marianne Perry Phase lead 0-2 provision – September 2025

This policy is due for review before September 2026 – new safer eating requirements added. 01/09/26

This policy is due for review before September 2027

