

FOOD AND DRINK POLICY

Policy statement:

It is my policy to provide children with healthy, balanced and nutritious meals, snacks and drinks.

Those responsible for the preparation and handling of food in my setting will be competent to do so and I/we follow any government guidance.

Children will be always within sight and hearing while eating.

I hold a valid paediatric first aid certificate and will be in the room whilst children are eating.

At each mealtime and snack time am I responsible for checking that the food being provided meets all the requirements for each child. If I work with assistants, it is my responsibility to ensure it is clear who is responsible for checking that the food being provided meets all the requirements for each child.

Procedure:

Before a child is admitted I will obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies, and any special health requirements. If relevant, I will share this information with all staff involved in the preparing and handling of food.

I will have ongoing discussions with parents and/or carers about the stage their child is at in regard to introducing solid foods, including to understand the textures the child is familiar with.

I will prepare food in a suitable way for each child's individual developmental needs, working with parents and/or carers to help children move on to the next stage at a pace right for the child.

I will prepare food in a way to prevent choking.

Babies and young children will be seated safely in a highchair or appropriately sized low chair while eating.

Where possible, I will sit facing children whilst they eat so they can make 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.

If a child experiences a choking incident that requires intervention, I will record details of where and how the child choked and will make parents and/or carers. The records will be reviewed periodically to identify if there are trends or common features of incidents that could be addressed to reduce the risk of choking. Appropriate action will be taken to address any identified concerns.

FOOD AND DRINK POLICY

Where parents provide meals for their children to eat in my setting, I will provide chilled storage for packed lunches and appropriate storage areas for other foodstuffs.

I will provide children with clean, age-appropriate crockery and eating utensils. To minimise the risk of infection, I will ensure children's plates, cutlery and cups are not shared and are cleaned and disinfected regularly.

I will respect the diversity of practice around mealtimes e.g. use of chopsticks or fingers for eating, while following appropriate hygiene practices.

I will provide children with healthy meals, snacks and drinks as appropriate, following NHS and government guidelines. Children will be able to prepare their own snacks, but these won't be shared with others.

I will ensure fresh drinking water is always available and accessible, both in and outside my setting. I will also ensure children do not share drinking cups.

As a provider of meals and snacks I am aware of my responsibilities under food hygiene legislation. This includes registration with my Local Authority Environmental Health Department. If I am contacted by the Environmental Health Department, I am happy to have my premises inspected by a food safety officer.

I will detail any allergens that are present in the food that I prepare for children in accordance with EU Information for Consumers Regulation 2014 and detailed on www.food.gov.uk. This information will be shared with parents/carers.

I will list any allergens in ingredients that are present in any food that I produce or provide for the children. I will also be aware when I take children out to eat at other settings. All registered food businesses have to comply with the legislation so I will make sure I am aware of any allergens and make this part of my risk assessment.

I will ensure suitable sterilisation equipment is used for babies' food.

I will always keep pets out of the food preparation area. If a family pet does gain access to this area, then I will ensure that all work surfaces and cooking utensils have been thoroughly cleaned before any food preparation or food handling takes place.

Baby changing facilities will not be near food preparation areas.

I will ensure that I, and everyone caring for children, as well as the children themselves, are aware of good hand washing procedures and how these are carried out. Hand washing procedures will be carried out regularly throughout the day. Where this isn't possible then sanitising hand gel will be used.

FOOD AND DRINK POLICY

I will not undertake laundry during times of food preparation, and I will ensure that any detergents or soiled clothing will not come into contact with food preparation areas.

If there is an outbreak of food poisoning affecting two or more children looked after on my premises, I will notify Ofsted as soon as possible but within 14 days of the incident occurring in order to comply with regulations. This includes incidents which occur outside childcare business hours (e.g. at home).

I will keep all food receipts, including those under £10, so that if there is an outbreak of food poisoning on my premises, I will be able to trace the outlet where the food was purchased.

Parents will be and have been updated on any recent legislation issued by the government, most recently the EYFS Nutrition Guidance issued in April 2025.

Date policy was written	12 August 2025
This policy is due for review on the following date	12 August 2026
Policy reviewed	12 th August 2026

This policy supports the following Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders requirements:

Section 3 – Safeguarding and welfare requirements

- Food and drink
- Health
- Staff:child ratios