

16. Lunchtime and snack time policies and procedures

Lunchtime and Snack Time Policy and Procedures

Statement of Intent

This policy sets out how we meet the **Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS, 2025)** requirements for food and drink (Section 3:

Safeguarding and Welfare), ensuring all children have access to healthy, balanced, and nutritious meals, snacks, and drinks while in our care.

We are committed to promoting children's health, well-being, and independence through positive mealtime routines.

Food and Drink Provision

- **Fresh drinking water** is available to all children at all times (EYFS 3.48).
- **Milk** is offered at breakfast, snack, and afternoon tea, in line with DfE nutritional guidance.
- **Breakfast** includes a choice of toast and/or cereals.
- **Snacks** are healthy, balanced, and varied. Fresh fruit is always available; afternoon snacks may include fruit or a low-sugar option such as a sugar-free biscuit.
- **Lunch** is prepared daily by our on-site cook. Menus are displayed on the parent notice board and are planned to meet children's dietary needs, allergies, and cultural/religious preferences (EYFS 3.47).

Food Safety and Hygiene

- We follow the **Food Standards Agency Safer Food, Better Business** procedures.
- Environmental Health inspects the setting annually; we currently hold a 5-star hygiene rating.
- Fridge, freezer, and food temperatures are recorded and monitored daily.
- Staff follow strict food hygiene practices when preparing and serving food (EYFS 3.48).

Children's Learning and Development at Mealtimes

- Mealtimes are **social and language-rich experiences**, used to encourage conversation, turn-taking, and good manners.
- Children are encouraged to **serve themselves** where appropriate, with adult support to promote independence (EYFS 1.9 – Personal, Social, and Emotional Development).
- All staff sit with the children during meals and snacks, facing them at the table, to provide supervision, encourage conversation, model positive behaviour, and ensure safety (particularly in relation to choking risks)..
- Children are encouraged to help prepare food (e.g., counting cutlery, chopping fruit with safety knives), supporting fine motor skills, mathematics, and independence.

Inclusion and Dietary Needs

- All dietary requirements (medical, cultural, or religious) are respected and clearly recorded in individual care plans (EYFS 3.47).
- Parents/carers are consulted about their child's dietary needs and preferences.
- Alternative options will always be provided where restrictions apply.

Allergy Awareness and Staff Training

- All staff receive **allergy awareness training** to ensure they can recognise, prevent, and respond to allergic reactions appropriately.

- Training includes safe food handling, cross-contamination prevention, and emergency procedures for managing allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis.
- A record of children with allergies or intolerances is clearly displayed in food preparation and eating areas, with parental consent.
- Staff are trained to use prescribed medication (e.g., auto-injectors) where required.

Babies and Younger Children

- Babies are supported to feed themselves as soon as they are developmentally ready, in consultation with parents.
- Staff encourage babies to develop self-feeding skills, promoting coordination, confidence, and emotional well-being.
- Bottle feeding and weaning follow safe preparation guidelines, in consultation with parents. (EYFS 3.48).

Hygiene and Well-being

- Children are supported to wash hands before and after eating.
- After meals, children are provided with wipes or supported in cleaning themselves to encourage independence and self-care.

Monitoring and Review

- This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if DfE or EYFS statutory requirements change.
- **All staff undertake regular food hygiene and allergy awareness training.**
- Training records are kept and updated to evidence compliance.

Appendix: Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Procedures

In the event of a suspected allergic reaction or anaphylaxis, staff must follow these steps immediately:

1. **Recognise the symptoms** (e.g., swelling, hives, difficulty breathing, vomiting, sudden collapse).
2. **Administer prescribed medication** (such as an adrenaline auto-injector) without delay.
3. **Call 999** – state clearly that a child is experiencing a severe allergic reaction/anaphylaxis.
4. **Ensure a member of staff stays with the child at all times** while another staff member meets emergency services at the entrance.
5. **Contact the child's parents/carers immediately** to inform them of the situation.
6. **Record the incident in detail** (time of reaction, symptoms observed, medication given, emergency services involvement) in the child's records and on the incident form.
7. **Review the child's allergy care plan** after the incident in consultation with parents/carers and medical professionals.
