

Food From Home Policy

This policy should be read alongside our:

- Early Years Cutting Guidance – Food Standards Agency
- Food from home form.
- Food from home temperature record.
- Nutrition and Mealtime policy

At our nurseries we strongly believe it is vital to treat each child as an individual and provide for all children equally.

We pride ourselves on providing balanced, nutritional meals for the children at the setting, from all different cultures and backgrounds, enabling the children to experience a variety of foods and have something on the menu familiar to their own culture. However, each child has their own taste buds and will grow to develop likes and dislikes within food, which we completely understand.

If a child is having consistent challenges at mealtimes within the setting, a meeting will be arranged to discuss how we can support them and encourage them to enjoy mealtimes within the setting. Alongside parents, the child's keyworker will create a plan, to ensure that no child is going hungry, and we are meeting the welfare needs of everyone. Under such circumstances, parents may be advised to bring in food from home for their child.

Babies and young children are especially vulnerable to bacteria and at risk from food poisoning, so to ensure everybody's safety it is important that any food brought in from home meets the requirements set out in this document.

The following guidelines have been set out by the NHS and must be followed:

- All food that is prepared at home should be cooled within 2 hours of cooking and put in the fridge.
- Food in the fridge must be consumed within 2 days of cooking.
- Rice must be cooled within 1 hour of cooking and placed in a fridge, then consumed within 24 hours.

No food brought in from home, should have been reheated previously, prior to entering the setting as this could be a potential risk for the children.

We will not allow frozen food into the setting so if food has been frozen, it must be thoroughly defrosted, according to current legislation, prior to bringing it into the setting.

All food should be handed to the member of staff collecting your child from the door, not placed in their bag, so we can ensure all food is being labelled and stored appropriately.

All food must come in a lidded container with the child's full name and the contents it holds.

As a nursery, it is highly important that we understand what is in the food, as there may be several children or staff within our setting who have allergies. We must highlight the importance of safeguarding those individuals, therefore, we require a full ingredients list of the food items

provided from home. Any pre-packed food for example, sandwiches, must remain in its original packaging.

All food that requires heating must reach a temperature of 75 degrees Celsius and be checked with a food probe, before allowing it to cool for the child to consume. All reheating food must be consumed within an hour of reheating. All staff serving and reheating food from home, will be competent to do so and have the correct training, in accordance with current legislation.

We will continue to follow our Nutrition and Mealtime policy also, ensuring children are supervised throughout all mealtimes. All staff in the setting are aware of children's individual dietary requirements. Children's choices, beliefs and safety must be respected and protected at all times.

We require the food to be prepared and cut in accordance with the age and stage of the child to prevent choking incidents. The Early Years Food Cutting Guidance by The Food Standards Agency, has been introduced to prevent the risk on choking in babies and young people. Below is a list of all the food prohibited for children under 5 according to the NHS guidance and how the food should be prepared.

Prohibited food and food preparation requirements to reduce the risk of choking:

- All pips and stones from fruit will be removed before serving.
- All small round foods, like grapes and cherry tomatoes must be cut lengthways and into quarters.
- All large fruits like melon and hard fruit or vegetables like raw apple and carrot must be cut into slices, not chunks.
- No Sausages
- Cheese must be cut into strips, not chunks.
- All bones must be removed from fish and meat.
- The Skin must be removed from all hard fruit and vegetables e.g., apples, for children under 12 months.
- No popcorn
- No marshmallows
- No jelly cubes
- No hard sweets
- No seeds or nuts
- No rice drinks.
- No Raw Shellfish
- No raisins for children under 12 months
- No honey for children under 12 months.

National guidance: The policy was drawn up using a range of national documents including a Eat Better Start Better toolkit, Early Years Foundation Stage Requirements, Government Website Guidelines, NHS guidelines and the Food Standards Agency.