

Food and Drink Policy

Policy Statement

We regard snack and mealtimes as an important part of our day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating and table manners. At snack and mealtimes, we aim to provide healthy, balanced and nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs.

Procedures

We follow these procedures to promote healthy eating in our setting:

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we ask parents about their dietary needs and preferences. This includes any allergies or intolerances, preferences for religious faiths or beliefs, information regarding children who may have additional support needs or specific diets. (See the Managing Children who are Sick, Infectious or with Allergies Policy.)
- We record information about each child's dietary needs in the Contact and Medical Details form, which parents sign and date.
- We regularly consult with parents to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs – including any allergies or intolerances - are up to date.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs and requirements so that all our staff and volunteers are fully informed about them.
- We implement systems to ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and preferences, as well as their parents' wishes.
- We plan snacks in advance, involving children in the planning.
- We display the menus of snacks for parents to view.
- We provide nutritious food for all snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings. Our Breakfast Club menu offers breakfast cereals that are labelled as 'low' 'green' with the lowest sugar and salt content. (See Breakfast Club policy)
- We follow the guidance on which foods to 'Avoid' 'Provide' and 'Limit', making sure we offer a range of foods from each food group over the course of a week. Daily, we provide fresh fruit and vegetables where possible and may provide some tinned fruit in juice (Not syrup). We do not provide dried fruit. We provide wholegrain toast, unsalted rice cakes and plain crackers across the week and avoid sugar or salt coated alternatives. We provide milk (or unsweetened oat milk) or water at every snack time and avoid sugary juices or cordials.
- We include a variety of foods from the following food groups:
 - dairy foods - or non-dairy 'unsweetened' alternatives that contain added calcium.
 - grains, cereals and starch vegetables
 - fruit and vegetables
- We include foods from the diet of each of the children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.





- We are a 'Nut Free' setting and take care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products and we are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts.
- Through discussion with parents and research reading, we obtain information about the dietary rules of the religious groups to which children, and their parents belong, and of vegetarians and vegans, as well as about food allergies. We take account of this information in the provision of food and drinks.
- We show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. We do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child, or make a child feel singled out because of her/his diet or allergy.
- We encourage children to engage in baking and cooking activities and regularly talk to them about healthy eating and its benefits.
- We have a suitable kitchen for the storage and preparation of food. Currently with a Food Hygiene rating of 5.
- Staff that handle and prepare food receive training in Food hygiene.
- Staff that are feeling unwell do not handle food and in the event of a member of staff having had a sickness bug they should not handle or prepare food for at least 48 hours after the last bout.

During Snack and Lunch times

- We ensure that children wash their hands thoroughly before and after touching food.
- We organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and adults participate.
- We use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.
- We ensure children are sat down on appropriately sized chairs in the designated snack area when eating.
- We ensure portion sizes are suitable for the age and size of the children.
- We prepare food in a way that prevents choking and avoid providing foods that are a choking risk eg grapes. We ensure that any foods provided are cut up to an appropriate size and that foods are cut in half or quarters along the length, rather than halved or cut into slices. This includes food sent in from home that has not been cut appropriately by parents.
- If needed we provide children with utensils that are appropriate for their ages and stages of development and that take account of the eating practices in their cultures.
- We have fresh drinking water constantly available for the children. We inform the children about how to obtain the water and that they can access water at any time during the day.
- We inform parents who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in our setting.
- We give parents who provide food for their children information about suitable containers for food.
- We provide parents with information on how to make a healthy, nutritious packed lunch.
- In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- For young children who drink milk, we provide semi skimmed milk.



Packed Lunches

Where parents provide packed lunches for their child, we:

- Advise parents to use an ice pack within the lunch box to keep perishable items cool.
- Advise parents to clearly label lunchboxes with their child's name.
- Advise parents on how to create a healthy, balanced, nutritious lunch.
- inform parents of whether we have facilities to microwave cooked food brought from home.
- encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk-based desserts, such as natural yoghurt or crème fraiche. We discourage sweet drinks and will provide children with water or milk.
- discourage packed lunch contents that consist largely of crisps, processed foods, sweet drinks and sweet products such as cakes or biscuits. We reserve the right to return this food to the parent as a last resort.
- Check all foods brought from home for potential allergens to reduce the risk of cross contamination.
- provide children bringing packed lunches with plates, cups and cutlery; and
- ensure that adults sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion and that children can be fully supervised.

Safer Eating

- We ensure that children are fully supervised when eating. Staff members maintain ratios during snack and lunch times and sit with the children throughout. They are vigilant to choking episodes and signs of unexpected allergic reactions and anaphylaxis, sitting vulnerable children nearer to them.
- All staff supervising children when eating hold a full up to date paediatric first aid certificate. This includes training on how to recognise the signs and symptoms for allergies and anaphylaxis and the difference between an allergy and an intolerance.
- During snack or lunch times children must ask to use the toilet and may only do so when a member of staff has checked they do not have food in their mouth. Children are encouraged to wash their hands thoroughly after using the toilet.
- Information regarding a child's dietary requirements, allergies, intolerances, preferences and special health requirements is obtained prior to a child attending Pre-School. This information is then shared with all staff and displayed in the kitchen.
- A member of staff each day is responsible for checking that food provided meets the needs of all the children individually. The member of staff responsible each day is made known to all other staff and is displayed on the kitchen board.
- Key practitioners have ongoing discussions with parents to discuss allergy action plans and how to best manage known allergies and intolerances. We refer to the British Society for Allergy and Clinical Immunology (BSACI allergy action plan) This information is shared with all members of staff.
- Where we have a case of Food poisoning affecting two or more children we notify Ofsted as soon as possible, and at least within 14 days of the incident.



Food brought in from home

On occasion parents may be asked to provide food or snacks from home (this may be as alternatives due to allergens, for a celebration, or as an alternative to the consumables charge). We encourage these foods to be healthy and nutritious and sit within the framework of our policy.

Celebrations

We discourage parents from bringing cakes or sweets to share on their child's birthday and encourage them to provide healthier alternatives.

Legal Framework

- Regulation (EC) 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Hygiene of Foodstuffs.
- DforEd EYFS Nutrition Guidance '25

Further Guidance

- Safer Food, Better Business (Food Standards Agency 2011)
- Nutritional Guidance for the Under Fives (Pre-school Learning Alliance 2009)
- The Early Years Essential Cookbook (Pre-school Learning Alliance 2009)
- Healthy and Active Lifestyles for the Early Years (Pre-school Learning Alliance 2012)
- British Society for Allergy and Clinical Immunology (BSACI allergy action plan)
- Food Allergy NHS
- Anaphylaxis – NHS
- Food safety – Help for Early Years providers – GOV.UK

This policy was adopted by:	Madley Pre-School <hr/>
On:	June 2023 and updated Sep 2025 <hr/>
Date to be reviewed:	June 2024 Sep 26 <hr/>
Signed on behalf of the provider:	<hr/>
Name of signatory:	Fiona Batstone <hr/>
Role of signatory:	Manager <hr/>

