Healthy and Safe Eating Policy

Policy Statement and Aims

The safety and wellbeing of children while eating is paramount. This policy is designed to ensure that all children enjoy healthy, balanced, and nutritious meals and snacks in a safe, supervised environment that minimises the risks of choking and allergic reactions, in compliance with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework for group and school-based providers.

Key EYFS Requirements

- This policy specifically addresses the EYFS requirements regarding:
- Supervision: Ensuring adequate supervision and the presence of a paediatric first aid (PFA) trained staff member.
- Information Gathering: Obtaining and acting on information about special dietary needs, preferences, allergies, and intolerances.
- Risk Mitigation: Taking all necessary steps to prevent choking and allergic reactions.
- Staff Competence & Training: Ensuring staff are competent and trained in food hygiene, allergy awareness, and emergency procedures.
- Healthy Eating: Provision of healthy, balanced, and nutritious food and drink. Allergy and Intolerance Management Information Gathering and Record Keeping

Prior to Admission:

- Information regarding all known or suspected food allergies, intolerances, and special dietary requirements (e.g., medical, cultural, religious) are obtained from parents/carers and recorded on the setting's Registration Form
- Individual Plans: A plan is developed, in consultation with parents/carers and, where appropriate, healthcare professionals, for every child with a diagnosed allergy requiring medical intervention.
- Data Access: All staff have immediate access to a clear, up-to-date record of all children's dietary needs. Policy Version: 1 Last Updated: October 2026. Review Date: October 2027
- Dedicated Staff: A nominated staff member are responsible at each mealtime for checking that the food and drink provided to a child with a known allergy or intolerance is safe for them to consume.
- Meal Preparation: Strict food preparation procedures are followed to prevent cross contamination.
- Food Labels: All food brought into the nursery (including ingredients) are checked for allergens listed on the child's plan.

- No Food Swapping: Children are actively supervised to prevent the sharing or swapping of food, which is particularly dangerous for those with allergies. Choking Prevention and Safe Food Preparation All food is prepared in an age and developmentally appropriate manner to minimise the risk of choking.

Mealtime Environment and Supervision

- Supervision: All children are under the close supervision of a member of staff while eating and drinking. Staff sit with or face the children to observe them closely.
- Paediatric First Aid Training Requirement (PFA) At any time when children are eating, there is a staff member with a current, 12 hour Paediatric First Aid (PFA) certificate present in the room/area.
- Seating: Children are securely seated in highchairs or appropriately sized low chairs while eating and drinking. They are actively discouraged from walking, running, or lying down while food is in their mouth.
- Distractions: Mealtimes are calm, social times with minimal distractions to allow children to concentrate on chewing and swallowing properly.

Emergency Procedures and Choking

- Staff trained in PFA will respond immediately to any suspected choking incident following the approved PFA procedure.
- The incident will be recorded on an accident/incident form, detailing the food involved, the actions taken, and the outcome.
- Parents/carers will be informed as soon as possible, and all records will be reviewed to identify any necessary changes to the policy or individual risk assessment. Allergic Reaction/Anaphylaxis
- Staff trained in PFA and allergy awareness will respond immediately to the signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction or anaphylaxis, following the child's plan and emergency action plan.
- If prescribed, the adrenaline auto-injector will be administered immediately. Parents/carers will be informed immediately, and appropriate medical assistance will be obtained where necessary.
- The incident will be recorded, parents/carers informed immediately, and the plan reviewed.
- Food Hygiene: All staff involved in the preparation and handling of food receive training in food safety and hygiene.
- Allergy Awareness: All staff complete PFA training which includes recognising the signs and symptoms of allergic reactions and anaphylaxis, including the correct emergency response and the administration of adrenaline auto-injectors.
- Weaning/Infant Feeding: Staff supporting infants will be trained in safe weaning practices, including appropriate food textures and preparation for babies at different developmental stages. Food Brought from Home (Packed Lunches/Birthday Cakes)
- Risk Mitigation: Parents/carers providing packed lunches will be given clear guidance on prohibited items, including high-risk choking foods and common allergens present in the nursery.
- Beckside Preschool & Nursery is a nut free setting
- Food Safety: Staff will ensure packed lunches are stored appropriately (e.g., refrigerated) to maintain food safety and hygiene.

- Celebrations: Any food provided for celebrations must be pre-approved by the Manager to ensure it is compliant with all children's allergy and dietary needs.

Healthy Eating and Meals

We aim to provide healthy, balanced, varied and nutritious food and drink at snack and mealtimes, to meet the child's needs and encourage them to develop and promote healthy lifestyles and well-being throughout their life. We provide a positive social experience around food and ensure that snacks and meals are varied, and children are encouraged to try familiar and unfamiliar food.

We share our menus in the Famly app so that parents can see at a glance the varied and nutritious food we offer. We also provide a sample menu on our website: Example food menu – Beckside Preschool and Nursery

Breakfast is available for children attending early sessions and may include a selection of healthy options such as cereal, milk or water.

Morning snack is provided daily and typically includes items such as toast, fresh fruit and vegetables, along with milk or water.

For our youngest children who are weaning, food and drink are provided in line with parents' wishes and the child's individual stage of development. We work closely with families to ensure suitable textures, portion sizes and foods are offered, following current guidance on safe weaning practices.

A freshly prepared, home-cooked lunch is provided each day which offers a balanced meal and includes a variety of foods from the main food groups. Children attending later sessions are offered a light tea, which may consist of a smaller cooked meal or a healthy cold option.

A daily meal charge applies and covers the hot lunch as well as all other meals and snacks provided during the day. Please see our fee structure for the setting on our website and within the Registration and Contract Form. Application pack with fee structure and funding options – Beckside Preschool and Nursery

Please note: Parents and carers have the option to opt out of the meal charge and provide their child with a packed lunch and other food items from home.

Parents/carers providing packed lunches are given information and support on providing healthy and nutritious packed lunches. Children can independently access water from their water bottles and are encouraged and support children to drink water throughout the session.

Children (and staff) have access to drinking water at all times throughout the session.