



## Food and Drink Policy

### Policy statement

At Home from Home Childcarers we regard snack and mealtimes as an important part of our day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults, and it helps children to learn about healthy eating. At snack and mealtimes, we aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs and ensures good eating habits for the future.

### Procedures

- We have a range of snacks including fruits, vegetable sticks and breadsticks/crackers available every day.
- Our snacks avoid large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives, and colourings.
- We take care not to provide any food containing nuts or nut products and we are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts.
- 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 his/her diet or allergy.
- We organise snack and mealtimes so that they are social occasions in which children and adults participate.
- We use snack and mealtimes to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink, and feeding themselves.
- Cutlery and crockery are available for children in all rooms to start to feed themselves and self-serve food in preparation for starting school.
- 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 ask for water at any time during the day, younger children have their water cups available to them throughout the day.
- We inform parents who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in our setting and ask for children's lunch boxes to have ice packs in.
- For young children who drink milk, we ask for parents to provide the appropriate milk. We work closely with parents of younger children and provide whole milk when they have transitioned onto whole milk at home, We introduce semi-skimmed milk from the age of two years.

- For each child under two and those with dietary needs, we record on Baby's Days children's bottle feeds.
- We work in collaboration with parents during the settling in period to meet the individual needs of babies regarding weaning and bottle feeds.
- We ask parents to provide bottles, teats and other equipment that has been sterilised and drip dried before use.
- All staff are fully trained on how to prepare and make bottles during their probationary period as per their training log.
- All Staff are made aware of safer food cutting to reduce the risk of choking making sure the following foods are cut in quarters length ways Grapes, Raspberries, Strawberries and Cherry Tomatoes.

### ***Food Allergies and Intolerances***

Before a child starts at our setting, we ensure we know about any dietary needs or preferences (including allergies). Parents are asked about dietary needs in our Registration Form and parents sign the form to signify that the information they have provided is correct. If parents indicate that their child has an allergy then they must complete an Allergy Care Plan, these are reviewed every 12 months where parents need to sign the update to signify that the information is correct. If a child's allergy changes before the 12 monthly review parents must inform us immediately!

Children with allergies are supervised by a member of staff during all snack and mealtimes to ensure they are provided with the correct food and not able to access other children's food. To protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.

All staff are kept up to date with all children's allergies, each room has their own information sheet that has the child's photo and allergy listed. All rooms also have their own allergy folder with a copy of each child's care plan in. Children with food allergies and food preferences have red placemats that states their name and allergy/preference, children without allergies have green placemats, these are used at all snack and mealtimes.

All snacks that are prepared that contain a child's allergy are recorded on an Allergy Form which states what alternative the child was given, this form is signed by the room staff.

We communicate regularly with parents/carers regarding food allergies and choices etc to ensure a child centred approach.

All parents and staff are made aware that we have a no NUTS policy at the setting.

## **Snacks**

For parents who wish to provide their own snacks, if they have chosen to opt out of the consumable charge for this, are required to provide one of the following:

- Cheese sticks
- Fresh fruit (Grapes, Raspberries, Strawberries and Cherry tomatoes must be cut length ways into quarters, if not these will be sent home, and you will be charged for snack on the day)
- Vegetable sticks
- Natural yogurt and fresh fruit are recommended, fruit flavoured fromage frais should be avoided due to them being high in sugar.
- We do not allow children to have crisps or chocolate, including chocolate biscuit bars for snack.
- We don't not allow raw or lightly cooked shellfish, such as mussels, clams and oysters for babies and rice drinks as a substitute for breast milk or formula.

## **Fromage Frais and Yogurts**

Many fromage frais/yogurts now have an age rating on due to the high sugar content, this means that we cannot allow particular fromage frais products to be consumed at the setting if the children is under the state age on the packaging. Whilst we appreciate that all foods can be part of a healthy balanced diet, we need to adhere to the age rating on affected products, please see the list below (this is not exhaustive):

- Peppa Pig - Age 4 years and over
- Asda own brand - Age 3 years and over
- Petit Filous - Age 3 years and over
- Paw Patrol - Age 4 years and over
- Wildlife Choobs - Age 3 years and over
- Frubes – Age 3 years and over
- Bluey fromage frais - Age 3 years and over

We encourage children to have plain full fat natural yogurt and fruit puree as an alternative to the above.

## **Packed Lunches and Dinners**

All children are asked to provide packed lunches and dinners, and in addition we:

- Inform parents that we have facilities to microwave cooked food brought from home
- Encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk-based deserts, such as natural yoghurt. We discourage sweet drinks and can provide children with water
- 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.

- Ensure that staff sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.
- Ask parents to avoid flavoured rice, pasta and noodle products such as pot noodles, super noodles etc (these will be returned to you, and you may be asked to bring in an alternative).
- Avoid dried fruit as a snack, should only be provided as part of a meal.
- Sugar coated cereals/chocolate cereals should not be bought in for breakfast (such as Coco Pops, Rice Krispies, Frosties etc)
- For babies under 1 year, we only allow 1 item per day which is high in saturated fats such as cakes, puddings, sweet and savoury pastries, biscuits, and other confectionary however this is strongly discouraged as per the Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Government Guidance.
- Weaning feeding guidance should be followed- <https://www.nhs.uk/start-for-life/baby/weaning/how-to-start-weaning-your-baby/>

### ***Food Hygiene***

At Home from Home Childcarers, we maintain the highest possible food hygiene standards regarding the purchase, storage, preparation and serving of food. We prepare, and serve breakfast, lunch and dinner as well as morning and afternoon snacks for children in the setting. We are registered as a food provider with the Local Authority Environmental Health Department.

Our staff understand the principles of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) set out in Safer Food, Better Business for Caterers (Food Standards Agency 2019). All members of management and staff involved in the handling of food, have relevant and up-to-date Food Hygiene training. Any staff involved in the serving or handling of food will wash their hands and wear gloves (if required) when serving/handling food.

Our staff will ensure:

- Food is stored at the correct temperatures and is checked to ensure it is in-date and not subject to contamination by pests, rodents, or mould.
- Food preparation areas are cleaned before and after use.
- All surfaces are clean and non-porous.
- All utensils, crockery etc are clean and stored appropriately.
- Waste food is disposed of daily.
- All equipment is checked regularly and anything that is broken or worn is disposed of and replaced.
- Cleaning materials and other dangerous materials are stored out of children's reach.
- Children do not have unsupervised access to the kitchen.

## **Reporting of Food Poisoning**

Food poisoning can occur for several reasons, not all cases of sickness or diarrhoea are because of food poisoning and not all cases of sickness or diarrhoea are reportable.

- Where children and/or adults have been diagnosed by a GP or hospital doctor to be suffering from food poisoning and where it seems possible that the source of the outbreak is within our setting, the manager will contact the Environmental Health Department to report the outbreak and will comply with any investigation.
- We notify Ofsted as soon as reasonably practicable of any confirmed cases of food poisoning affecting two or more children looked after on the premises, and always within 14 days of the incident.

## **Legal framework**

- Regulation (EC) 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Hygiene of Foodstuffs.

## **Further guidance**

- Safer Food, Better Business (Food Standards Agency 2019)
- 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)
- Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition (2025)

## **Policy Links**

Our intention is for this policy to be read in conjunction with the following Home from Home Childcarers Policies and Procedures:

- Managing Children who are Sick, Infectious or with Allergies Policy
- Nut Policy and Procedure

	<b><u>Date:</u></b>	<b><u>By Whom?</u></b>	<b><u>Comments</u></b>
<b>Created</b>	22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2025	Rachel Simms	New policy
<b>Reviewed</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> August 2025	Rachel Simms & Chrissie Morley	Updated to be in line with new guidance
<b>Next Review</b>	2026		