



19 Nutrition, Health and Safer Eating Policy

At Summertime we believe Children's early experiences with food can shape future eating habits and positively impact children's long-term health.

We have created this policy to meet the needs of the setting, parents and children with high regard to the Department for Education (DfE) Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance and the Food Standards Agency.

Mealtimes and Environment

- Children sit on chairs/high chairs together at tables for snacks and meals to reduce choking risks, encourage social interaction, and promote positive attitudes towards food. (For events such as picnic the children will sit on the ground but will supervised)
- A paediatric first aid trained member of staff supervises children closely during meals and snacks, usually sat at the table with the children.
- Mealtimes are relaxed, social experiences where children are encouraged (not pressured) to try a range of foods, including those they may not have at home.

Drinks

- Fresh drinking water is always accessible. Each child should bring a clearly named water bottle.
- Juice in bottles is discouraged for health and oral health reasons. *(An exception will only be made for health in certain circumstances)*
- Cow's Milk and water are offered at each snack time

Snacks

- Provided for families paying the optional enrichment fee.
- All snacks are healthy, balanced and based on the four main food groups: fruit & vegetables, dairy, carbohydrates, and protein.
- Parents providing their own snacks must ensure these are ready-to-eat, do not require refrigeration, and comply with DfE EYFS nutritional guidance.

Allergies, Dietary Needs, and Cultural Preferences

- We respect and support all children's allergies, intolerances, dietary choices (vegetarian, vegan, pescetarian), and religious food preferences.
- Information on allergies and intolerances is displayed in both the kitchen and classrooms for staff reference.
- Parents must inform us immediately of any new or changing allergies, intolerances, or medical conditions, as these can develop at any stage.

👉 NHS guidance on food intolerances: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/food-intolerance/>

Infant Feeding and Weaning

Breastfeeding:

- Expressed breast milk is welcomed. It should be stored in sterilised containers or specialist storage bags, labelled and dated.
- NHS information on breastfeeding benefits: NHS Breastfeeding Benefits
👉 <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/breastfeeding-and-bottle-feeding/breastfeeding/benefits/>

Formula feeding

👉 Families should follow NHS guidance: Types of Formula
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/breastfeeding-and-bottle-feeding/bottle-feeding/types-of-formula/>

👉 NHS Start for Life has helpful information and advice on breastfeeding.
<https://www.nhs.uk/start-for-life/baby/feeding-your-baby/breastfeeding/>

Weaning:



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- From around 6 months, babies should be introduced to a wide range of flavours and textures alongside their usual milk feeds.
- Homemade foods are encouraged over shop-bought pouches/purees.
- Parents should discuss new foods with staff to ensure consistency and support during the weaning process

Packed Lunches and evening meals provided by parent/carers

- Parents/carers provide children's main meals (breast/formula milk, breakfast, packed lunch, dinner).
- All lunchboxes and containers should be clearly labelled with the child's name.
- Should be in insulated lunch bags with **ice packs**.
- Food **must be appropriately cut to reduce choking risks**.

👉 FSA advice on preventing choking:

<https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/2021/09/food-safety-advice-on-choking-hazards-in-settings/>

- Acceptable treats: one small slice of cake or a single biscuit/wafer.
- We will reheat meals supplied from home safely: reheating food to 75°C with temperatures checked using a digital probe and recorded.
- Homemade foods are encouraged over shop-bought high salt or sugar ready meals and snacks
- Evening meals for children staying after 5pm can be stored in the refrigerator if given to a member of staff in the morning.

👉 For guidance on healthy choices, see: NHS Food Labels Guide <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-guidelines-and-food-labels/how-to-read-food-labels/>

Foods to Avoid

For safety and health reasons, parents must not provide:

- Foods high in salt, sugar, or saturated fat (e.g., crisps, confectionery, pastries).
- Popcorn, raw jelly cubes, or whole nuts (choking risks).
- Unpasteurised or mould-ripened soft cheeses.
- Raw or lightly cooked eggs. (unless red 'British Lion Quality')
- Rice drinks (risk of arsenic).
- Slush drinks containing glycerol.
- Raw or lightly cooked shellfish.

Not permitted: sweets, chocolate bars, chewy or hard candy, high salt savoury snacks.

👉 Common food allergens: DfE List of Allergens (PDF)

https://assets.ctfassets.net/dvmeh832nmjc/1UcJVonGkBHy9IHHNt9GmL/90b081db600d8cad30b870f458a60ed6/Common_allergens.pdf

Teaching Healthy Eating

We actively support children's understanding of healthy eating through:

- Play-based learning: activities about food origins, growth, and benefits.
- Daily routines: children are encouraged to cut fruit/vegetables (where appropriate), pour drinks, and make independent food choices
- Cooking activities: healthy recipes prepared with children, respecting cultural and dietary needs.
- Hydration: regular reminders to drink water.

Cathy White. Manager.
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