

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Health

Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, they must be healthy, balanced and nutritious.



8.1 Food safety and nutrition policy

Policy statement

Perranporth Pre-School regards snack and meal times as an important part of our day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. At Perranporth Pre-school we promote healthy eating using resources and materials from the Early Years Alliance and Healthy under 5's. At snack times, we aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs. Our setting is suitable, clean and safe place for children to be cared for, where they can grow and learn. We meet all statutory requirements for food safety and fulfil the criteria for meeting the relevant Early Years Foundation Stage Safeguarding and Welfare requirements.

Procedures

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

- Parents are to supply a packed lunch.
- Hands are washed prior to being given food or drink.
- We have a rolling two-week snack menu available for parents to view.
- We recognise that we have a corporate responsibility and duty of care for those who work in and receive a service from our provision, but individual employees and service users also have responsibility for ensuring their own safety as well as that of others. Risk assessment is the key means through which this is achieved.
- Procedure 8.2a Kitchen is followed for general hygiene and safety in food preparation areas.
- We provide nutritionally sound meals and snacks which promote health and reduce the risk of obesity and heart disease that may begin in childhood.
- We provide fresh homemade food for all snacks, we do not provide any food or drink which contain, sugar and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- We ensure that children are supervised at mealtimes and that children are within sight and hearing of a member of staff.
- We follow the main advice on dietary guidelines and the legal requirements for identifying food allergens when planning menus based on the four food groups:
 - meat, fish, and protein alternatives

- milk and dairy products
 - cereals and grains
 - fresh 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.
 - Following dietary guidelines to promote health also means taking account of guidelines to reduce risk of disease caused by unhealthy eating.
 - Parents/carers share information about their children's particular dietary needs with staff when the enrol their children and on going basis with their key person. This information is shared with staff who are involved in the care of the child.
 - We take into account every child's individual development needs and work in partnership with parents/carers to help children to move on to the next stage with regard to weaning as per the guidance listed below.
 - Foods provided by us for children have any allergenic ingredients identified on the menus.
 - Care is taken to ensure that children with food allergies and intolerances do not have contact with food products that they are allergic to.
 - We notify Ofsted of any food poisoning affecting two or more children in our care as soon as possible and at least within 14 days.
 - Risk assessments are conducted for each individual child who has a food allergy or specific dietary requirement, a copy is shared in the child's online file with parents.
 - If a child chokes at mealtime and intervention is given. We record details of the incident and ensure that parents/carers are informed
 - We use snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and pouring drinks, independently feeding themselves and drinking from an open cup.
 - We promote independence by using child friendly knives and scissors so the children can cut and open their own items, with support
 - 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 offer children arriving early in the morning, and/or staying late, an additional appropriate snack.
 - We log each child's snack time on their personal profile on the Family app and include information such as how much they have eaten.
 - We inform parents who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in the setting.
 - We give parents who provide food for their children information about suitable containers for food, portion sizes and what a healthy lunch box looks like.
 - In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.

Packed lunches

Children are required to bring packed lunches if they attend a session that includes the lunch hour:

- Parents are to supply a packed lunch.
- ensure perishable contents of packed lunches have an ice pack to keep food cool.
- ask parents to take care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products.
- inform parents of our policy on healthy eating.
- inform parents we do not have facilities to microwave cooked food brought from home.
- No water bottles allowed, to encourage drinking from an open cup.
- No smoothies or drinks of any kind allowed we provide your child with a drink
- encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling.
- Grapes must be cut into quarters
- Fruit, and milk-based deserts, such as natural yoghurt.
- do not allow sweets, yo-yo bear products, chocolate, and sugary drinks.
- discourage packed lunch contents that consist largely of crisps, processed foods, sweet drinks, and sweet products such as cakes or biscuits.
- Portion sizes must be adhered to, we will support children to only eat the correct portion sizes everything else will be sent home.
- We at Perranporth Pre-school reserve the right to return this food to the parent as a last resort.
- ensure staff sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.

Staff Lunches and snacks

We expect our staff to be good role models to our children.

- We provide fresh healthy snacks for staff
- Staff must ensure their lunches do not contain nuts and follow our no nut policy
- Staff must ensure they have a balanced healthy lunch.
- Advice and guidance is provided for staff on how to achieve this

Food for play and cooking activities

Some parents and staff may have strong views about food being used for play. It is important to be sensitive to these issues. For example, children who are Muslim, Jewish, Rastafarian, or who are vegetarian, should not be given any food to play with that contains animal products (Gelatine). Parents' views should be sought on this. In some cases, it is not appropriate to use food for play at all, particularly in times of austerity.

- Food for play may include dough, corn flour, pasta, rice, food colourings/flavourings.
- Jelly (including jelly cubes) is not used for play.
- Food for play is risk assessed against the 14 allergens referred and is included in the written risk assessment undertaken for children with specific allergies.
- Staff are constantly alert to the potential hazards of food play, in particular choking hazards and signs of previously undetected allergies.

- Pulses are not recommended as they can be poisonous when raw or may choke.
- The use of raw vegetables for printing is discouraged.
- Dried food that is used for play should be kept away from food used for cooking.
- Foods that are cooked and used for play, such as dough, have a limited shelf life.
- Cornflour is always mixed with water before given for play.
- Cornflower and cooked pasta are discarded after an activity; high risk of bacteria forming.
- Utensils used for play food are washed thoroughly after use.

Children's cooking activities

- Before undertaking any cooking activity with children, members of staff should check for allergies and intolerances by checking children's records.
- Children are taught basic hygiene skills such as the need to wash hands thoroughly before handling food, and again after going to the toilet, blowing their nose or coughing.
- The area to be used for cooking is cleaned; a plastic tablecloth is advised.
- Children should wear aprons that are used just for cooking.
- Utensils provided are for children to use only when cooking, including chopping/rolling boards, bowls, wooden spoons, jugs, and are stored in the kitchen.
- Members of staff encourage children to handle food in a hygienic manner.
- Food ready for cooking or cooling is not left uncovered.
- Cooked food to go home is put in a paper food bag and refrigerated until home time.
- Food play activities are suspended during outbreaks of illness.
- **Playdough and raw (uncooked flour)**
 - All flour including cornflour is raw until the point it is heated or cooked. Raw flour poses a risk of E. coli to young children and current advice is that it should not be used for play, or for uncooked playdough recipes.
 - Only playdough that has been cooked or made with precooked flour should be used.
 - Only cornflour that has been cooked or made with precooked flour should be used.
 - If a child or member of staff is allergic to any of the ingredients they must be replaced, and a safe alternative used.
 - Staff have up to date information about children's allergies or concerns about a potential allergy and these are clearly displayed.
 - If a younger child is likely to put the playdough/ cornflour in their mouth, a safe alternative is provided.
 - If a child is likely to eat the playdough due to persistent sensory seeking behaviours the activity will be replaced with a safe alternative.

- Children are always supervised when playing with playdough or cornflour.
- Children and staff wash their hands before and after the activity.
- **Other activities with flour?**
- Uncooked flour should not be used for activities where children are exploring through touch or taste, or there is a likelihood they will put their fingers in their mouths.
- Baking: You can do baking activities where flour is used and then the food is cooked. You must ensure that the activity is risk assessed, and children do not eat the uncooked flour or the mixture.

Menu planning and nutrition

Food supplied for children provides a healthy and balanced diet for healthy growth and development. Foods that contain any of 14 allergens identified by the FSA are identified on menus. The setting follows dietary guidance to promote health and reduce risk of disease caused by unhealthy eating. When planning menus, the setting manager and cook ensure that:

- Parents and staff are able to contribute ideas for menus which are confirmed each week in advance. A four- to six-week cycle reviewed seasonally is a good way of working out menus.
- Menus reflect children's cultural backgrounds, religious restrictions and the food preferences of some ethnic groups.
- Menus are clearly displayed so that parents and staff know what is being provided.
- Foods that contain any of the 14 major allergens are identified on the menu that is displayed for parents.
- Parents must share information about their children's particular dietary needs with staff when they enrol their children and on an on-going basis with their key person.
- Key persons regularly share information about the children's levels of appetite and enjoyment of food with parents.
- Staff refer to [Help for early years providers : Food safety](#) which includes:

[Example menus for early years settings in England: Guidance](#) and [Example menus for early years settings in England : Recipes](#)
- Eat Better, Start Better - Foundation Years.

The cook maintains a record of children's dietary needs in a Food Allergy and Dietary Needs folder

Packed lunches

Children have packed lunches, staff promote healthy eating, ensuring that parents/carers are given advice and information about what is appropriate content for a child's lunch box. Parents/carers are also advised to take measures to ensure children's lunch box contents remain cool i.e. ice packs, as we as a setting do not have facilities for refrigerated storage.

Meeting dietary requirements

Snack and mealtimes are an important part of the day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. We aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs and preferences.

- Staff discuss and record children's dietary needs, allergies and any ethnic or cultural food preferences with their parents/carers. A child's special dietary requirements are recorded on registration to the setting and information is shared with all staff.
- If a child has a known food allergy, procedure 8.1a Allergies and food intolerance is followed.
- Staff record information about each child's dietary needs on the individual child's profile on the Famly app.
- Up-to-date information about individual children's dietary needs is displayed so that all staff and volunteers are fully informed.
- Staff ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and cultural or ethnic preferences, as well as their parent's/carer's wishes. At each mealtime, a member of staff is responsible for checking that the food provided meets the dietary requirements for each child.
- The menus of meal and snacks are displayed on the parent notice board for parents to view. Foods that contain any food allergens are identified.
- Staff aim to include food diets from children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.
- Through on-going discussion with parents and research reading by staff, staff 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. Staff take account of this information when providing food and drink.
- Staff provide a vegetarian alternative when meat and fish are offered and make every effort to ensure Halal meat or Kosher food is available to children who require it.
- Where it is not possible to source and provide Halal meat or Kosher food, a vegetarian option is available; this will be discussed and agreed with parents at the time of the child's registration.
- All staff show sensitivity in providing for children's diets, allergies and cultural or ethnic food preferences. A child's diet or allergy is never used as a label for the child, they are not made to feel 'singled out' because of their diet, allergy or cultural/ethnic food preferences.
- Fresh drinking water is available throughout the day. Staff inform children how to obtain the drinking water and that they can ask for water at any time during the day.
- Meal and snack times are organised as social occasions.

Fussy/faddy eating

- Children who are showing signs of 'strong food preferences, or aversions to food ' are not forced to eat anything they do not want to.
- Staff recognise the signs that a child has had enough and remove uneaten food without comment.
- Children are not made to stay at the table after others have left if they refuse to eat certain items of food.
- Staff work in partnership with parents to support them with children who are showing signs of 'food preference or aversion' and sign post them to further advice, for example, How to Manage Simple Faddy Eating in Toddlers (Infant & Toddler Forum) <https://infantandtoddlerforum.org/health-and-childcare-professionals/factsheets/>
- **Legal references**
 - Regulation (EC) 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the hygiene of foodstuffs.
 - Food Information Regulations 2014
 - The Childcare Act 2006
- **Further guidance**
 - *Safer Food Better Business for Caterers* (Food Standards Agency)
 - Paediatric Allergy Action Plans - BSACI
 - Food allergy - NHS
 - Anaphylaxis - NHS
 - Weaning - Start for Life - NHS
 - Help for early years providers : Food safety
 - Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance (2025)
 - Healthy under 5's

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Other useful Early Years Alliance publications

- Nutritional Guidance for the Under Fives (Ed. 2010)
- The Early Years Essential Cookbook (2009)
- Healthy and Active Lifestyles for the Early Years (2012)