

# Safer Eating including Nutrition and Mealtimes



## Grass Roots Nursery Group: Safer Eating including Nutrition and Mealtimes Policy

### Key Principles

- **Healthy and Balanced Meals:** We offer meals and snacks that meet children's nutritional needs, following **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) guidance** and the **Nutrition Guidance for Early Years Providers**.
- **Meeting Individual Needs:** We collaborate with parents to cater to allergies, intolerances, dietary requirements, cultural preferences, and weaning stages.
- **Positive Eating Environment:** Mealtimes are designed to be relaxed and engaging, fostering social interaction and healthy eating habits.
- **Hygiene and Safety:** We maintain high standards in food preparation, storage, and handling.
- **Learning Through Food:** Children explore food through sensory play, cooking activities, and discussions, reinforcing healthy eating habits within the EYFS curriculum.

### Choking Prevention

- Food is prepared following recommended safety measures:
  - Grapes, cherry tomatoes, and similar foods are **cut lengthwise**.
  - Hard, round, and sticky foods are **modified for safe consumption**.
  - Children remain **seated while eating**, and staff **actively monitor mealtimes**.
- **Mealtime Supervision:**
  - Staff members **sit facing children** to observe eating habits and prevent food swapping.
  - Babies and toddlers are **securely seated in highchairs or low chairs** when eating.
- **Paediatric First Aid (PFA):**
  - At least one **paediatric first aid-trained staff member** is present during mealtimes to respond to choking or allergic reactions.

### Food Allergies & Dietary Needs

- **Allergy Information Collection:**
  - Before a child starts at the nursery, details of allergies, intolerances, dietary needs, and weaning stages are obtained.
- **Traffic Light Food System:**
  - A **visual guide** may be introduced to highlight allergenic risks for easier identification.
- **Individual Allergy Action Plans:**
  - Developed with **parents and healthcare professionals** for children with allergies.
  - Regular updates ensure accurate records as intolerances can change over time.
- **Emergency Response:**
  - Staff undergo training to **recognise and respond to allergic reactions**.

### Safe Meal Preparation & Hygiene

- **Food hygiene training is mandatory** for all staff handling food.
- **Strict preparation procedures** reduce cross-contamination risks.

- **Regular risk assessments** ensure compliance with safety standards.

### **Weaning & Infant Nutrition**

- **Guidance on introducing solid foods** safely to match developmental stages.
- **Individualised weaning plans** are developed in partnership with parents.

### **Learning & Engagement**

- Children engage in **food-based learning**, discovering food origins, making healthy choices, and exploring diverse cuisines.
- **Celebrations & Events:** Nutritious alternatives to sugary snacks are encouraged.
- **EYFS Alignment:** Food-related activities are designed to **support children's development across key areas**, including social, physical, and cognitive growth.

### **Food for Off-Site Consumption**

- **Nutritious meals available** for parents to purchase, labeled with ingredients, allergens, and reheating instructions.

### **Policy Review & Communication**

- **Annual Review:** This policy is updated annually to **reflect best practices and evolving guidance**.
- **Parental Engagement:** Open channels for discussing meal preferences and concerns.

### **Reference to Related Policies**

This policy should be read alongside the following related nursery policies:v

- **Allergies and Intolerances Policy** – Procedures for identifying and managing allergic reactions.
- **Health and Safety Policy** – Safeguarding measures for food-related risks, including choking hazards.
- **Safeguarding Policy** – Guidance on ensuring children's well-being during mealtimes.
- **Bottle-Feeding Policy** – Storing and heating formula or breast milk as per parental instructions.

**We believe that a healthy diet is essential for children's physical, social, and emotional development. By working together with parents, we can ensure that all children at Grass Roots Nursery Group have a positive experience with food and develop healthy eating habits for life.**

# Procedure for Handling Food Allergies and Dietary Restrictions

## Purpose:

This procedure outlines the steps to be taken to ensure the safety and well-being of children with food allergies or dietary restrictions at Grass Roots Nursery Group.

## Scope:

This procedure applies to all staff, children, and families associated with the nursery.

## Procedure:

### Information Collection:

- Upon enrollment, parents will be asked to provide detailed information about their child's allergies or dietary restrictions on the registration form.
- This information will include:
  - Specific allergens
  - Dietary requirements
  - Any necessary precautions or medical interventions
- Parents of children who are weaning are asked to share information with practitioners through settling in sessions, all about me form and ongoing conversations and updates.

### Communication and Documentation:

- All staff members will be informed of the child's allergies or dietary restrictions.
- The information will be documented in the child's individual file and shared with the nursery manager.
- An Allergy Awareness Card will be completed for each child with allergies.

### Safe Food Preparation:

- Food for children with allergies will be prepared in designated areas or with separate equipment to prevent cross-contamination.
- Staff will follow strict hygiene practices to minimise the risk of allergen exposure.
- All food items will be clearly labelled with ingredients and allergens.

### Meal Planning:

- The nursery manager and nursery chef will work with parents to develop a personalised meal plan for children with allergies or dietary restrictions.
- The meal plan will ensure that the child receives nutritious and appropriate food options.

### Emergency Procedures:

- All staff members will be trained on the signs and symptoms of allergic reactions and the appropriate emergency procedures.
- In case of an allergic reaction, staff will follow the emergency procedures outlined in the nursery's emergency plan.
- This may include administering medication, contacting emergency services, and providing first aid.

### Review and Updates:

- The child's allergies or dietary restrictions will be reviewed regularly, and the meal plan will be updated as needed.

- The nursery manager will ensure that all staff are aware of any changes.

**Additional Considerations:**

- Staff Training: All staff members will receive training on food allergies, dietary restrictions, and safe food handling practices.
- Communication with Parents: The nursery will maintain open communication with parents regarding their child's allergies or dietary restrictions.
- Emergency Kit: The nursery will maintain an emergency kit containing necessary medications and supplies for children with allergies.

**By following this procedure, Grass Roots Nursery Group will ensure that children with food allergies or dietary restrictions are provided with a safe and supportive environment.**

# Mealtimes Procedure

## Purpose

To establish procedures for mealtimes at Grass Roots Nursery Group, ensuring a safe, enjoyable, and nutritious experience for children.

## Scope

This procedure applies to all staff, children, and parents/carers involved in meal times at Grass Roots Nursery Group.

## Key Principles

### Safe and Hygienic Environment

- Maintain high standards of hygiene and safety during mealtimes.
- Follow food safety and hygiene regulations, including safe food preparation and storage.

### Nutritious Food

- Provide healthy, balanced, and age-appropriate meals and snacks.
- Follow the EYFS nutrition guidance, ensuring meals include:
  - The four food groups (fruits/vegetables, whole grains, protein sources, dairy).
  - Appropriate portion sizes for different age groups.
  - Traffic light food labels to help staff and parents identify healthier choices.

### Individual Needs

- Cater to allergies, dietary requirements, and cultural preferences.
- Follow the Allergy Policy and Procedure set out above to prevent cross-contamination.

### Positive Eating Experiences

- Create a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere for mealtimes.
- Encourage social interaction and self-feeding.

### Learning Opportunities

- Integrate mealtimes into EYFS learning and child development.
- Use food-based activities to teach healthy eating habits.

## Mealtime Supervision

- **Staff Presence:** At least one staff member must be within sight and hearing of all children at all times during mealtimes.
- **Supervision Ratio:** Adhere to EYFS staff-to-child ratios.
- **Active Supervision:** Staff should monitor children closely, ensuring safety and well-being.

- **Assistance:** Offer support to children who need help feeding themselves.
- **Modelling Positive Behaviour:** Staff should demonstrate healthy eating habits and manners.

## Mealtime Environment

- **Calm and Relaxed Atmosphere:** Create a positive mealtime experience.
- **Seating Arrangements:** Ensure appropriate seating for all age groups.
- **Hygiene Practices:** Encourage hand washing before and after meals.
- **Distraction-Free Zone:** Minimise distractions to help children focus on eating.

## Mealtimes and Snacks

- **Regular Mealtimes:** Offer structured meals and snacks throughout the day.
- **Variety:** Provide a diverse range of healthy food options.
- **Portion Sizes:** Follow EYFS portion size recommendations for different age groups.
- **Self-Feeding:** Encourage independent eating where possible.
- **Food Allergies and Intolerances:** Follow the Allergy Policy and Procedure above.
- **Special Dietary Needs:** Accommodate vegetarian, vegan, and cultural dietary preferences.

## Mealtime Practices

- **Positive Reinforcement:** Encourage healthy eating habits through praise.
- **Avoid Coercion:** Do not force children to eat if they are not hungry.
- **Mealtime Conversations:** Engage children in social and language development.
- **Limit Distractions:** Reduce toys and screens during mealtimes.

## Review and Evaluation

- **Annual Review:** Update the procedure to reflect current EYFS nutrition guidance.
- **Parent & Staff Feedback:** Gather input to improve mealtime practices.
- **Monitor Eating Habits:** Adjust meal plans based on children's needs and preferences.

**By following these procedures, Grass Roots Nursery Group can ensure that mealtimes are safe, enjoyable, and contribute to children's overall well-being.**

## Appendix 1

### Step-by-step guide to preparing a formula feed

- **Step 1:** Fill the kettle with at least 1 litre of fresh tap water (do not use water that has been boiled before).
- **Step 2:** Boil the water. Then leave the water to cool for no more than 30 minutes, so that it remains at a temperature of at least 70C.
- **Step 3:** Clean and disinfect the surface you are going to use.
- **Step 4:** It's important that you wash your hands.
- **Step 5:** If you are using a cold-water steriliser, shake off any excess solution from the bottle and the teat, or rinse them with cooled boiled water from the kettle (not tap water).
- **Step 6:** Stand the bottle on the cleaned, disinfected surface.
- **Step 7:** Follow the manufacturer's instructions and pour the amount of water you need into the bottle. Double check that the water level is correct. Always put the water in the bottle first, while it is still hot, before adding the powdered formula.
- **Step 8:** Loosely fill the scoop with formula powder, according to the manufacturer's instructions, then level it using either the flat edge of a clean, dry knife or the leveller provided. Different tins of formula come with different scoops. Make sure you only use the scoop that comes with the formula.
- **Step 9:** Holding the edge of the teat, put it into the retaining ring, check it is secure, then screw the ring onto the bottle.
- **Step 10:** Cover the teat with the cap and shake the bottle until the powder is dissolved.
- **Step 11:** It's important to cool the formula so it's not too hot to drink. Do this by holding the bottle (with the lid on) under cold running water.
- **Step 12:** Test the temperature of the formula on the inside of your wrist before giving it to your baby. It should be body temperature, which means it should feel warm or cool, but not hot.
- **Step 13:** If there is any made-up formula left in the bottle after a feed, throw it away.

Taken from:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/breastfeeding-and-bottle-feeding/bottle-feeding/making-up-baby-formula/> (accessed: 18/07/2023)