

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: State here which EYFS Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement this document relates to.

3.48, 3.49



Food Hygiene, Nutrition and Mealtimes Policy

Policy statement

At Cotswold Bunnies Nurseries, we believe that mealtimes should be happy, social occasions for children and staff alike. We promote shared, enjoyable positive interactions at these times.

We are committed to offering children healthy, nutritious and balanced meals and snacks, which meet individual needs and requirements. We follow the EYFS Food Nutrition Guidance ensuring our menus are nutritious, healthy and prepared with full consideration for all known allergies amongst our children.

We provide and/or serve optional food for children on the following basis:

- Snacks.
- Cooked Meals or Pre-packaged meals from home.

We maintain the highest possible food hygiene standards with regard to the purchase, storage, preparation and serving of food. We are registered as a food provider with the local authority Environmental Health Department and follow 'Safer Food, Better Business' published by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) in order to maintain high standards of food hygiene, as well as ensuring the safety of the children in our setting. When preparing food, staff (kitchen or general) will observe current legislation regarding food hygiene and training. Cotswold Bunnies is committed to ensuring that safe and healthy practices around the storage, preparation and service of food are maintained throughout the setting. To this end, all staff have completed their food hygiene qualification prior to preparing or serving any food.

The setting has set high standards of personal hygiene for all members of staff involved in the handling and preparation of food. Any person showing signs of ill health will not be permitted to handle food.

Procedures

Food Hygiene

- Our staff with responsibility for food preparation understand the principles of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) as it applies to our setting. This is set out in Safer Food, Better Business [for Caterers (Food Standards Agency 2011). The basis for this is risk assessment of the purchase, storage, preparation and serving of food to prevent growth of bacteria and food contamination.
 - All our staff follow the guidelines of Safer Food, Better Business.
 - All our staff who are involved in the preparation and handling of food have received training in Level 2 food hygiene. A member of management has completed their Level 3 Food Hygiene.
 - The person responsible for food preparation and serving carries out daily opening and closing checks on the kitchen to ensure standards are met consistently. (See Safer Food, Better Business)
 - We use reliable suppliers for the food we purchase.
 - Food is stored at correct temperatures and is checked to ensure it is in-date and not subject to contamination by pests, rodents or mould.
 - Packed lunches are stored in a cool place, and parents are requested to provide an ice pack.
 - Lunches provided from home must be shop bought, pre-packaged and sealed with a complete list of ingredients.
 - Food preparation areas are cleaned before and after use.
 - There are separate facilities for hand-washing and for washing-up.
 - All surfaces are clean.
 - All utensils, crockery etc. are clean and stored appropriately.
 - Waste food is disposed of daily.
- Our nurseries are registered food businesses and regularly inspected by local councils. The Cowshed site receives annual physical checks, most recently achieving a grade 5—the highest standard. The site on the Common undergoes self-assessment due to its classification as “Childcare on Domestic Premises,” and also received a grade 5 at its last physical inspection.
- Cleaning materials and other dangerous materials are stored out of children's reach.
- Children do not have unsupervised access to the kitchen.
- When children take part in cooking activities, they:
 - are supervised at all times;

- understand the importance of hand-washing and simple hygiene rules;
- are kept away from hot surfaces and hot water; and
- do not have unsupervised access to electrical equipment, such as blenders etc.

Temperature Control

It is the policy of Cotswold Bunnies to ensure that any and all foods are stored according to safe food handling practises and at the correct temperature in order to prevent the growth and multiplication of food poisoning organisms, to reduce the rate of food spoilage and to ensure that food quality is maintained.

Fridge and freezer temperatures are checked and recorded on a daily basis to ensure the correct temperature is being upheld.

Cleaning of Food Preparation Areas

- Every week the fridge is thoroughly cleaned and all items in the fridge are checked for freshness, and all food past their use by or best before date are correctly disposed of.
 - Shelves and drawers are removed and cleaned with warm soapy water
 - The inside walls are cleaned from top to bottom with anti-bacterial cleaner
 - The seals around the fridge are cleaned to ensure no spillages or stains
 - Freezers are defrosted (on non-frost-free) and cleaned once a month following the same procedure.
- All food preparation surfaces are wiped clean after use with anti-bacterial cleaner and a fresh, clean cloth is used each day.
- The manager will ensure that appropriate controls are in place to prevent cross contamination and that these controls are documented accordingly including colour coded plates and bibs, as well as chopping boards.
- When preparing food, staff (kitchen or general) will observe current legislation regarding food hygiene and training

Allergies

The nursery caters for children's specific dietary needs that may include allergies or food intolerances, or because of religious, cultural or ethical reasons

Staff are made aware of children's specialist requirements through individual care plans and other information provided by parents.

To help us manage the risks associated with food allergies or intolerance the nursery has the following in place;

- Pre-entry information from parents
- Induction information from staff
- Food allergen risk assessment
- Excellent food hygiene practises (5* rating)
- Written procedures for children with food related conditions
- Strict procedures with regards to packed lunches and other food provided from home.

Reporting of food poisoning

Food poisoning can occur for a number of reasons; not all cases of sickness or diarrhoea are as a result 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.

Food and Drink

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

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we ask their parents about their dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies. (See the Managing Children who are Sick, Infectious or with Allergies Policy.)
- We record information about each child's dietary needs in the Registration Form and parents sign the form to signify that it is correct.
- We regularly consult with parents to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs – including any allergies - are up-to-date. Parents sign the updated record to signify that it is correct.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all our staff and volunteers are fully informed about them.
- We implement systems to ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and preferences, as well as their parents' wishes.
- We display the menus of meals/snacks for parents to view and we email the menus to the parents

- We provide nutritious food for all meals and snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- We include a variety of foods from the four main food groups:
 - fish and protein alternatives;
 - dairy foods;
 - grains, cereals and starch vegetables; and
 - 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.
- We are a nut free nursery to ensure children with diagnosed and potential nut allergies are protected. We remind parents of this when they are providing packed lunches.
- Through discussion with parents and research reading, we 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. We take account of this information in the provision of food and drinks.
- We provide only vegetarian or pescatarian food.
- 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 her/his diet or allergy.
- We organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and adults participate in conversation while the children enjoy their meals. The adults are with the children at mealtimes.
- We use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.
- 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. The children are encouraged to bring their own water in a named water bottle.
- We inform parents who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in our setting.
- We give parents who provide food for their children information about suitable containers for food.

- In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- For young children who drink milk, we provide whole pasteurised milk.
- For each child under two, we provide parents with daily written information about feeding routines, intake and preferences via the Tapestry app.
- All staff who cook and prepare food for the nursery have Food Hygiene training
- We follow the Food Standards Agency advice for the preparation of food, as well as foods not to offer.

Children under 1 and still weaning

- Before a child starts nursery, all parents will have been sent a Registration Form where there is a list of weaning foods that parents must tick if their child has eaten the food 3 times at home.
- The Manager, Deputy Manager or senior member of staff will have a conversation about weaning with the parents before the child comes into the nursery. They will check that the weaning chart has been filled in on the Registration form and if it has not, then the parents need to fill it in on arrival.
- The baby room leader will regularly communicate with parents to ensure that the weaning list is up to date. This is no longer necessary once the child has tried everything and the child has all our meals.
- Children under one may have nursery-cooked meals if desired, provided all listed ingredients have been tried at home at least three times. Meals will be pureed or mashed according to age and stage of development, and staff will communicate with you about this.
- For all children under 1 the only snack they have is foods that have been weaned on already, usually soft fruit.
- We ensure all babies are sat up, and in a suitable high chair, at all times when eating.
- We do not hurry children when eating.
- We cut food appropriately, using the FSA guidance to support us, and this guidance is up in every room where food would be prepared or served.
- Children under the age of 6 months should provide milk as the only drink. In the event that water has been recommended by a GP or paediatrician, it should be cooled, boiled water. We will need to be informed in writing of the reason for this.

Bottle feeding

- Where a child is still bottle feeding, we support the parents to continue in a way that is consistent with home.
- Bottles for any child under 1 must be sterilised before use.
- Formula is made up at the time of use, unless using a bottle of pre made formula.
- When making formula from powder, we follow the instructions on the package. Particularly, we ensure that the water is boiling and left to cool for no more than 30 minutes. It must be over 70 degrees before being used.
- Formula must be cooled and checked using a clean temperature probe.
- Breast and Cow's milk can be warmed up using the bottle warmer, or by being stood in boiling water. They MUST NOT be warmed in the microwave.
- The temperature of the milk must not be above 37 degrees.
- We follow the NHS advice regarding the storing of breast milk, as follows:
 - In the fridge for up to 8 days at 4C or lower. If higher than 4C, use it within 3 days.
 - For 2 weeks in the ice compartment of a fridge.
 - Up to 6 months in a freezer, if it's lower than -18C.
 - Breast milk that has been cooled in the fridge can be carried in a cool bag, with ice packs, for up to 24 hours.
- All bottles made, must be written on the bottle check sheet, with the child's name, time bottle is made, amount and type of milk, who made it, the temperature at the check and the time it must be used by.
- Powdered formula must be brought in sealed, only be kept for up to 4 weeks once opened (in line with manufacturers guidelines), with the date it is opened by a member of staff and the date to be used by written on the packaging. The formula tub will be returned to parents once the use by guidance has been met, or at the parents request. We can not accept/reaccept any open tubs of formula as we are not able to ensure the storage of the formula, which may affect the quality.

Packed lunches

Where parents choose to bring packed lunches, we:

- Ask that an ice pack is provided to ensure perishable contents of packed lunches are refrigerated;
- Ask that all food is shop bought, pre packaged and sealed, with a complete list of ingredients on;

- Food may be heated for children if the instructions are listed on the packaging;
- Inform parents of our policy on healthy eating;
- 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;
- Lunches must have an ice pack included in the lunch box to ensure the food stay fresh as we do not have the fridge space in the nurseries.

Celebrations

We are aware that parents like to bring items in to celebrate their child’s birthdays and other special events, and this can sometimes mean that they provide sweet items such as cake. The guidance does state that this can mean children are having unhealthy foods several times a week. As we are small settings, we do not find that to be the case, but we do advise that any items brought in must be pre-packaged with a list of ingredients, but parents may wish to look at alternatives such a non-edible items, such as bubbles or stickers.


Legal framework

- Regulation (EC) 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Hygiene of Foodstuffs
- Food safety Act 1990
- Food standards Act 1999
- Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework
- Early Years Nutrition Guidance (2025)

Further guidance

Safer Food Better Business (Food Standards Agency 2011) (updated 2020)

This Policy was adopted by:		Cotswold Bunnies Nurseries Ltd	
On:	01.02.2026	Date to be reviewed:	01.02.2027

Signed on behalf of the Provider:			
Name of Signatory:	Pippa Collins		
Role of Signatory (e.g, Chair, Director or Manager)	Manager		