



4. Food safety and nutrition policy

Aim

Ducklings pre-school based in Great Notley Community Centre is a 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

Objectives

- At Ducklings pre-school we recognise that we have a corporate responsibility and duty of care for those who work in and receive a service from Ducklings pre-school, 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 2.c. Kitchen is followed for general hygiene and safety in food preparation areas.
- We provide nutritional snacks which promote health and reduce the risk of obesity and heart disease that may begin in childhood.
- We ensure that children are supervised at mealtimes and that children are within sight and hearing of a member of staff at all times and where possible staff are sat facing children when eating to ensure they are eating in a way that prevents choking and so they can prevent food sharing and be aware of any unexpected allergic reactions.
- We follow the main advice on dietary guidelines and the legal requirements for identifying food allergens when planning snack menus.
- 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 and allergies with the supervisor/ deputy supervisor when they meet the children during a home visit and on an on-going basis with their key person. This information is shared with all staff who are involved in the care of the child.
- Ducklings pre-school ensures that all staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis and the differences between allergies and intolerances which may develop at any time.
- Foods provided by the pre-school 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.
- If a child chokes at mealtime and intervention is given. We record details of the incident and ensure that parents/carers are informed.

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

Help for early years providers : Food safety

Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance (2025)

Allergy action plan

This Food safety and nutrition policy was adopted by	NGCA Ducklings Pre-School
On	29 th September 2025
Signed on behalf of the management committee	
Name of signatory	Ken Yap
Role of signatory	Chairperson



4.a. Food preparation, storage and purchase

General

- All staff that prepare snack have up to date certificated training on food safety.
- The staff refer to Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance (2025) which contains guidance on food safety, managing food allergies and reading food labels.
- The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the requirements in Safer Food Better Business are implemented.
- The staff responsible for preparing food have undertaken the Food Allergy Online Training.
- The supervisor is responsible for overseeing the work of all food handlers to ensure hygiene and allergy procedures are complied with.
- The supervisor has responsibility for conducting risk assessment based on the 'Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point' method set out in Safer Food Better Business.
- The staff carry out and record daily opening/closing checks, four weekly reviews and dated records of deep cleaning.
- The supervisor maintains all Food Allergy and Dietary Needs with:
 - a list of all children with known food allergies, intolerances or dietary needs updated at least once a term (the personal/medical details about the allergy or dietary needs is in the child's file along with a copy of the risk assessment). This is clearly displayed for all staff and the risk assessment shared with all staff.
 - a record of food menus along with any allergens using.
 - a copy of the FSA booklet 'Allergen information for pre-packed and loose foods' available at <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/allergen-information-for-pre-packed-and-loose-foods>.
 - a copy of the Food Allergy Online Training CPD certificate for each member of staff that has undertaken the training
- The supervisor is responsible for informing the chairperson and Ofsted representative who then reports to Ofsted any food poisoning affecting two or more children looked after on the premises. Notification must be made as soon as possible and within 14 days of the incident.

Purchasing and storing food

- Food is purchased online from Tesco.com

- Pre-packed food (any food or ingredient that is made by one business and sold by another such as a retailer or caterer) is checked for allergen ingredients and this information is communicated to parents alongside menu information.
- If food that is not pre-packed (described as 'loose food'), such as sandwiches bought from a bakery is served, then allergen information will have been provided by the retailer, this information must then be shared in the same way with parents.
- Parents are requested not to bring food that contains nuts. Staff check packets to make sure they do not contain nuts or nut products.
- Bulk buy is avoided where food may go out of date before use.
- All opened dried food stuffs are stored in airtight containers.
- Dried packaged food is not decanted from packaging into large bins or containers as this prevents monitoring of sell by/use by dates and allergen information.
- Food is regularly checked for sell by/use by dates and any expired items are discarded.
- Bottles and jars are cleaned before returning to the cupboards.
- 'Squeezy' plastic bottles are not used for sauces.
- Items are not stored on the floor; floors are kept clear so they can be easily swept.
- Perishable foods such as dairy produce are to be used the same day. Soft fruit and easily perishable vegetables are kept in the fridge at 1- 5 Celsius.
- Packaged frozen food should be used by use by dates.
- Food left over should not be frozen unless it has been prepared for freezing, such as bread.
- Freezer containers should be labelled, dated and used within 1-3 months.
- Fridge and freezer thermometers should be in place. Recommended temperatures for fridge 37 degrees Fahrenheit (3 degrees Celsius), and freezers 0 degrees Fahrenheit (-18 degrees Celsius). Temperatures must be checked and recorded daily to ensure correct temperatures are being maintained.
- Freezers are defrosted every 3 months or according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Fruit and vegetables stored in the fridge are washed thoroughly before refrigeration to reduce risk of pests and E.coli contamination.
- Staff's own food or drink should be kept in separate fridge; where possible.
- Items in fridges must be regularly checked to ensure they are not past use by dates.

Preparation of food

- Food handlers must check the content of food/packets to ensure they do not contain allergens.
- Food allergens must be identified on the menus and displayed for parents.

- Food handlers wash hands and cover any cuts or abrasions before handling food.
- Separate boards and knives are used for chopping food, usually colour coded.
- Raw and cooked foods are prepared separately.
- All vegetables and fruit are washed before preparing.
- Food left out is covered, for example when cooling down.
- Where a microwave is used, food is cooked according to manufacturer's instructions. It is not used to heat children's food.
- When food is prepared for children with dietary needs and preferences every effort is made to prevent cross-contamination.

Serving Food

- There is a named person each day who is responsible for ensuring that the food being provided meets all the requirements for each child.
- Staff risk assess the likelihood of children with dietary restrictions accessing the food of other children and must take appropriate action to prevent this from happening, for example:
 - check the list of children's dietary requirements displayed in the food preparation area
 - place mats
- Children with allergies/food preferences are not made to feel 'singled out' by the methods used to manage their allergy/food preference.
- Food served to children with identified allergies is checked by the food handler to ensure that the snack (and its ingredients) does not contain any of the allergens for that child.
- Food is taken from the kitchen to the rooms on a trolley, not carried across rooms.
- Tables are cleaned before and after, with a non-bleach spray and paper towel.
- Members of staff serving food wash their hands and cover any cuts with a blue plaster.

E.coli prevention

Staff who are preparing and handling food, especially food that is not pre-prepared for consumption e.g. fruit and vegetables grown on the premises, must be aware of the potential spread of E.coli and must clean and store food in accordance with the E.coli 0157 guidance, available at: www.food.gov.uk

Further guidance

Safer Food Better Business

Campylobacter

Food allergy/anaphylaxis guidance

www.bsaci.org

www.nhs.uk/conditions/anaphylaxis/

www.nhs.uk/conditions/food-allergy/

Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance

Common_allergens.pdf

Allergen checklist for food businesses | Food Standards Agency



4.b. 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, is discarded daily.
- Cornflour is always mixed with water before given for play.
- Cornflour 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; and a plastic tablecloth just used for cooking is used.
- 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.



4.c. Snack menu 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 pre-school follows dietary guidance to promote health and reduce risk of disease caused by unhealthy eating. When planning menus, the supervisor ensure that:

- Staff are able to contribute ideas for menus which are confirmed each week in advance. Our five-week cycle is reviewed yearly.
- 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 the supervisor during the home visit and on an on-going basis with their key person.
- Key persons share information about the children's levels of appetite and enjoyment of food with parents.
- Staff refer to Help for early years providers and Eat Better, Start Better - Foundation Years.
- The supervisor maintains a record of children's dietary needs in the children's file and displays it in the food preparation area.

Packed lunches

Where children have packed lunches, staff promote healthy eating, ensuring that parents are given advice and information about what is appropriate content for a child's lunch box. Parents are also advised to take measures to ensure children's lunch box contents remain cool by providing refrigerated storage.



4.d. Meeting dietary requirements

Snack and mealtimes are an important part of the day at Ducklings pre-school. 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 the child's registration forms and information is shared with all staff. This continues as an ongoing dialogue with all parents/carers throughout their time at Ducklings pre-school.
- If a child has a known food allergy, procedure 5.d. Allergies and food intolerance is followed.
- Parents record information about their child's dietary needs in the individual child's registration form; parents sign the form to signify that it is correct.
- 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 wishes. At each mealtime, a member of staff is responsible for checking that the food provided meets the dietary requirements for each child.
- The daily menu of snacks are displayed on the door for parents to view. Foods that contain any food allergens are identified.
- 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 starting pre-school.
- 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 that they can access their drink bottle at any time during the day.
- Packed lunch and snack times are organised as social occasions.

Food preference or aversion

- 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/carers to support them with children who are showing signs of 'food preference or aversion' and sign post them to further advice.