



“A Confident Start in a Caring Environment”



HOME FARM CHILDREN'S NURSERY LTD (HFCN)

Food Policy

(including No Nuts, Healthy Eating, Bottle Feeding and Dummy)

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This policy links with and must be reviewed in conjunction with:

- HFCN Health Policy
- TST Health and Safety Policy

MEAL PROVISION

HFCN settings will:

- Ensure that staff have basic knowledge about childhood nutrition and the importance of diet in child development
- Ensure that any meals, snacks or drinks provided are healthy, balanced and nutritious
- Ensure that those responsible for the preparation and handling of food are properly trained, equipped and competent
- Implement food safety policies by having effective management of food safety systems
- Ensure that all food is stored, prepared, cooked and served in a hygienic and competent way in compliance with all food safety legislation and best practice
- Notify Ofsted of any food poisoning affecting two or more children looked after on the premises
- Obtain record and act on information from parents about a child's dietary needs
- Ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities under food hygiene legislation including registration with the relevant Local Authority Environmental Health Department
- Keep careful records of all food hygiene activities conducted
- Take note in a child's records of any food allergies/intolerance they have and communicate this to the kitchen and food handling staff, who will ensure that all foods are appropriately labelled if they contain an allergen (e.g. nuts) and are not given to children

The provision will ensure the following:

- For children to be offered the opportunity to try a wide variety of healthy snacks.
- For children to have the opportunity to experience foods which raise their awareness of other cultures.
- For fresh drinking water to be available at all times.
- Where possible for staff to sit with children while they eat and provide a good role model for healthy eating.
- For staff to engage children, parents and carers in open discussion about the importance of healthy eating habits.
- For children to be encouraged to develop good eating habits and given plenty of time to eat.
- For children to be taught about the importance of washing hands prior to eating and how to use good manners.
- For children to be given the opportunity to prepare healthy snacks
- For parents of children who are on special diets or have allergies, to be asked to provide as much information as possible about suitable foods, and in some circumstances to provide the food themselves.
- For healthy food options to be used in all activities whenever possible: in play, language, cooking and other events.
- For staff handling food to have appropriate food hygiene training and certification.
- For the snack area to be kept in a hygienic condition at all times.

Home Farm Children's Nursery

Home Farm Children's Nursery offers breakfast, consisting of a variety of cereals, toast, fruit and raisins, and a selection of snacks. These snacks generally comprise fresh fruit (with tinned fruit provided on occasion), breadsticks, crackers and cheese and vegetables.

Home Farm Children's Nursery uses a dedicated catering provider for parents/carers who opt for this lunch service. As experts in food and nutrition, our provider prepares and delivers fresh, healthy, and nutritionally balanced meals daily.

The catering provider caters for most dietary requirements including food allergies and intolerances.

A full ingredients list and comprehensive allergen information are provided for all standard meals. In the production of their meals, the company utilises a separate area of the kitchen specifically for preparing meals for special dietary needs.

Home Farm Children's Nursery Packed Lunch Policy

Home Farm Children's Nursery requests that all lunch boxes include:

- At least one portion of fruit (e.g., small apple, orange, dried fruit, cherry tomatoes)
- At least one portion of vegetables (e.g., carrot sticks, cucumber, celery)
- Meat, fish or other source of non-dairy protein (e.g., chicken, turkey, ham, beef, pork, tuna, lentils, kidney beans, chickpeas, hummus and falafel)
- A starchy food such as any type of bread, pasta, rice, couscous, noodles, potatoes or other type of cereals. (For example, pitta bread, tortilla wraps, rice cakes, oat cakes)
- Dairy food such as milk, cheese, yoghurt, fromage frais or custard

- Snacks such as crisps or cheddars, including seeds, vegetables and fruit (with no added salt, sugar or fat). Breadsticks served with fruit, vegetables or dairy food are also a good choice.
- **PLEASE ENSURE THAT FOOD IS CUT UP CORRECTLY E.G. GRAPES, BLUEBERRIES AND CHERRY TOMATOES SHOULD BE CUT INTO QUARTERS NOT HALVES**

Packed lunches MUST not include:

- Nuts – This includes products such as peanut butter and Nutella, due to the life-threatening risk posed to any child with a severe nut allergy.
- Confectionery such as chocolate bars and sweets (fruit strings are considered to be sweets). Cakes and biscuits are allowed but encourage your child to eat these only as part of a balanced meal.
- drinks other than water – fresh water is available at all times so you do not need to include this

Some links to more information and ideas:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-guidelines-and-food-labels/water-drinks-nutrition/>
<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-types/how-does-sugar-in-our-diet-affect-our-health/>
<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-teeth-and-gums/taking-care-of-childrens-teeth/>
<https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes/#recipes>

Some practical tips

- If you make up a lunch box the night before store it in the fridge
- Vary the sort of bread you use – cut wholemeal pitta bread into strips to have with a dip
- Cold cooked pasta can easily be turned into a pasta salad.
- Salad in a small bag or tub
- Encourage your child to help prepare their lunch – children are more likely to eat something they have helped with

HEALTHY EATING

HFCN settings recognise healthy eating habits in the early years is crucial, impacting on growth, development, behaviour and academic performance in later life. Our aim is to provide a nutritious and balanced diet in our setting promoting the health and wellbeing of our children. We encourage healthy eating habits and aim to meet individual children's dietary needs.

Children are encouraged to operate independently at the snack table. They are encouraged to pour their own drinks, serve, and spread or cut food as appropriate and then to clear away after they have finished. The Nursery only provides milk or water for the children to drink.

ALLERGIES AND INTOLERANCES

HFCN settings aim to meet individual children's dietary needs, catering for food allergies and intolerances, cultural and ethical requirements and any medical needs.

Parents and carers must notify staff of any known or suspected allergies and/or food intolerances and provide all needed information at registration. Some children may require individual care plans to keep them healthy and safe. To help us manage the risks associated with food allergies or intolerances the nursery will;

- Gather information from parents at registration
- Establish the level of risk associated with the allergy/intolerance e.g. low, moderate, severe
- Ensure all allergies and intolerances are known to all staff by displaying these in the kitchen area
- Maintain excellent food hygiene practices
- If necessary, provide children with individual placemats detailing with food related conditions

Health Plans and Emergency Response

Individual health care plans are prepared for children with allergies. Allergy lists are displayed in each Nursery room, the kitchen and Nursery office and are updated regularly. These documents highlight a photo, the name of each child, their specific allergies / diet and any medical notes or requirements. (Medication will be stored, administered and documented in accordance with our Administering Medicine Policy.)

If an allergic reaction occurs a member of staff will administer the appropriate treatment and the parents will be immediately informed. All first aid trained staff at the Nursery, have been trained to administer an EpiPen. If the reaction is severe immediate medical assistance will be sought by calling the emergency services.

NUT FREE POLICY

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Administering Medicine Policy.

In recognition that a severe nut allergy may be life threatening, HFCN aims to practice a 'nut free policy'. Parents/carers are made aware that we do not permit nuts or nut products within our setting for any reason. Reminders are circulated to parents/carers when necessary and a 'Nut Free Zone' logo is displayed around the Nursery and on Tapestry.

This policy serves to set out measures to reduce the risk to those children and adults who may suffer an anaphylactic reaction if exposed to nuts to which they are sensitive. In addition to aiming to protect children who have allergies, Home Farm Children's Nursery also helps them to learn to take responsibility as to what foods they can eat and to raise awareness of when they may be put at risk.

Parents/carers are made aware that we do not permit nuts or nut products within our setting for any reason. A 'Nut Free Zone' logo is displayed around the Nursery and on our newsletters.



Where necessary, regular reminders will be circulated to parents/carers, reminding them of the policy. Posters are displayed around the Nursery rooms at all times.

Anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis (also known as anaphylactic shock) is an allergic condition that can be severe and potentially fatal. Anaphylaxis is your body's immune system reacting badly to a substance (an allergen) such as food, which it wrongly perceives as a threat. The whole body can be affected, usually within minutes of contact with an allergen, though sometimes the reaction can happen hours later.

Anaphylaxis varies in severity. Sometimes it causes only mild itchiness and swelling but, in some people, it can cause sudden death. Anaphylaxis can lead to death if breathing becomes severely obstructed or if blood pressure becomes extremely low (known as shock). If symptoms start soon after contact with the allergen and rapidly get worse, this indicates that the reaction is more severe.

Symptoms

The symptoms of anaphylaxis usually start between 3 and 60 minutes after contact with the allergen. Less commonly, this can occur a few hours or even days after contact.

An anaphylactic reaction may lead to feeling unwell or dizzy or may cause fainting due to a sudden drop in blood pressure. Narrowing of the airways can also occur at the same time, with or without the drop in blood pressure. This can cause breathing difficulties and wheezing.

Other symptoms may include...

- Swollen eyes, lips, genitals, hands, feet and other areas (this is called angioedema)
- Itching
- A strange metallic taste in the mouth
- Sore, red itchy eyes
- Changes in heart rate
- A sudden feeling of extreme anxiety or apprehension
- Itchy skin or nettle rash (hives)
- Unconsciousness due to very low blood pressure
- Abdominal cramps, vomiting or diarrhoea, or nausea and fever.

Staff and Volunteers

All staff are made aware of this policy and have a duty to follow its procedures both within the Nursery settings and during trips and visits.

Staff and volunteers **must ensure they do not bring in nut products or consume them within the Nursery settings**. Any staff member leaving the premises and returning after consuming nuts must wash their hands thoroughly. In the event we are informed of a child in attendance with a severe nut allergy, staff will be asked not to consume nuts off-site if returning later in the day.

Particular caution must be exercised at certain times of the year, such as Easter and Christmas. If staff distribute confectionery, meticulous care must be taken to ensure that no nut products are included.

All product packaging must be thoroughly checked for warnings directed at nut allergy sufferers. If the following or similar warnings are displayed, the product **must not be used in the Nursery**:

- Not suitable for **nut** allergy sufferers
- This product contains **nuts and Peanuts**
- This product may contain traces of **nuts and Peanuts**
- Factory: Before being prepared for manufacture, the equipment was previously used to make products containing **nuts**
- This product is made in a factory that may contain **nuts**
- Made in a factory that uses **sesame seeds** and **nut** ingredients
- Product made in nut free area but **nuts** used elsewhere
- Made in a kitchen that handles **Nuts and Peanuts**

All first aid trained staff at the Nursery, have been trained to administer an Epi pen.

Parental Responsibilities

Parents and carers must notify staff of any known or suspected nut allergies and provide all necessary information, as detailed in their child's individual health plan. This information will be shared with the entire Nursery staff team and will be readily available in each Nursery room, the kitchen, and the office.

Parents **must not bring any food or treats onto the premises** unless they have carefully checked all ingredients (refer to the packaging examples outlined in the 'Staff' section). Similarly, any homemade foods brought in must be entirely nut-free. Staff members can provide guidance if parents/carers are unsure about a food selection before it is brought into the Nursery.

Lunchbox items will be removed by staff and replaced with alternative snack items if they are found to contain nuts, nut products, or if their packaging indicates they were made in a factory that uses sesame seeds and nut ingredients.

Even if your child does not have a nut allergy or any other allergies, we kindly request that you speak with them about the importance of **not sharing or accepting food from others** within the Nursery or elsewhere, to prevent potential cross-contamination.

Children

All children are regularly reminded about the good hygiene practice of hand washing, particularly before and after eating. This helps to reduce the risk of secondary contamination. Children are supervised at all times whilst eating which helps to ensure the act of food sharing with their friends.

SAFER EATING

- HFCN considers safer eating in the early years very important for safeguarding mealtimes and reducing the risk of serious harm resulting from choking whilst eating.
- Children are encouraged to operate independently at the snack table. They are encouraged to pour their own drinks, serve, and spread or cut food as appropriate and then to clear away after they have finished. Cups, bowls and spoons are washed in a dishwasher to maintain hygiene standards.
- HFCN recognises that a severe nut allergy may be life threatening and therefore aim to practice a 'nut free policy'. Please refer to our '**Nut Free Policy**' for further information.
- Staff supervise all meal times ensuring safety measures are adhered to e.g. blueberries cut in half, grapes cut and quartered lengthwise, strawberries are cut into appropriate long/narrow pieces.
- Food is stored in the kitchen and any chilled items are refrigerated and/or frozen.

Procedure for food provided by parents

- Food is labelled with the child's name and stored in the kitchen.
- Food is heated following the manufacturer's instructions and after probing, the temperature is recorded.
- The guidelines for heating meat are adhered to, ensuring it reaches a temperature of 75°- 80°.
- Rice provided from home is never reheated.
- Should any food supplied by parents/carers, be past the sell/use by date, this will not be served to the child. An alternative will be provided and parents will be informed.

FOOD HYGIENE

At HFCN settings we are committed to providing safe and healthy practices concerning the preparation, storage and serving of food. All members of staff involved in the handling and preparation of food hold a Level 2 Food Handling qualification which is renewed every three years. The settings are registered with Ashford Borough Council Environmental Health Department and annual inspections take place accordingly.

Our aim is to meet dietary and cultural requirements, to provide children with a range of nutritious, healthy and well-balanced snacks and meals, which promote children's growth and development.

It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that safe practices are maintained in the preparation and storage of food and that all food hygiene practices comply with relevant legislation, training and policy. When preparing food, staff will observe current legislation regarding food hygiene and training by:-

- washing hands with antibacterial soap before handling food (this includes the children prior to eating snacks and undertaking cooking activities);
- using clean disposable cloths;
- wearing clean protective clothing i.e. disposable aprons and gloves;
- ensuring any person(s) showing signs of ill health are not permitted to handle food;

- cleaning working surfaces with an anti-bacterial spray;
- ensuring the correct colour coded boards are used;
- checking the probe monthly for faults or battery failure and recording the relevant information

Feeding Babies

Babies are weaned at approximately 6 months old. This begins the process of moving from solely milk, to the consumption of a wide range of nutritious, healthy foods. There are a range of things to consider when feeding a baby:

- Babies should always sit up while eating
- Babies should never be left unsupervised
- Baby's food should be blended or mashed to their preferred consistency
- Do not hurry the child when eating—allow plenty of time for meals
- Meal times should be a happy, calm experience
- Only put a small amount of food on the tray at a time
- Avoid round, firm foods and large chunks
- Ensure food is cut and prepared appropriately (see food chart)
- Avoid stringy foods like string beans and celery
- Offer only a few pieces of food at a time
- Cut meat and poultry across the grain, and into tiny fingertip-sized pieces
- Food pieces should be no larger than one-half inch in any direction. If in doubt, cut food into smaller pieces
- Babies should never be forced to eat any food

Refrigeration

- The temperature of the fridge is kept below 8° and recorded daily. (This also applies to the fridge in the baby room, if there is one.)
- All milk is stored in the refrigerators and dates are regularly checked.

Food Safety Hazards

Staff at HFCN settings are aware of potential food safety hazards and procedures are in place to ensure all potential risks are well managed. Food safety hazards include:

- Physical hazards: glass fragments, dust, pests
- Chemical: cleaning products, insecticides
- Biological: poor personal hygiene, poor storage
- Allergenic risk: cross-contamination

Note:

Should there be an outbreak of food poisoning, the manager/deputy will inform the Environmental health office, Ofsted and the Health Protection Agency.

BOTTLE FEEDING AND WEANING POLICY

HFCN aims to meet every child's individual needs. Therefore, a meeting will be arranged with parents/carers prior to their starting date to discuss their well-being. Parents who are breastfeeding their children are welcomed, and every effort is made to accommodate their needs. When a child is breastfed, it is helpful if bottles are introduced at home alongside breastfeeding prior to starting at the Nursery to help children settle and avoid any unnecessary upset.

Formula:

Parents are asked to provide a sterilised bottle for each feed and pre-measure the formula powder into a container. Please label the pot clearly with the child's name and quantity of powder (e.g. 6 scoops) to ensure that staff are making the bottle correctly. Please inform staff of preferred temperatures such as warm, room temperature or cooled.

Cartons of formula milk can be provided by the parents/carers. The date of opening will be recorded on the carton and staff will check it is used within the required time (e.g. 3 weeks).

Bottles should be given at the times agreed with the parent bearing the child's immediate need in mind. The timing of feeds is to be agreed with the parent during daily handover discussions.

The quantity of milk consumed by the child is recorded on the child's daily contact sheet.

The temperature of the milk is to be checked by a member of staff before the bottle is given to the child unless the parent advises staff to offer a bottle cold. If refused, the bottle will be offered to the baby again at 10-15 minutes intervals. Bottles will be discarded after 1 hour. Bottles are never re-heated. Bottles are only warmed with water and not in a microwave.

In instances of ready-made milk, half of the carton can be used in the morning while the other half must be stored in the fridge to be used in the afternoon. All open cartons of milk must be discarded at the end of the day.

Feeds (either expressed breast milk or formula) will be prepared as and when they are required by the babies and not as part of a nursery routine. Breast milk (clearly labelled) is stored at the Nursery in the fridge or freezer. Alternatively, it is possible to establish a routine of both breast and formula milk.

All staff ensure that they have washed their hands thoroughly prior to making or giving a feed. A suitable sterilised labelled bottle will be used for feeds. It is parents/carers responsibility to provide clearly labelled, measured breast milk / formula along with the correct amount of water for each feed. Staff will record the amount of milk consumed in the baby's handover sheet shared with parents/carers at the end of the day. Any milk left over from the feed will be discarded.

Weaning

Working collaboratively with parents/carers the introduction of solids to a baby's diet will take place at approximately six months of age as prior to this a child's digestive system is still developing. Opportunities will be provided for children to explore a variety of foods, appropriate to their developmental age. A staged approach is used to move children from nutritional pureed meals to finger food to promote chewing which helps develop jaw muscles to aid speech.

Parents/carers are encouraged to discuss their preferred weaning plan with staff. Recognising healthy eating habits in the early years is vital to growth, development, behaviour and academic performance in later life, a nutritious and balanced diet is provided, promoting the health and wellbeing of our children. HFCN settings aim to meet individual children's dietary needs, catering for food allergies and intolerances, and medical conditions (see 'Healthy Eating Policy' for further details).

Home Farm Children's Nursery uses a dedicated catering provider for parents/carers wishing to access this service once their child has reached the appropriate developmental stage for digesting these meals. Fresh healthy nutritional balanced meals are provided by the caterer on a daily basis for lunch.

The HFCN settings provide breakfast (fruit and cereal) and/or nutritional snacks and operates a '**no nut policy**' – further details of which are outlined in the 'Healthy Eating' and 'Nut Free' Policies. A range of food allergies, intolerances, cultural and ethical requirements and medical needs are catered for.

Parents/carers choosing to supply food for their children, must ensure the meal(s) are correctly labelled with the child's name, which is then stored in the kitchen. See the 'Food Hygiene' Policy regarding storage and preparation of food. Please refer to the 'Nut Free Policy' for further details regarding foods not permitted in the Nursery.

Sterilisation of Feeding Utensils (if applicable)

All feeding utensils (spoons, bottles, dummies, and drinking cups) for children under the age of 12 months must be sterilised daily. Bottles, spoons, and bowls will be thoroughly washed in hot soapy water, then rinsed, and fully submerged in sterilisation fluid for a minimum of 15 minutes between each use.

Useful documents/websites:

- www.food.gov.uk Food Standards Agency
- www.hpa.org.uk Health Protection Agency
- www.kenttrustweb.org.uk "Food Hygiene – A Guide for Businesses"

USE OF A DUMMY

At Home Farm Children's Nursery, we recognise that a dummy can be a source of comfort for a child who is settling and/or upset, and that it may often form part of a child's sleep routine.

We do however, also recognise that overuse of dummies may affect a child's language development as it may restrict the mouth movements needed for speech. As babies get older, they need to learn to move their mouths in different ways, to smile, to blow bubbles, to make sounds, to chew food and eventually to talk. As babies move their mouths and experiment with babbling sounds, they are learning to communicate their needs. The more practice they get the better their awareness of their mouths and the better their speech will be. Children who suck dummies throughout the day or during the day, make fewer noises and gain less experience of using their voice. It is therefore likely that they share less exchange with adults and this can prohibit their language development.

If toddlers are permitted to continue to suck a dummy and try to speak with it in their mouths, there is also a significant risk that the child will learn distorted patterns of speech as the teat prevents normal movement of the tongue and the front of the mouth. Speech and language difficulties may also be hindered as continuous dummy use shapes young mouths to accommodate it. At Home Farm Children's Nursery, we are committed to being proactive to helping our children become competent talkers and to assist them when communicating using well developed speech and language. To support this, all staff speak with the children and take care in listening to what they have to say, during play and all aspects of the care we provide.

We will also offer support and advice to parents to discourage dummy use during waking hours at home and suggest ways in which the child can be weaned off their dummy through books and stories (when appropriate).

The following policy is therefore practiced to ensure our children are given the greatest opportunity to develop normally.

Practice:

- Only allow dummies for comfort if a child is really upset (for example, if they are new to the setting or going through a transition) and/or as part of their sleep routine.
- Discuss the use of dummies with parents/carers as part of a child's individual care plan.
- All dummies to be stored in named containers that parents / carers provide for safekeeping.
- Any dummy that may fall on the floor or is picked up by another child is immediately cleaned or sterilised.

When discouraging the dummy staff will:

- Comfort the child and, if age/stage appropriate, explain in a sensitive and appropriate manner why they do not need their dummy.
- Distract the child with other activities and ensure they are settled before leaving them to play.
- Offer other methods of comfort such as a toy, teddy or blanket.
- Explain to the child they can have their dummy when they go home or at sleep time.