

Food, Nutrition, and Mealtimes Policy

1. Policy Statement

At New Beginnings Day Nursery, we recognise that **food, nutrition, and mealtimes** are central to children's health, wellbeing, learning, and development.

- Mealtimes are planned as **calm, enjoyable, and sociable occasions** where children and adults eat together, interact positively, and develop independence.
- We are committed to providing **healthy, nutritious, and balanced meals and snacks**, tailored to individual needs and dietary requirements, in line with:
 - EYFS Statutory Framework (Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements – EYFS 3.1, 3.45, 3.47)
 - Department for Education Early Years Nutrition Guidance
 - Public Health and NHS guidance

This policy supports children's **physical, social, and emotional development**, and ensures **food safety, allergen management, and inclusion** (EYFS 3.1, 3.48, 3.49).

This policy should be read alongside the:

- Safeguarding Policy
 - Allergies and Allergic Reactions Policy
 - Health and Safety Policy
 - Funded Hours Meal Opt-Out Policy (at the end of this policy) (EYFS 3.2, 3.8)
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2. Our Approach to Food and Healthy Eating

- Children attending a full day receive **breakfast, lunch, tea, and two snacks daily**.
- Menus are planned in line with **DfE example menus, NHS guidelines, Soil Association accreditation, and Healthy London guidelines**, and are **rotated regularly**.
- Menus reflect **cultural diversity, seasonal variation**, and are **displayed for parents and children**.
- Parents and children are **invited to participate in menu planning**.
- Menus always include **fresh fruit and vegetables daily**.
- Foods are **nutritious and balanced**, avoiding excessive sugar, fat, salt, and **artificial additives, preservatives, or colourings**.
- Portion sizes are **age-appropriate**, following guidance for babies and young children.

EYFS compliance: 3.45, 3.46, 3.49

3. Sustainability

- Use **bulk, long-life staples, frozen, or tinned produce** where appropriate.
 - Prepare **home-made sauces** and minimise food waste.
 - Menus use **seasonal fruits and vegetables** and offer a **variety of meats, fish, and plant-based alternatives**.
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4. Mealtime Environment

- Children are **never left alone** when eating or drinking; a **qualified paediatric first aider** is present.
- Staff **model good table manners, eat with children**, and support **social, fine, and gross motor development**.
- Mealtimes encourage **independence**, e.g., self-serving and making food choices.
- Distressed children or those who dislike a meal are **supported without pressure** and may be offered alternatives later.
- Children are given **time to eat at their own pace**.

EYFS compliance: 3.27, 3.45–3.49

5. Drinks

- Only **milk, breast milk, and water** are provided to promote oral health.
 - **Fresh water is always available** and monitored.
 - Staff encourage **additional water intake during hot weather**.
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6. Baby Feeding and Weaning

- Follow **individual feeding patterns** agreed with parents.
- Support **breastfeeding and formula feeding** as required (NHS guidelines).
- **Weaning** introduced collaboratively, respecting each child's stage, texture preferences, and parental guidance.
- **Daily written records** are maintained for children under 2 years.
- **Commercial baby food is not provided or permitted** (except formula milk).

EYFS compliance: 3.45–3.46, 3.48

7. Management of Food Allergies and Dietary Needs

- All **allergens are displayed alongside menus**.
- Individual dietary needs are **recorded before admission** and shared with relevant staff.
- **Risk assessments and individual dietary/allergy plans** are implemented and reviewed regularly.
- **Seating arrangements prevent cross-contamination**; a responsible adult monitors mealtimes.
- Staff ensure **allergies do not label or single out children**.

EYFS compliance: 3.45–3.49

8. Formula Milk and Breast Milk

- Parents may provide **formula milk** in manufacturer's tubs, pre-measured labelled dispensers, or unopened ready-to-drink cartons.
 - Any opened formula milk not used within **four weeks** will be returned to parents.
 - **Breast milk is fully accepted**, with appropriate storage and feeding facilities.
 - Parents are responsible for **sufficient supply and updating milk charts**.
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8a. Breast Milk Brought from Home

- Must be **clearly labelled** with the child's name and date of expression.
- Nursery provides **refrigeration or freezing** as required.
- Staff follow **safe handling procedures**, including hygiene checks and avoiding cross-contamination.
- **Daily logs** record amounts taken and feeding times for children under 2.
- Any **changes in supply, storage, or routines** must be communicated by parents.

EYFS compliance: 3.45–3.48

9. Provision for Cultural and Dietary Preferences

- Menus accommodate children's **cultural backgrounds**.
 - **Familiar foods and new options** are introduced.
 - Cultural differences in eating habits are respected.
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10. Learning About Food

- Children encouraged to:
 - Make **healthy choices**
 - Participate in **food preparation, cooking, shopping, and growing activities**
- Positive attitudes to **healthy eating** promoted through play, discussion, and hands-on experiences.

EYFS compliance: 1.3, 1.4, 3.46

11. Celebrations and Special Occasions

- Special occasions may include **treats at mealtimes**, ensuring oral health is protected.
- **Non-food alternatives** are encouraged: stickers, badges, fruit platters, party games, dancing, or singing.
- Foods brought in from parents must meet **Food Information for Consumers (FIR) 2014 standards**.

Birthday cakes and other celebratory foods:

- Parents may provide cakes or treats for **special occasions**, which will be **provided to children to take home**, not consumed at nursery. Any children with allergies or dietaries will be offered an alternative to ensure they are not singled out.
 - All celebratory foods must be **shop-bought and remain in original packaging**, with **allergy information clearly displayed**.
 - This ensures compliance with the nursery's **allergy management and safeguarding policies**.
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12. Food Safety and Hygiene

- Staff trained in **food hygiene, allergy management, choking prevention, and food safety** (updated every three years).
- EYFS guidance requires **safe food handling, avoidance of cross-contamination, and careful supervision**.
- Any incidents affecting **food safety** are reported to **Ofsted and relevant health authorities**.

EYFS compliance: 3.44–3.49

13. Food Brought from Home – Packed Meals (Opt-Out of Funded Meal Charges)

13.1 Policy Overview

- Standard policy: **nursery-provided meals preferred.**
- Packed meals allowed only through **funded hours opt-out policy.**

13.2 Safety and Storage Requirements

- Must comply with **Food Safety Act 1990 & Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013:**
 - Correct storage and temperature control
 - Avoid cross-contamination
 - Limit time perishable food is unrefrigerated
- Packed meals may need to be requested **every 4 hours** for children in nursery **10-hour days.**
- Management will discuss **policy with parents** for understanding and agreement.

13.3 Nutritional Guidelines

- Must include:
 - Starchy foods (bread, pasta, rice, potatoes, wraps)
 - Vegetables and/or fruit
 - Protein (beans, pulses, meat, fish, eggs, tofu)
 - Dairy or unsweetened calcium-enriched alternatives
- Foods that **MUST** not be provided : sugary foods, high-fat/salt snacks, fizzy drinks, nuts, ultra-processed items.

13.4 Allergy Management

- **Strict NO-NUT policy.**
- Food must remain in **original packaging.**
- Children may only eat **their own packed meals.**

13.5 Non-Compliance

- Meals not meeting guidelines may be **refused.**
- Alternative meals per day will be provided at **additional cost** if required.
- Persistent non-compliance may be treated as a **safeguarding concern.**

13.6 Parental Support

- Guidance and resources available:
 - First Steps Nutrition – Eating Well
 - Health for Under 5s – Packed Lunches

14. Monitoring, Review, and Compliance

- Staff monitor mealtimes for **healthy eating, food safety, and allergy management**.
- Policies reviewed **annually or as required**.
- Food consumed and packaging will be returned to the parent for disposal and consideration of food consumption.
- Activity log will not be completed on Famly for food consumed but verbal feedback will be given to direct to meal containers for consumption.
- **Parental declaration** confirms understanding and agreement with packed meal and allergy policies.

14.8 Parental Declaration / Consent Form for Opt-Out

I, [Parent/Carer Name], confirm:

- I understand and will follow the packed meal policy.
- No nut-based products or high-risk foods included.
- All food is safe, fresh, and age-appropriate.
- Non-compliance may result in meals being refused and alternative meals charged.

By opting out of nursery-provided meals, I confirm my agreement and commitment to abide by this policy.

Parent/Carer Signature: _____

Date: _____

Child's Name: _____

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
1 st September 2025	J Wilkinson	1 st September 2026