



Weaning Policy and Procedure

For the majority of children, weaning begins from the age of 6 months. Loversall Farm Day Nursery follows the NHS published guidelines and therefore will not support any type of weaning for children under the recommended age, unless this is advised and supported by a competent health professional in the best interest of the child.

When supporting a baby through the weaning process, we will always work in close partnership with the child's parents (providing their wishes meet the published guidelines) to ensure the food being offered to the child is appropriate and safe.

When a child commences at nursery, and as part of the pre-entry meeting, parents will be asked to complete an 'all about me' form, this will request various types of information relating to their child's dietary needs, including specific information about weaning. It is the responsibility of the practitioner carrying out the meeting, to ask specific questions to enable us to follow safe eating practices. All information gathered will be added onto the 'weaning record' which must then be agreed and signed by both the parent and practitioner. A copy of the record will be shared with the nursery cook, along with the agreed sessions the child will be attending. The cook will also sign the form to say she is happy with the content and that all requirements meet legislation and NHS guidance. Any concerns relating to the form will be shared with the parent by the child's key person.

When a child attends nursery and the menu for that day does not support the weaning stage, a suitable alternative will be provided and this will be shared with the parent.

According to the NHS there are three types of weaning:

1. Baby-Led Weaning – This is where a parent supports their baby to feed themselves. This type of weaning enables the baby to explore their foods whilst trying a variety of textures
2. Traditional or spoon feeding weaning – This is where a parent chooses to feed their baby, baby foods from a spoon. This type of weaning begins with smooth/blended foods, progressing to chunkier or lumpier foods before moving onto solid foods
3. Combination weaning – which comprises of baby-led and traditional weaning. This may include both pureed and other solid food

When to start weaning

The NHS recommends that you start weaning after 6 months of breastfeeding or formula feeding. If the baby was premature it is important that the parent discuss with a member of the Health Visiting team before starting to offer baby food.

A baby's digestive system will not be ready for solid foods until around 6 months old. By weaning after 6 months old parents can reduce the risk of their babies developing allergies, infections, illness, obesity and diabetes.

Foods to avoid when weaning

When weaning a baby onto solid foods, it's important to avoid certain foods:

Honey - Do not give babies honey until they are a year old. It has the risk of giving them botulism.

Salt - Do not add salt to your baby's food. Too much salt can damage their kidneys.

Shellfish - There is a risk of food poisoning.

Sugar - Do not add sugar to your baby's food. Too much sugar can increase their risk of tooth decay.

Cholesterol lowering foods such as Benecol or Flora ProActive - Babies need cholesterol for their brain development

Lumpy and textured foods

When weaning a baby, remember that this is the baby's first experiences of food. New textures and tastes can be overwhelming and difficult to process.

Keep offering the baby lumpy and textured food alongside smooth foods. This is because a baby will steadily become used to the new textures. Giving a baby the foods over and over gives them time to get used to the tastes and textures. It can take a baby lots of tries before they decide if they like or dislike a food.

Signs that a baby is ready to start weaning

These signs are a typical part a baby's development. Reaching these developmental milestones before you start weaning a baby will help the weaning process. The following are signs of being ready:

- sitting upright and supporting the weight of their own head - a baby should be able to hold their head steady
- good hand eye-coordination - your baby should be able to look at food, pick it up and put it in their mouth by themselves

Babies who are not ready will push the food back out of their mouths. They will end up with more food around their face than in their mouth.

Not signs of a baby being ready

Some behaviours can be mistaken for a baby being ready for solid foods. The following are not signs of being ready:

- chewing on their fists
- first tooth is coming through
- seeming hungry and wanting more milk
- suddenly refusing to breastfeed (also known as a nursing strike)
- waking up in the night when they previously slept through the night
- watching you eat
- weight gain slowing down

Acceptable foods that can be provided to babies that are weaning

Vegetables

Cook to soften them, then mash with a fork or blend vegetables to a suitable texture for your baby – or give them as finger foods.

Offer a variety including ones with bitter flavours:

- broccoli
- butternut squash
- cabbage
- carrots
- cauliflower
- courgette
- green beans
- kale
- parsnips
- peas
- peppers
- swede

Fruit

Mash with a fork or blend soft ripe fruits to a suitable texture for your baby, or give them as finger foods. Harder fruits will need to be cooked to soften them.

Wash and remove any pips, stones and hard skin.

Fruit includes:

- apples
- bananas
- blueberries
- kiwi
- mango
- melon
- nectarines
- oranges

- peach
- pears
- pineapple
- plums
- raspberries
- strawberries

Starchy Foods

These can be cooked, where necessary, and mashed with a fork or blended to a suitable texture for your baby or offered as finger foods.

Cereals can be mixed with breast milk or first infant formula – or with pasteurised whole (full-fat) cows' milk (or goats' or sheep's milk) if your baby is over 6 months old.

Starchy foods include:

- baby rice
- bread
- oats
- pasta
- pitta bread
- porridge
- potato
- rice
- sweet potato
- toast

Protein Foods

This food group includes meat, fish, eggs, beans and pulses, and is suitable from around 6 months.

As well as giving baby protein, these foods contain other useful nutrients, such as iron and zinc, which are important for babies.

For eggs, make sure they are stamped with the British Lion stamp mark. There have been improved food safety controls in recent years, so infants, children and pregnant women can now safely eat raw or lightly cooked hen eggs (as long as they have the British Lion stamp), or foods containing them.

If you have a severely weakened immune system or are on a medically supervised diet prescribed by health professionals, you should cook all eggs thoroughly.

Protein foods include:

- beans
- beef
- chicken
- egg
- fish (no bones)
- lamb
- lentils
- pork
- pulses, such as chickpeas
- tofu
- turkey

Dairy

- Pasteurised dairy foods, like pasteurised full-fat yoghurt and cheese, are suitable foods for baby from around 6 months.
- Full-fat, unsweetened or plain yoghurts are a good choice because they do not contain added sugars.
- Whole pasteurised (full-fat) cows' milk, or goats' or sheep's milk, can be used in cooking or mixed with food from around 6 months old, but not as a drink until baby is 12 months.

Drinks

During meal times, offer baby sips of water from an open or free-flow cup. Using an open cup, or a free-flow cup without a valve, will help baby learn to sip and is better for their teeth.

If baby is younger than 6 months, it's important to sterilise the water by boiling it first and then letting it cool right down.

Sweet drinks like squash, fizzy drinks, milkshakes and fruit juice can have lots of sugar, so avoid these to help prevent [tooth decay](#) – even baby and toddler drinks can be sugary.

Cows' milk is not a suitable drink until baby is 12 months old, but it can be used in cooking or mixed with food from 6 months of age.

To ensure babies are effectively supported and remain safe at all time through the weaning stages, staff at Loversall Farm Day Nursery will:

- Carry out an in depth conversation with parents, as part of the pre-entry visit, to ascertain the type of weaning style that has been adopted in the home environment. They will discuss all aspects of the child's weaning journey, including; the types of foods being offered to baby,

any food that the parent does not wish the child to eat, how food is presented, i.e. blended, mashed, finger foods. The amount the parent wishes the child to have and how often during the day

- Complete a weaning form to record all information. This will then be signed by the parent and practitioner and immediately shared with the nursery cook. The cook will read through the information and providing all the requests follow current legislation and guidance, she will also sign and retain a copy for her own records. Where there are discrepancies, the key person will speak directly to the parents
- Never provide any foods that have not been agreed with the parents and will follow parents wishes at all times
- Always provide the baby with breast or formula milk in addition to the weaning foods being offered
- Always provide the milk feed first as guidance implies that babies should not be hungry when presented with the food as this can cause babies to eat quickly which increases the risk of choking
- Finger foods and/or lumpier food will not be given to a baby who is unable to support their own head when sitting
- Ensure all children are sat on appropriate furniture when eating that meets their level of development, i.e. children who are unable to walk or effectively maintain their balance will need to be securely fastened into the nursery high chair. Under no circumstances will children be allowed to walk around the nursery whilst eating/drinking
- Ensure all food offered to any child are of a safe temperature to prevent burn or scald injuries
- Not give any foods, other than milk feeds, to children under 6 months of age
- Never leave a baby unattended and will always sit with any baby that is going through the weaning stage
- Inform existing staff and new staff in the room about the systems in place for supporting children who are weaning and any individual plans that are in place for individual children
- Inform the cook should parents share any changes to the current weaning record
- Challenge any practices that could put the child at risk and report this immediately to the Nursery Manager
- Always practice safe food practices, including the removal of skin, seeds, pips, stones from specific foods and ensuring finger foods are cut appropriately to prevent choking
- Have an up to date food hygiene, food allergy and paediatric first aid certificate
- Provide feedback to the child's parent at the end of the session

Date adopted	16 January 2025
Signed on behalf of the nursery	
Date of review	September 2026