



A world in which Autism is celebrated.

Registered Charity No. 1152188

Health and Safety

26. Food and Drink during Specialist Sessions (Monday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday).

Policy statement

This setting regards snack and meal times as an important part of the setting's day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating.

We promote healthy eating

Procedures

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

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we find out from parents/carers their children's dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies. (See the Managing Children with Allergies policy).
- We record information about each child's dietary needs in her/his record and parents/carers sign the record to signify that it is correct.
- We regularly consult with parents/carers to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs - including any allergies - are up-to-date. Parents/Carers are to sign the up-dated record to signify that it is correct, and staff are informed of any changes.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all 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.
- During cultural celebrations, 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 take care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products and are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts, possibly even removing them completely.
- Through discussion with parents/carers and research reading by staff, we obtain

information about the dietary rules of the religious groups to which children and their parents/carers belong, and of vegetarians and vegans, and about food allergies. We take account of this information in the provision of food and drinks.

- We require staff to show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. Staff 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 staff participate.
- 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.
- We inform parents/carers who provide food for their children, about the storage facilities available in the setting.
- We give parents/carers, 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.

Cooked lunches

Some funded schemes require us to provide a cooked meal, these will be carefully planned to ensure all allergies are recognised.

- All children and young people are offered a choice of meals.
- Parents and carers will be provided with written information regarding the choice of a cooked meal offered or packed lunch
- All cooking activities are logged in line with regulations.

Packed lunches

- Ensure perishable contents of packed lunches are refrigerated.
- Inform parents/carers of our policy on healthy eating.
- Encourage parents/carers to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit and milk based desserts such as yoghurt or crème fraiche. We discourage sweet drinks and can provide children with water.
- 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/carer as a last resort.
- Provide children, bringing packed lunches, with plates, cups and cutlery.

- Ensure staff sit with the children so that the mealtime is a social occasion.

Snacks provided during Youth Club

- During Youth Club and the Late Diagnosis Group, young people and vulnerable adults are encouraged to make their own light meals with food provided to teach life skills. All activities are overseen by certified staff/volunteers.
- All cooking activities are logged in line with regulations.

Legal framework

- Regulation (EC) 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the hygiene of foodstuffs.
- Regulation (EC) No. 853/2004
- Food Safety Act 1990.

This policy was adopted on

20th April 2015

Policy updated

August 2025

Date to be reviewed

April 2026

Signed on behalf of the management committee

Name of Signatory

Role of Signatory

Reviewed By	Date
Sue Carr	24/04/2024
Sue Carr	18/08/2025