



Nutrition and Mealtimes Policy

(For procedures – refer to our Safer Eating Statement)

Policy

At **Evergreen** we believe that mealtimes should be happy, social occasions for children and team alike. We promote shared, enjoyable positive interactions at these times.

We are committed to offering children healthy, nutritious and balanced meals and snacks which meet all children's individual needs and dietary requirements.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our allergies policy

Our approach to food and healthy eating

A balanced and healthy breakfast, midday meal, tea and two daily snacks are provided for children attending a full day at the nursery

Menus are planned in advance and in line with example menu and guidance produced by the Department for Education (copies can be provided on request). These reflect cultural diversity and variation and are displayed for children and parents to view; parents and children are involved in menu planning

All meals and snacks include servings of fresh fruit and vegetables.

We provide nutritious food at all snack and mealtimes, avoiding large quantities of fat, sugar, salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.

Quantities offered take account of the ages of the children being catered for, in line with recommended portion sizes for babies and young children.

Sustainability

To provide cost-effective foods, we purchase staple long-life ingredients in bulk, use frozen or tinned fruit and vegetables if appropriate, prepare home-made meals, and use left-over foods where possible.

We plan menus to ensure that fruits and vegetables are seasonal and at their cheapest, we use a variety of meat, fish and vegetable alternatives.

We grow and use our produce where we can.

Mealtime environment - safer eating

No child is ever left alone when eating or drinking to minimise the risk of choking, and a qualified paediatric first aider is always present during meal and snack times. A team member will always be sat facing the children as they eat.

The team set a good example and demonstrate good table manners. Meal and snack times are organised so that they are social occasions in which children and team sit in small groups. During meal and snack times children are encouraged to use appropriate table manners and the team promote conversation to support social development

The team use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drinks, and feeding themselves

Any child who shows signs of distress at being faced with a meal they do not like will have their food removed without any fuss. If a child does not finish their first course, they will still be given a helping of any second dish.

Children not on special diets are encouraged to eat a small piece of everything.

Children who refuse to eat at the mealtime are offered food later in the day.

Children are given time to eat at their own pace and are not rushed.

Children with allergies or dietary requirements have a colour coded placemat. Children with allergies will have their own table to sit on and will have their food served on a red plate or bowl.

Children bringing a packed lunch will be sat together to limit any cross contamination from their food to other children. Parents must adhere to our Packed Lunch Policy to ensure we keep all children safeguarded.

All children will be expected to sit down on a chair at the table, that is the correct height. The team will support children with additional needs to adhere to this. Individual risk assessments will be put in place for children who are not able to do so, to ensure we keep them safe whilst eating.

Drinks

Only milk and water are provided as drinks to promote oral health. Fresh drinking water is always available and accessible. It is frequently offered to children and babies, and intake is monitored

In hot weather staff will encourage children to drink more water to keep them hydrated.

Baby feeding and weaning

We follow babies' individual feeding patterns following conversations with parents. We regularly review these to ensure they continue to meet the baby's needs. This information is recorded in their settling in books.

We feed babies responsively according to their needs and support mothers with breastfeeding, through providing suitable places to breastfeed in the setting and making provision for expressed breastmilk

We prepare infant formula milk if required, following NHS guidelines.

Weaning is introduced in collaboration with parents, including discussions about the stage their baby is at, the types of foods and textures their baby is eating at home and how these are presented to the baby; no assumptions are made based on the age of the baby

The nursery provides parents with daily verbal feedback on children's eating.

Commercial baby food and drink

We provide fresh food for babies and do not use pre-made commercial baby food or drinks

Management of food allergies and dietary needs

All allergens are displayed in kitchen areas to show the ingredients of each meal.

Individual dietary requirements are respected. Before a child joins the nursery, we gather information from parents regarding their children's dietary needs, including any special dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies that a child has, and any special health requirements. All information is shared with staff involved in preparing and handling food in the form of posters and table mats. These are colour coded and clearly show the child, what they can and cannot eat. These are used at EVERY snack and mealtime.

Where appropriate, we will carry out a risk assessment in the case of allergies and work alongside parents to put into place an individual risk assessment and care plan for their child. This will be regularly at least every term and any changes shared with all staff.

We give careful consideration to seating to avoid cross contamination of food from child to child. Where appropriate, an adult will sit with children during meals to ensure safety and minimise risks

At each meal and snack time, we ensure a nominated practitioner is responsible for checking that the food being provided meets all the requirements for each child. They will be identified by wearing a red apron. This will be a specific person who is competent and confident in knowing

children's dietary needs. The specific procedure for this person will differ depending on the routine in each setting. The procedures can be found in the annex to this policy and are displayed in each food prep and serving area/room at each setting. Also displayed is our Safer Eating Statement.

Where appropriate, discussions will also take place with children about allergies and potential risks to make them aware of the dangers of sharing certain foods

Staff show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. They do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child, or make a child feel singled out because of their diet or allergy.

Provision for cultural and dietary preferences

Where possible, we provide foods from the diet of each of the children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.

Cultural differences in eating habits are respected.

Learning about food and cooking with children

Staff support children to make healthy choices and understand the need for healthy eating.

We promote positive attitudes to healthy eating through play, growing, shopping and cooking opportunities and discussions. Baking and cooking activities will focus on healthier recipes.

Celebrations and special occasions

We will celebrate festivals with healthier or savoury foods.

We do not allow parents to bring in cakes on special occasions. Instead, we have a special hat or pretend birthday cake that we use to celebrate and sing to the child.

We also celebrate with alternatives such as stickers, bubbles, fruit platters, choosing a favourite story, becoming a special helper, playing a party game, dancing and/or singing their favourite song, and so on

We ensure that all food brought in from parents meets health and safety requirements and that ingredients are listed, following the Food Information for Consumers (FIR) 2014.

Food safety and hygiene

All staff who prepare and handle food are competent to do so and receive training in food hygiene which is updated every three years. This is in line with new guidelines from the EYFS September 2025.

All staff are trained in preparing foods safely to avoid the risk of choking, following the Foods Standards Agency guidelines

All staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis. These are displayed around the kitchen areas in each setting.

All staff are aware of the differences between allergies and intolerances, including that they need to maintain vigilance as children can develop allergies at any time

In the very unlikely event of any food poisoning affecting two or more children on the premises, whether or not this may arise from food offered at the nursery, we will inform Ofsted as soon as reasonably practical and in all cases within 14 days. We will also inform the relevant health agencies and follow any advice given.

Food brought from home (please see our Packed Lunch Policy)

We are a nut free setting.

We allow children to bring packed lunches into the setting, under prior agreement. We ask that parents doing so follow our Packed Lunch policy. We also provide parents with guidelines for nutritious content and signpost to the NHS packed lunch

We share the Food Standards Agency choking hazards guidance to support parents to prepare foods to reduce choking hazards.

We request parents use ice packs.

We do not provide reheating services for children's packed lunches.

Children's lunch boxes are checked prior to giving the contents to the children to ensure any risks from potential allergens or choking hazards are managed.

Our policy is developed in partnership with parents, staff and children and reviewed on a regular basis.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
<i>April 2022</i>	<i>L Davy</i>	<i>March 2023</i>
<i>October 2022</i>	<i>L Davy</i>	<i>October 2023</i>
<i>April 2024</i>	<i>L Davy</i>	<i>April 2025</i>
<i>November 2024</i>	<i>L Davy</i>	<i>November 2025</i>
<i>May 2025</i>	<i>L Davy</i>	<i>May 2026</i>

<i>Re-written August 2025</i>	<i>L Davy</i>	<i>August 2026</i>
<i>October 2025</i>	<i>L Davy</i>	<i>October 2026</i>

October 2025 ADDITIONS

- *A team member will always be sat facing the children as they eat.*
- *Children with allergies will have their own table to sit on and will have their food served on a red plate or bowl, along with their red mat.*
- *This specific procedure for the person in the red apron will differ depending on the routine in each setting. The procedures can be found in the annex to this policy and are displayed in each food preparation and serving area/room at each setting. Also displayed is our Safer Eating Statement.*
- *Children bringing a packed lunch will be sat together to limit any cross contamination from their food to other children. Parents must adhere to our Packed Lunch Policy to ensure we keep all children safeguarded.*