

Health and Nutrition Policy

1. Policy Statement

At Yewlands Day Nursery Ltd, we are committed to promoting the health, well-being, and development of all children in our care. We understand that nutrition is fundamental to children's physical and emotional growth, and mealtimes provide an opportunity to support healthy habits, social skills, and learning. This policy ensures that all children receive balanced, nutritious meals, that we maintain high standards of hygiene, and that we comply with the **EYFS reforms** that come into effect from **September 2025**.

2. Aims and Objectives

- To provide balanced, nutritious meals and snacks that meet the dietary needs of children.
 - To create a safe mealtime environment that encourages healthy eating habits and promotes good hygiene.
 - To accommodate cultural, medical, and dietary needs safely and respectfully, ensuring children's needs are always met.
 - To comply with all relevant health, safety, and nutritional standards, as outlined in the **EYFS framework effective from September 2025**.
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3. Nutritional Standards

- All meals and snacks are planned in consultation with parents to ensure they meet children's specific nutritional needs, including any allergies or intolerances.
- **Balanced Meals:** Meals and snacks must include a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and dairy products to support children's growth and development.

- **Minimizing Sugar and Salt:** Food's high in sugar, salt, or saturated fats will be avoided, with a focus on providing whole, unprocessed foods.
 - **Hydration:** Fresh water and milk will be available throughout the day. We encourage children to drink water regularly to stay hydrated, and sugary drinks will not be offered.
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4. Mealtime Practices

- **Supervision:** All mealtimes will be supervised by staff with **Paediatric First Aid (PFA)** certification to ensure immediate action in case of emergencies.
 - **Seating:** Children will be seated safely in highchairs or appropriately sized low chairs during mealtimes to ensure their safety and comfort.
 - **Social Interaction:** Mealtimes will be treated as a social and educational opportunity, where children can learn about healthy eating, practice good table manners, and interact with others.
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5. Special Dietary Needs

- We work closely with parents to understand and accommodate any special dietary needs, such as allergies, intolerances, cultural or religious dietary restrictions, or vegetarian/vegan preferences.
 - **Allergy Action Plans:** For children with allergies or intolerances, individual allergy action plans will be developed in consultation with parents, healthcare professionals, and the nursery team. These plans will include clear instructions on what to do in case of an allergic reaction.
 - **Risk of Cross-Contamination:** We will prevent cross-contamination by using separate utensils, food preparation areas, and storage for children with food allergies.
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6. Introduction of Solid Foods

- We will consult with parents regarding the introduction of solid foods, taking into account each child's developmental needs and readiness.
 - Staff will follow clear guidelines on weaning and ensure that food is provided in a safe, manageable format, gradually increasing the textures and types of food offered as children develop.
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7. Choking Prevention

- All food will be prepared in ways that reduce the risk of choking. Foods will be chopped into small, bite-sized pieces, and hard, round, or sticky foods (such as grapes or marshmallows) will be avoided unless cut appropriately.
 - Children will be seated in a safe and stable position while eating, and staff will remain vigilant, ensuring no child is left unsupervised while eating.
 - **Mealtime Observation:** Staff will closely monitor all children while they eat, observing for any potential choking hazards or other issues.
 - **Training:** All staff will receive training on choking prevention and appropriate interventions in case of a choking incident.
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8. Hygiene and Food Safety

- **Food Safety:** All food is prepared and served in accordance with food hygiene regulations, with staff receiving appropriate training on food safety practices.
 - **Hygiene Practices:** Children will wash their hands before and after eating to prevent the spread of germs. Staff will wear gloves and aprons when handling food and will ensure that children's eating areas are clean.
 - **Safe Storage:** Food will be stored at the correct temperatures to ensure its safety, and all items will be checked for allergies or expiry dates.
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9. Record Keeping and Reporting

- Any incidents related to choking or allergic reactions will be documented and reviewed with parents immediately.
 - A detailed record of children's dietary requirements and preferences will be maintained, and staff will be trained on any updates or changes to those needs.
 - Any food-related incidents or complaints will be handled according to the nursery's complaint procedure and reported to relevant authorities as needed.
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10. Working with Parents and Carers

- Parents and carers will be fully involved in discussions regarding their child's food allergies, dietary preferences, or special requirements.
 - We will work together to develop meal plans and ensure that all nutritional needs are met. Parents will be encouraged to share feedback on menus and mealtime practices.
 - Parents will be provided with information on the nursery's approach to health and nutrition during the induction process and have ongoing access to the policy.
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11. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to any changes in legislation, nutritional guidelines, or the **EYFS framework**. The policy will be updated to reflect any new guidelines or best practices and communicated to all staff and parents as required.

This policy incorporates the changes and requirements from the **September 2025 EYFS safeguarding reforms**, including updates related to allergy management, choking prevention, food preparation safety, and supervision during mealtimes. It

aligns with the latest public health recommendations and ensures the nursery provides a safe, hygienic, and supportive environment for children to thrive.