

Food & Drink Policy

Purpose

Aflah Nursery recognises the importance of healthy eating, good nutrition and safe eating practices in supporting children's health, wellbeing and development.

Parents and carers provide their child's packed lunch where lunch is required during their nursery session. Aflah Nursery provides appropriate snacks and drinking water for children during the nursery day.

This policy sets out how the nursery promotes healthy eating and ensures that food and drink are provided, handled and consumed safely in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Healthy Eating

Aflah Nursery promotes healthy eating and encourages children to develop positive relationships with food from an early age.

Snacks provided by the nursery will be healthy, balanced and nutritious and will take account of children's individual dietary requirements.

The nursery will have regard to current Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance when providing food and snacks.

Fresh drinking water will be available and accessible to children throughout the nursery session.

Children will also be supported through everyday experiences and activities to develop an age-appropriate understanding of healthy food, nutrition and looking after their bodies.

Packed Lunches

Parents and carers are responsible for providing a suitable packed lunch where their child attends nursery over the lunchtime period.

Parents are encouraged to provide a healthy, balanced, and nutritious lunch appropriate for their child's age and developmental stage.

Parents must take account of any foods that the nursery has advised should not be brought into the setting because of another child's serious allergy or other identified safety concern.

The nursery will communicate with parents when there are concerns regarding the suitability or safety of the food in a child's packed lunch.

Dietary Requirements and Allergies

Before a child starts at Aflah Nursery, parents and carers will be asked to provide information regarding any allergies, food intolerances, dietary requirements, preferences and relevant health needs.

This information must be kept up to date and made available to all members of staff involved in supervising, preparing or handling food.

Parents and carers must inform the nursery immediately if their child develops a new allergy or intolerance or if there are any changes to their dietary or medical needs.

At every snack and mealtime, staff will be clear about who is responsible for checking that the food and drink being given to each child is suitable for their individual requirements.

Allergy Action Plans

Where a child has a known food allergy or intolerance, the nursery will work in partnership with parents and carers and, where appropriate, with healthcare professionals to establish appropriate arrangements to manage the child's needs.

An Allergy Action Plan will be developed where appropriate and kept up to date. Staff responsible for the child's care will be made aware of the plan and any emergency procedures to follow.

Staff will understand the signs and symptoms of allergic reactions and anaphylaxis and the difference between an allergy and a food intolerance. Staff will also remain aware that children may develop allergies at any time.

Where emergency medication is required, this will be managed in accordance with the nursery's Administration of Medicines Policy.

Safer Eating and Choking Prevention

Aflah Nursery recognises that babies and young children are particularly vulnerable to choking and that careful supervision during eating is essential.

Food provided by the nursery will be prepared and served in ways that reduce the risk of choking and are appropriate for each child's developmental needs.

Staff will not make assumptions about the food or textures a child can safely manage based solely on their age. Where relevant, staff will work with parents and carers to understand the textures and foods their child is familiar with.

Children will be seated safely and appropriately while eating. Where possible, eating will take place in a designated area where unnecessary distractions are minimised.

Children will always remain within sight and hearing of a member of staff whilst eating. Where possible, staff will position themselves so that they can clearly observe children eating, identify signs of choking or allergic reaction and discourage children from sharing food.

Children will not be permitted to walk or run around whilst eating.

Paediatric First Aid During Meals and Snacks

Whenever children are eating, at least one member of staff in the room must hold a valid full-course Paediatric First Aid certificate that meets the requirements of the EYFS. Staff will know how to respond appropriately in the event of choking or an allergic reaction.

Choking Incidents

Any choking incident requiring staff intervention will be addressed immediately using appropriate first-aid procedures.

Details of the incident will be recorded, including where and how the child choked and the action taken. The child's parent or carer will be informed.

Choking records will be reviewed periodically to identify any patterns, trends or common factors. Where a concern is identified, appropriate action will be taken to reduce the risk of a similar incident occurring again.

Food Hygiene

Food and snacks provided by the nursery will be prepared, stored and served hygienically.

All staff involved in preparing and handling food will receive appropriate food hygiene training and must be competent to carry out their responsibilities.

Staff will follow appropriate handwashing and hygiene procedures before preparing or serving food and will ensure that food preparation and eating areas are maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.

Packed lunches will be stored appropriately during the nursery session.

Food Poisoning

Where food poisoning affects two or more children cared for on the premises, Aflah Nursery will notify Ofsted as soon as reasonably practicable and, in any event, within 14 days of the incident.

The nursery will take any additional action required by relevant public health authorities.

Partnership with Parents

Aflah Nursery recognises that effective communication with parents and carers is essential to ensuring that children's nutritional, dietary and medical needs are met safely.

Parents are responsible for keeping the nursery informed of any changes to their child's allergies, intolerances, dietary requirements, eating abilities or relevant health needs.

Where staff have concerns about a child's eating, drinking, nutrition or ability to manage foods or textures safely, these concerns will be discussed sensitively with parents and appropriate support sought where necessary.

Our Commitment Towards Good Oral Health

- We will ask you (parents/carers) whether your child has been registered with a dental practice in the early weeks of admission and encourage this with a follow-up conversation.
- We will promote good oral hygiene and practices via conversations around snack/lunch times, our continuous provision e.g. at small world and as role play opportunities, through our Helpful People topic (visiting dental practitioner) and targeted workshops using 'Dental Buddies' resources & Oral Health in EY Settings' NHS guidance.
- We will dedicate a post via our online learning journal (Tapestry) around the importance of good oral health, attaching the 'Dental Buddies' resources for parents to avail.
- Through daily monitoring of the contents of packed snacks & lunches, removing and returning to you food/drink items that are undesirable for good oral health.

Ofsted & Other

- The nursery will notify Ofsted of any food poisoning affecting two or more children attending the nursery, within 14 days of the incident.
- Food hygiene procedures are communicated during the induction of all staff.
- All staff involved in the preparation of food or supervision of meals are trained in 'Food Hygiene.'

Monitoring and Review

The Nursery Manager is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented consistently and that staff understand their responsibilities regarding food safety, allergies and safer eating.

Food and eating arrangements will be reviewed following any significant allergy, choking, or food-safety incident, and when children's individual needs change.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation, statutory guidance, or nursery practice changes.

Date Approved: August 2026

Review Date: August 2027

Aflah Nursery