



Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Nutrition Guidance followed by Guildford Nursery School

For the purposes of this document Guildford Nursery School and Family Centre will be referred to as GNSFC. When we say “parent” we mean “parents and carers”.

1. Purpose

This policy outlines how we provide healthy, balanced and safe food and drink for all children in our early years provision. It ensures we meet our legal duties and promote positive attitudes towards healthy eating.

2. Legal Framework

This policy is based on:

- **Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage** (September 2025) - our legal requirement
- **Eat Better, Start Better** - voluntary food and drink guidelines for early years settings in England (Department of Health and Social Care)
- **Food Information Regulations 2014** - allergen requirements
- **Food Safety Act 1990** and related regulations

Under the EYFS statutory framework, we must:

- Ensure that food and drink provided to children is healthy, balanced and nutritious
- Provide fresh drinking water at all times
- Record and act on information from parents about children's dietary needs, preferences, food allergies and any special dietary requirements

3. Key Principles

- **Health and nutrition:** We provide food and drink that supports children's growth, development and wellbeing
- **Safety first:** We follow strict food safety, hygiene and allergy management procedures
- **Inclusive practice:** We cater for all dietary, religious, cultural and medical needs
- **Positive food culture:** We create a calm, social eating environment where children develop healthy attitudes towards food
- **Partnership with parents:** We work closely with families to understand and meet each child's individual needs

4. Food and Drink Standards

Meals and snacks

We provide a variety of foods from the main food groups at every meal:

- **Fruit and vegetables** - at least one portion at every main meal, plus offered at snack times
- **Starchy foods** - such as bread, pasta, rice, potatoes (wholegrain varieties where possible)

- **Protein foods** - including meat, fish, eggs, beans, lentils, and pulses
- **Dairy products** - including milk, cheese, and yoghurt (full-fat for under 2s)

We provide:

- Healthy snacks such as fresh fruit, vegetable sticks, plain rice cakes, breadsticks, and cheese
- Age-appropriate portion sizes
- Food prepared fresh on-site where possible

We limit or avoid:

- Foods high in sugar, salt and saturated fat
- Processed foods and ready meals
- Foods with artificial colours, flavours or preservatives
- Sugary snacks, cakes, biscuits and confectionery

Drinks

- **Fresh drinking water** is freely available at all times, both indoors and outdoors
- **Milk:**
 - Full-fat milk for children aged 1-2 years
 - Semi-skimmed milk may be introduced from age 2, but only if the child is a good eater and growing well (we will discuss this with parents first)
 - Skimmed milk is not suitable for children under 5
- **We do not serve:** fruit juice, squash, flavoured milk, fizzy drinks or other sugary drinks

Meal and snack times

- **Breakfast:** 8:00am - 8:30am (for children attending breakfast club)
- **Mid-morning snack:** Approximately 10:00am
- **Lunch:** 12:00pm - 12:45pm
- **Mid-afternoon snack:** Approximately 2:30pm
- **Tea:** 4:00pm (for children attending after-school club)

Children are given adequate time to eat at their own pace in a calm, unhurried environment.

5. Special diets, allergies and dietary requirements

Recording information

On admission and regularly thereafter, we:

- Record all food allergies, intolerances and dietary requirements on each child's registration form
- Obtain detailed information from parents about symptoms, severity and management
- Display allergy information clearly in the kitchen and relevant areas (with parental consent regarding confidentiality)
- Update records whenever parents inform us of changes

Managing food allergies

We take food allergies extremely seriously. Our procedures include:

- **Staff training:** All staff receive training in food allergy awareness and recognising allergic reactions
- **Individual care plans:** Children with severe allergies have individual healthcare plans, including emergency procedures
- **EpiPen training:** Relevant staff are trained to administer adrenaline auto-injectors (EpiPens) where required
- **Safe food preparation:** We prevent cross-contamination through separate preparation areas, utensils and storage
- **Clear labelling:** All food is clearly labelled with ingredients and allergen information
- **Communication:** We inform all staff, including supply staff and volunteers, about children's allergies

Cultural and religious dietary requirements

We respect and accommodate all cultural and religious dietary needs, including:

- Halal and Kosher requirements
- Vegetarian and vegan diets
- Fasting practices (where age-appropriate)

We work with parents to ensure we understand and meet their requirements fully.

6. Food safety and hygiene

We maintain the highest standards of food safety:

Staff training

- All staff involved in food preparation hold a Level 2 Food Hygiene certificate (minimum)
- Training is refreshed every three years

Food preparation and storage

- We follow strict hygiene procedures during food preparation
- Food is stored at correct temperatures and used within safe timeframes
- We maintain clear records of food temperatures, deliveries and stock rotation
- Kitchen areas are cleaned and sanitised regularly
- We follow a comprehensive cleaning schedule

Personal hygiene

- Staff wash hands thoroughly before handling food
- Staff with illness or infection do not prepare food
- Children wash hands before meals and snacks
- We teach children about good hygiene practices

Choking hazard management

We take steps to minimise choking risks:

- **Food preparation:** We cut foods appropriately for children's ages:
 - Grapes and cherry tomatoes are cut lengthways into quarters
 - Hard fruits and vegetables are cooked or grated
 - Foods are cut into small, manageable pieces
 - We avoid whole nuts for children under 5
- **Supervision:** Children are always supervised by an adult during mealtimes and snacks
- **Eating environment:** Children always sit down to eat and drink; we do not allow eating while walking or running
- **Staff training:** All staff are trained in paediatric first aid, including how to respond to choking

7. Creating a positive eating environment

We believe mealtimes should be enjoyable, social occasions.

We:

- **Sit with children** during meals, modelling good eating behaviours and table manners
- **Encourage independence** by allowing children to serve themselves (with support) and make choices
- **Create a calm atmosphere** with appropriate noise levels and no distractions
- **Make mealtimes social** by encouraging conversation and interaction
- **Respect children's appetites** - we never force children to eat, but we do encourage them to try new foods
- **Use positive language** about food, avoiding labelling foods as "good" or "bad"
- **Celebrate diversity** by introducing children to foods from different cultures

- **Involve children** in food preparation activities (age-appropriate, such as washing vegetables or mixing ingredients)

Supporting fussy eaters

- We work with parents to understand children's preferences and any concerns
- We offer new foods alongside familiar favourites
- We encourage (but never force) children to try small tastes of new foods
- We praise children for trying new foods, regardless of whether they like them
- We maintain consistent approaches between home and nursery

8. Staff training and development

All staff receive training in:

- Food hygiene and safety (Level 2 minimum)
- Food allergy awareness and management
- Paediatric first aid (including choking response)
- Early years nutrition and healthy eating
- Inclusive practice for dietary requirements

Training is refreshed regularly and records are maintained.

9. Partnership with parents

We work closely with parents to ensure children's nutritional needs are met:

- **Sharing information:** We display weekly menus and share information about what children have eaten
- **Communication:** We discuss any concerns about eating, appetite or dietary needs
- **Consistency:** We work with parents to maintain consistent approaches to food between home and nursery
- **Involvement:** We invite parents to share recipes and food traditions from their cultures
- **Resources:** We provide information about healthy eating and child nutrition

Parents are welcome to discuss their child's dietary needs at any time.

10. Example meal plan

Menus are subject to change based on seasonal availability and children's preferences. Alternative options are always available for children with dietary requirements.

Meal	Example foods
Breakfast	Low sugar cereal with fruit, milk and toast
Snack	Carrot sticks, apple slices, water or milk
Lunch	Chicken casserole, wholegrain rice, peas, water
Snack	Plain rice cakes, cucumber, water or milk
Tea	Wholemeal toast, cheese, tomato, water

11. Monitoring and review

This policy is:

- Reviewed annually by the headteacher and governing body
- Monitored through regular observations of mealtimes
- Evaluated through feedback from staff and parents
- Updated in response to changes in legislation or guidance

12. Related policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Health, Safety and Welfare Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Medical Needs Policy

For the full guidance, visit: [EYFS Nutrition Guidance \(May 2025\)](#)