

Food and Drink Policy

Food and Hygiene Officer: Charlene Collins

Statement of intent

Little Sunbeams pre-school regards snack and meal times as an important part of the pre-school session. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating.

Aim:

At snack times, we aim to provide nutritious snacks, which meet the children's individual dietary needs. We aim to meet the specific legal requirements regarding the provision of food and drink, and safer eating, as stated in the Statutory Framework for the EYFS (2025) section 3.62-3.70 and to promote oral health as stated in section 3.58

We are aware that there are 14 allergens listed under UK law.

Methods:

1. Before a child starts to attend Little Sunbeams, we find out from parents their children's dietary needs, including any allergies and religious dietary restrictions and we take account of this information in the provision of food and drinks in accordance with the EYFS Statutory Framework 2026 (3.65) This information is reviewed with parents and updated termly at our child reviews (3.66)
2. Parent's record information about each child's dietary needs in his/her registration form and parents sign the record to signify that it is correct.
3. We hold current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all staff and volunteers are fully informed about them (3.65)
4. We implement systems to ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and their parents' wishes.
5. We provide a variety of food for snack time including fruit, raw vegetables, bread, crackers, breadsticks and cereals. All food is prepared in a way to prevent choking (3.68)
6. A full list of the foods provided will be made available on parental request.
7. 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 his/her diet or allergy.
8. We organise snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate.
9. We use snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.
10. We will ensure children wash their hands before their meal.

11. We will encourage children to eat the food provided in their lunch box.
12. We will make sure children have enough time to eat lunch, but realise they also would like time to play.
13. Children are seated on appropriately sized chairs when eating and lunch takes place in a separate room, which is a designated eating area where distractions are minimised (3.69)
14. Children are not allowed to swap or share their food with anyone else.
15. 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 session.
16. For children who drink milk, we provide semi-skimmed, pasteurised milk as the Government's Food Standards Agency advise that children should be stopped from drinking full-fat milk from the age of two to prevent clogged arteries and heart disease in later life.
17. Parents who wish to send in a treat to celebrate their child's birthday are encouraged to provide a healthy, suitable alternative to cakes and sweet treats such as a fruit platter or non-edible items such as bubbles, stickers, etc.
18. We will notify Ofsted of any food poisoning affecting two or more children looked after on the premises, as soon as it practicable, but in any event within 14 days of incident occurring.

All children must be within sight and hearing of staff when eating and a staff member holding a full paediatric first aid certificate must be present at all times as stated in section 3.64 EYFS Statutory Framework 2026

Choking:

Should a choking incident occur requiring intervention, the following procedure, in accordance with the EYFS statutory Framework 2026 (3.71) will apply:

- Details of where and how the choking occurred will be recorded
- Parents must be informed immediately, asked to collect the child asap and to seek medical advice.
- A physical intervention form must be completed and photocopied. On collection, the parent must sign both copies, one copy must be handed to the parent and the second placed in the child's personal file.

Any records of choking will be reviewed periodically to identify if there are any trends or common features of incidents that could be addressed to reduce the risk of choking and appropriate action will be taken to address any identified concerns.

The Food Standards Agency poster showing Early Years food choking hazards is displayed in setting for staff to refer to when preparing snacks or supervising children when eating from their lunchboxes.

Lunch Boxes

The government has placed a duty on childcare providers to ensure that every child is healthy. Eating healthily will help children to be fitter and healthier now and later in life. To grow and stay healthy children need to eat a nutritionally balanced diet. Good nutrition in childhood can prevent a variety of health problems both in the short term and later in life.

In the short term the effects of unhealthy packed lunches can include poor growth, tooth decay, obesity, anemia, constipation and poor concentration which can have an effect on a child's learning.

In the longer term effects of a poor diet can be increased risks of strokes, cancer, heart disease and diabetes.

Ofsted is required to report on how Little Sunbeams promotes the well-being of the children and this includes packed lunches and drinks brought into preschool from home

Please see Lunchbox content guidelines below (These are based on the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) guidance for 1-5 year olds)

Must include (a balanced combination):

1. **Starchy base / carbohydrate** (one portion)
 - Wholemeal or wholegrain bread, wraps, pitta, chapatti, pasta, rice, potatoes, or similar.
2. **Protein / alternative source**
 - Meat, fish, eggs, beans, pulses, lentils, tofu, or dairy-based spreads.
3. **Fruit and / or vegetables**
 - At least one portion (e.g. carrot sticks, cucumber, cherry tomatoes (quartered), pepper strips, fruit slices).
4. **Dairy or dairy alternative**
 - Cheese, yoghurt (plain / low sugar), fromage frais, or a fortified alternative (unsweetened where possible).
5. **Drink**
 - Water is best.
 - No sugary drinks or juice with meals.
 - Any drink sent from home must be plain water

Foods to limit or exclude:

- **Sugary / sweet foods, chocolate, biscuits, cakes** — these should *not* be included in packed lunches (or only in minimal amounts, e.g. very small treat)
- **Ultra-processed snacks** (e.g. crisps, snack bars with high salt/sugar) — only minimal or occasional.
- **High-salt foods** — avoid processed meats with added salt, salted crisps, etc.

- **Large chunks or whole pieces** of food that pose choking risk (whole grapes, large cherry tomatoes etc)

Children's lunch boxes must **not** contain the following:

- Nuts or nut products
- Sweets
- Fizzy drinks
- Cans or glass bottles

Portion guidance: Portions should be appropriate to a preschool child's appetite—not too large, not too small. See attached guidance on appropriate portion sizes.

[Portion sizes.pdf](#)

[A healthy balanced diet for children.pdf](#)

A frozen freezer block is highly recommended as we do not have refrigeration facilities for lunch box storage.

All rubbish from children's lunch boxes will be sent home to reduce waste, due to changes in waste regulations imposed upon us as from March 2025

Children are only permitted milk and water to drink throughout the day as recommended in section 6.6 of the Chief Medical Officer's independent report Time to Solve Childhood Obesity published October 2019.

Version	Changes made	Author	Date
1.0	Baseline version	Lyn D	12 th Oct 2015
1.1	Methods 15) change to semi-skimmed milk from whole milk following an announcement by the Government's Food Standards Agency Lunch Boxes – removed the statement 'No egg products' as the child with severe egg allergy no longer attends	Lyn D	21st May 2016

	Change of Officer		
1.2	Change of Officer Methods 5) change from nutritious snacks to fruit and raw vegetables Methods 6) list of foods provided available on parental request	Lyn D	13 th April 2017
1.3	Change of Officer – Nicky Smith	Lyn D	15 th Nov 2017
1.4	Changed to reflect update of EYFS in Feb 2018	Lyn D	4 th Aug 2018
1.4	Reviewed, no changes made	Lyn D	26 th Sept 2019
1.5	Aim: Amendment to reflect EYFS update (pub March 2021)	Lyn D	27 th July 2021
1.6	Reference made to the Time to Solve Childhood Obesity report	Lyn D	13 th Oct 2021
1.7	Reference to oral health	Lyn D	30 th Nov 2021
1.8	Change of named officer	Lyn	28 th Sept 2022
1.9	Reference to awareness there are 14 allergens listed in UK law	Lyn	28 th May 2024
2.0	Change of named officer, Changes to reflect EYFS updated 2024 Reference to FSA poster and children being supervised when eating Reference to change of food waste regulations as from March 2025	Lyn	20 th Jan 2025

2.1	Amendments to reflect the updated EYFS Statutory Framework Sept 2025	Lyn	14 th Sept 2025
2.2	Addition of section Lunch boxes	Amanda	1 st Oct 2025
2.3	Paragraph added relating to choking	Lyn	4 th Oct 2025
2.4	Amendments to reflect changes to EYFS Statutory Framework 2026	Lyn	1 st Sept 2026