

Healthy Eating, Food Safety and Nutrition Policy

Introduction

At Apple Blossom Nursery, we believe that a balanced, nutritious diet and high standards of food safety are essential to support the health, development, and wellbeing of young children. This policy outlines our approach to healthy eating, food preparation, dietary needs, allergy management, and nutritional practices in line with statutory guidance and best practice frameworks including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2025.

Aims

- To provide nutritionally sound meals and snacks that support growth, learning, and development.
- To promote healthy eating habits and reduce the risk of diet-related conditions such as obesity and heart disease.
- To ensure the safety and hygiene of all food served at the nursery.
- To work in partnership with parents and carers in meeting children's dietary needs, including allergies and intolerances.

Healthy Eating & Nutrition

Eating Well for Children Aged 1–4

The four main food groups recommended for young children:

- Starchy foods – potatoes, bread, rice, pasta
- Fruit and vegetables
- Proteins – beans, pulses, eggs, meat, fish
- Dairy and alternatives

Children are provided with breakfast, lunch, tea, and 2 healthy snacks daily, in accordance with the Example Menus for Early Years Settings in England. For example, we may offer healthy snacks such as apples and bananas.

We encourage:

- Eating a wide variety of foods to support healthy growth.
- Positive relationships with food through conversation, play and role modelling.
- Exploring food through sensory play, including real fruit and vegetables in the mud kitchen and edible play activities.

Children are offered milk or water with meals and snacks. Water is freely available throughout the day.

We understand that some children may need time and support to accept new textures and tastes. Staff work closely with families to gradually introduce new foods and encourage healthy preferences.

Family Engagement & Home Support

- Build Good Habits: We encourage families to support healthy eating at home by providing balanced meals and maintaining consistent routines.
- Get Involved: Talk to your child about their lunchbox contents and snack choices. Positive discussions can help children develop lifelong healthy eating habits.

Food Safety

- Follow Procedure for Kitchen hygiene and safety.
- Adhere to Regulation (EC) 852/2004 and Food Information Regulations 2014.
- Conduct regular risk assessments in food preparation areas.
- All allergenic ingredients are clearly identified on menus.
- Children are supervised at all times during meals and snacks, and are always within sight and hearing of a staff member during eating times. This is essential to ensure safety, support positive eating habits, and respond quickly in case of choking or allergic reactions.
- If a child chokes at mealtime and intervention is given, we record details of the incident and ensure that parents/carers are informed.

Heating Facilities & Sustainability

- Heating Facilities: We have a microwave available to warm up children's food when needed.
- Sustainable Practices: To reduce waste and ensure safety, we kindly ask parents to send food in reusable, microwave-safe containers, ideally made of plastic.

These should:

- Have secure, child-friendly lids
- Keep food fresh
- Be easy for children to open at lunchtime

Managing Dietary Needs

- Parents share dietary needs during enrolment and update staff as needed.
- All dietary needs and allergies are clearly communicated and documented.
- Snacks are adapted for allergies, intolerances, religious or cultural preferences.
- Risk assessments are conducted for any child with special dietary requirements.
- Ofsted or the CMA is notified within 14 days of any food poisoning affecting two or more children.
- Any food-related incidents (e.g. choking) are recorded and shared with parents.

References & Guidance

- Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance (2025)
- Safer Food Better Business – Food Standards Agency
- NHS guidance on food allergies, weaning, and anaphylaxis
- Childcare Act 2006

Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if there are legislative changes.

Adopted by Apple Blossom Nursery on: 01/09/25

Next review due: 01/09/25 or when there are any legislative changes