Next Steps Pre-school, Elms Vale, Church Road, Dover, CT17 9LW
Tel: 01304 226234
Registered Charity No. 1156391

Food and Drink Policy

Policy statement

The setting regards snack and meal times as an important part of the setting's day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. We promote healthy eating using resources and materials from the Early Years Alliance and the Caroline Walker Trust (Eating well for under-5s in child care). All snacks and meals aim to be nutritious and to cater for individual dietary needs.

Early Years Foundation Stage 2026: key themes and commitments

The safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS state that providers must have regard to the Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance. This means providers must take this guidance into account and should follow it unless there is good reason not to.

Procedures

We follow these procedures to promote healthy eating in our setting.

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we find out from parents their children's dietary needs and preferences, including allergies.
- We record information about each child's dietary needs in their registration record, and parents sign the record to confirm that it is correct.
- We regularly consult parents to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs, including any allergies, are up to date. Parents sign the updated record to confirm that it is correct.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all staff and volunteers are fully informed about them.
- We implement systems (in line with the Food Information Regulations 2014) to ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs, including allergies and preferences, as well as their parents' wishes.
- We display pictures and information about healthy eating.
- We promote the healthy eating plate and make parents aware of the sugar hidden in foods.
- We provide nutritious food for all snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt, and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- We offer a choice of milk or water and a variety of fruit, as well as cheese and crackers or breadsticks (salt-free).

- We include foods from the diets of each of the children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.
- We take care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products and are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts.
- Through discussion with parents and research by staff, we obtain information about the dietary rules of the religious groups to which children and their parents belong, and of vegetarians and vegans, and about food allergies. We take account of this information when providing food and drinks.
- 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 them feel singled out because of their diet or allergy.
- Staff are confident in their responsibility for preparing food and are competent to do so; individuals are trained in food hygiene.
- We organise healthy snack times to help children develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink, and feeding themselves.
- We provide children with utensils that are appropriate for their ages and stages of development and that take account of the eating practices of their cultures.
- We have fresh drinking water constantly available for the children. We tell the children how to obtain water and that they can ask for water at any time during the day.
- We inform parents and children about the storage facilities available in the setting.
- We give parents information about suitable containers for food, and reminders not to pack grapes or food containing nuts.
- In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.

Major food allergens

The 14 major food allergens are:

- Celery
- Cereals containing gluten
- Crustaceans
- Eggs
- Fish
- Lupin
- Milk

- Molluscs
- Mustard
- Tree nuts
- Peanuts
- Sesame seeds
- Soya
- Sulphur dioxide and sulphites

Legal framework

- Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance (May 2025)
- The Food Information Regulations 2014
- Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the hygiene of foodstuffs

Further guidance

- Safer Food, Better Business
- Food Champion training 2016
- www.food.gov.uk/industry/regulation/hyglegresources/sfbb/
- http://www.food.gov.uk/news-updates/campaigns/allergen-rules#toc-2

This policy was adopted in September 2026.

Next review: September 2027.

Name of signatory: Virginia McCarthy

Role of signatory: Manager