

# Developing a Healthy Eating Policy

## Food Safety and Hygiene



## 8: DEVELOPING A HEALTHY EATING POLICY

A policy does not have to be as complicated as it may sound. It is merely a way of ensuring everyone is clear about the healthy eating messages a nursery aims to promote. It can be used to provide information for both staff and parents and it should be written in agreement with parents. Several nurseries across Great Yarmouth may already have their own healthy eating policy.

For those that do not, the following example, taken from “Eating well for the under 5’s in childcare” by the Caroline Walker Trust, can be used as a starting point and adapted for local use. It should be borne in mind that a number of points may not be applicable in some nurseries depending on circumstances, and that not all establishments will require such a detailed policy.

### Sample nutrition policy

- The weekly menus will be on display in advance. Recipes will be available to parents.
- The weekly menu will provide children in childcare with a varied diet.
- All the children in childcare will have suitable food made available for them.
- Children who do not receive breakfast at home will be offered this when they arrive at nursery.
- Milk will be served with morning and afternoon snacks and this will be full fat milk.
- All dairy products will be full fat.
- Soya drinks will only be given as a substitute for cow’s milk with the parent’s agreement and then only those fortified with calcium will be given.
- Water will be available at all times.
- Diluted fruit juice (not squash) will be served with the main meal.
- Children will have access to bread or fruit if they are hungry between meals.
- Children will be allowed to have second helpings of fruit or milk-based desserts.
- Children will still receive dessert if they refuse their main course.
- Parents or guardians will be advised if their child is not eating well.
- Parents of children who are on special diets will be asked to provide as much information as possible about suitable foods and in some cases may be asked to provide the food themselves.
- Carers will sit with children while they eat and will provide a good role model for healthy eating.
- Withholding food will not be used as a form of punishment.
- Children will be encouraged to develop good eating skills and table manners and will be given plenty of time to eat.
- Advice will be given to parents about suitable foods to bring from home.
- Outdoor play will be encouraged every day, in all weathers, with suitable clothing. This will ensure that children have an opportunity to be exposed to sunlight, which helps their bodies to make vitamin D. Parents will be advised to provide sun cream for their child when necessary.

## 9: FOOD SAFETY AND HYGIENE

Participation in food preparation is a valuable learning experience for children and provides a great opportunity to reinforce basic personal and food hygiene procedures. It is essential that children who are involved in the preparation of snacks are always closely supervised.

The Foundation Food Hygiene Certificate is required for the level of food preparation discussed in this pack and we strongly recommend that at least one member of staff from the nursery who is involved in food or snack production completes the course. Those that already have their Foundation Food Hygiene Certificate are recommended to follow refresher training every 3 years.

In Great Yarmouth the Foundation Food Hygiene Certificate can be obtained by attending a 1-day course organised by the Environmental Health Department of Great Yarmouth Borough Council (tel: 01493 846451) or Great Yarmouth College (tel:01493 655261). Alternatively, it is also possible to complete a 6 hour computer based Foundation Food Hygiene course at First Move (Artillery Square tel: 01493 331919). Refresher training can also be followed via these organisations.

We recognise that the majority of establishments will not provide lunches and will only handle a limited range of snack foods. However, it is intended that the information below can be shared with parents, as it gives advice on the appropriate handling of high risk foods such as raw meat and poultry.

If your nursery is responsible for providing lunches or cooked meals we recommend that you consult with your local Environmental Health Officer for advice on food hygiene training, registration and risk assessment. Depending on the type of foods you prepare in your nursery, you may be required to complete a food registration form. You should contact your Environmental Health Officer in your Local Authority for advice on whether this is necessary for your establishment. For more information please contact Elaine Pritchett at Great Yarmouth Borough Council on 01493 846451.



## Food Preparation

- Always wash hands thoroughly with a bactericidal liquid or clean soap in a wash hand basin or nominated sink, and dry using disposable towels, before preparation of food, between preparation of raw meat or vegetables, after going to the toilet, blowing your nose, changing nappies, handling waste or handling pets.
- Make sure food is kept at safe temperatures: for hot food this is above 63°C, for cold food this is below 5°C.
- Do not use un-pasteurised milk or milk based products such as goat's cheese or milk products made from un-pasteurised milk. If a parent supplies such milks or foods check if it requires to be boiled.
- The use of fresh eggs is not recommended in nurseries, but dried and pasteurised eggs can be used.
- Wash all fruits and vegetables thoroughly before eating. Take extra care when washing vegetables especially if eating raw. Always use a clean chopping board and knife. Vegetables for young children should be washed and peeled.
- Wash the sink with a bactericidal detergent after cleaning vegetables or using the sink for other activities e.g. washing paint brushes.
- Wash dishes, cutlery, worktops and equipment with hot water and a bactericidal detergent and rinse in designated sinks, preferably twin sinks, or use a dishwasher if available.
- Separate chopping boards and knives, preferably colour coded, should be used for ready to eat foods and vegetables.
- Change cloths or sponges often. Always disinfect worktops before and after food preparation. Wipe the tops of cans before opening them.
- Bring milk indoors as quickly as possible and place in the fridge. Any damaged cartons should be discarded. Provide a covered holder for any deliveries of food to your nursery to avoid contamination from birds.
- Take off jewellery such as rings or bracelets before preparing food to avoid germs getting into food.
- Always cover cuts or sores with a blue waterproof dressing.
- If you are unwell avoid handling food especially if you have been sick or have diarrhoea and report any such illness to your supervisor.
- Clean protective clothing should be worn when preparing food.
- Your nursery is likely to operate a no smoking policy, however, remember never to smoke when handling food.

## Storage

- Perishable foods such as meat and poultry will be labelled with a “use by” date and should not be kept beyond this date. Foods that can be kept for longer such as bread will be labelled with a “best before” date. When this date runs out it doesn’t mean that the food is dangerous but it may no longer be at its best. So, to enjoy food at its best, use it before the “best before” date.
- Always store food in accordance with the labelling instructions.
- The fridge should be cleaned with a bactericidal spray and defrosted following manufacturer’s instructions. The fridge should be fitted with a thermometer. The fridge should be capable of storing perishable foods at a temperature of between 0°C and 5°C. Adhere to any recommended storage temperatures marked on food labels and check temperatures of chilled foods regularly.
- Don’t overload the fridge as this will increase the temperature.
- Part-used canned food should be transferred to an airtight container and stored in the fridge.
- Raw meat and fish should be kept covered at the bottom of the fridge.
- Raw and cooked food should be stored and prepared separately.
- Packed lunch boxes should be refrigerated if possible. If not, they should always be stored in a cool place with a cool plate inside. Ensure the child’s name is clearly marked on the lunch box.
- Don’t use any leftover food.
- Insulated cool boxes, or a cool box with cool packs, should be used for carrying food when taking children on trips or outings.
- High risk ready to eat foods such as cooked meats, dairy products and pasta dishes provided by parents and intended to be shared by nursery children should not be accepted as it is not possible to verify the conditions under which the food was prepared.
- However, foods brought in for snacks such as fruits, vegetables, bread and rolls are acceptable.

If you require further clarification or advice on any of these points, you should contact your the Environmental Health Officer within your Local Authority.

