

Safer Eating and Allergy Management Policy

Policy Statement

At the Childrens Learning Centre, we are fully committed to ensuring that every child's dietary needs are met safely, and that all mealtimes and snack times are managed with the utmost care. Offering children a wide range of foods, textures and flavours, while catering for any individual needs, can help increase the variety of foods children will eat, encouraging healthier eating habits in later childhood. This policy outlines our procedures for managing food allergies, special dietary requirements, and choking risks, in full compliance with the latest EYFS framework.

Allergy and Dietary Needs Management

- Before a child starts at the setting, **detailed information** will be gathered regarding:
 - Food allergies and intolerances
 - Medical dietary needs
 - Cultural and religious dietary preferences
- This information will be:
 - **Documented and stored securely**
 - **Shared with all staff** to ensure awareness and accountability
 - **Reviewed regularly** and updated if any changes are reported by parents or carers

Allergy or intolerance Action Plans

- For children with known allergies or intolerances, an **Allergy or Intolerance Action Plan** will be created in partnership with:
 - Parents or guardians
 - Relevant healthcare professionals

- Action plans will be:
 - Displayed appropriately in areas required (e.g., kitchen and eating areas) discreetly and respectfully.
 - We will use a simple traffic light system to display in meal areas. Red=Allergy, Orange=Intolerance, Green=Preference, with the child's name, photo and details of dietary requirement.
 - Action Plan to be filed in child's own personal information
 - Regularly reviewed and updated as needed

Named Allergy Lead for Each Child

- A specific staff member will be **designated as responsible each day** for checking each child's food before serving, ensuring it is safe and meets their dietary requirements. The named person allocated to this role, for that room, each day, will be displayed in the eating area.

Food Preparation and Labelling

- All food will be prepared with allergy awareness in mind:
 - Clear **separation of allergen-containing foods**
 - **Strict prevention of cross-contamination** during preparation and serving
 - **Labelling of all prepared foods and ingredients** where applicable

Safe Introduction of Solid Foods

- Weaning and the introduction of solid foods will be:
 - **Planned in consultation with parents or carers**
 - Suitable for each child's individual development needs, with no assumptions based on age.

- Gradually introduced to monitor for allergic reactions
- Carried out with close supervision and care

Choking Prevention Measures

- Food will be prepared and served in ways that **reduce choking risks**:
 - Foods will be cut into age-appropriate sizes
 - Whole grapes, cherry tomatoes, and similar foods will be halved or quartered
 - Cheese will be sliced or grated
 - Carrots, cucumber and similar foods will be cut into small baton strips
 - Tough or sticky foods will be avoided for younger children
 - All lunch boxes from home, will be checked and any foods that may cause choking will be removed
 - Parents will be supported on how to cut foods to reduce choking and appropriate foods to place in a lunch box
- **Children will be seated** in highchairs or low chairs during all meals and snacks.
- Distractions will be minimised during eating, no music in the background, or use of toys at the table etc.
- Fresh drinking water must always be available and accessible to children.

Supervision and Emergency Preparedness

- Two valid **Paediatric First Aid (PFA) trained members of staff will be present at all times** during meals and snack times
- Staff will **sit facing the children** to closely observe for signs of choking or allergic reactions (choking can be silent). All staff to position themselves to be able to view all children.

- Children must always be within sight **and** hearing of a member of staff whilst eating
- Children will be closely supervised to prevent food swapping or sharing

Incident Management and Reporting

- Any choking incident or allergic reaction will be:
 - **Responded to immediately** by trained staff
 - **Documented** in the incident log
 - **Reported to parents/carers as soon as possible**
- Near-miss incidents will be regularly reviewed to identify patterns and prevent recurrence

Staff Training

- All staff involved in food preparation and supervision will receive training in:
 - **Food hygiene**
 - **Allergy awareness, including symptoms and treatment for allergies and anaphylaxis**
 - **Differences between allergies and intolerances**
 - **Choking prevention**
 - **EYFS-aligned Paediatric First Aid (PFA)**
- All staff will be required to read and understand the EYFS **nutrition guidance**.

Parental Communication

- Parents will be informed regularly about:
 - Menus and meal plans
 - Changes in allergy or dietary management procedures
 - Any incidents involving food or allergies
 - What food is suitable for a lunchbox brought in from home and how it should be prepared to reduce choking and allergen risk to others
 - Regular reviews and ongoing discussions about individual children's dietary requirements

Additional information

- Early Years Foundation Stage **nutrition guidance**
- NHS - Food allergies in babies and young children.
- NHS – Your baby's first solid foods
- Weaning – Start for life - NHS
- NHS – Drinks and cups for babies and young children
- Better Health Start Life – Foods and drinks to avoid
- NHS – Foods to avoid giving babies and young children
- Food Standard Agency – Allergen guidance for food businesses
- NHS – What to feed young children
- Food Standard Agency – Early years choking hazards food safety advise
- Help for early year providers – Food Safety
- BSACI – Allergy Action plans
- NHS – Food allergy
- 14 Allergy awareness list

This information can be found online, to signpost parents to, as well as a paper copy in our Allergy, Intolerances and dietary Requirements Information Folder, in the office.