

Rainbow Pre-School & Extended Services



Rainbow Pre-School and Extended Services **Food and Nutrition Policy**

Policy Statement

Rainbow Pre-School and Extended Services aims to promote the health and well-being of children and their families through food within the setting.

The Rainbow Pre-School and Extended Services Food and Nutrition Policy supports the setting to meet the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Nutrition Guidance, notably the requirement to provide healthy, balanced and nutritious food and drinks to all children attending the setting.

By providing healthy, balanced and nutritious food and drink, as well as educational information about healthy eating, we not only are able to contribute to the healthy development of children in our care but support their families to continue this at home.

Development and implementation of the food policy:

We have developed our Food and Nutrition Policy in partnership with all staff / committee members, parents/carers and children by:

- Discussing with staff and committee members what they would like to see in the policy.
- Asking parents to tell us what they think about the food and drink provided at the setting in surveys at parents evenings.
- Consulting with children about current menus.

The food policy will be implemented and promoted by:

- Making it available on our website.
- Putting an article in our newsletter to inform parents that we have a new policy, where they can view it. This will be repeated annually when the policy is updated.
- Presenting the finished policy at a staff meeting and circulating to committee members.
- Providing information about how to provide a healthy, balanced and nutritious packed lunch. This will be given to parents at induction meetings, included in our prospectus, available on our website, promoted through the newsletter and handed out at the start of each academic year.

When and who the policy applies to:

Our food and nutrition policy applies to all food provided by the Pre-School and Extended Services (breakfast, snacks and light tea), food used in activities, and food brought in from home by parents (packed lunches).

The policy applies to all staff within the Pre-School & Extended Services setting as they are all involved in planning menus, cooking, preparing and serving food, and to parents who bring food into the setting from home.

Food and drink provision:

Children will have access to free fresh drinking water at all times. Cups and water jugs will always be available in the main activity room and in the outside space.

Term time:

Children attending the breakfast club will be provided with breakfast between 7:30-8.30am. Children attending the pre-school will be provided with a mid-morning (between 10.00-10:30am) and mid-afternoon snack (between 2:00-2.30pm).

Children attending after school club will be provided with a light tea between 4.00-4.30pm. We expect parents to be providing a further meal at home in the evening and plan our menus accordingly.

Holiday club:

Children attending the breakfast club will be provided with breakfast between 7:30-8.30am. Children attending the holiday club will be provided with one mid-morning (between 10-10.30am) and one mid-afternoon snack (between 3-3.30pm).

Children will not go for longer than 3 hours between meals and snacks.

Drinks:

Children at the pre-school will be offered water and semi-skimmed milk alongside their snacks or lunches. Children at the breakfast and sunset club will be offered water, milk or ½ and ½ diluted fruit juice.

Menus and guidelines:

We follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance as outlined by the EYFS. This will be promoted on our website and on the parent noticeboards.

Menus will be made displayed to parents on a daily basis. We have a three weekly menu cycle which is changed twice a year to allow for seasonality.

Portion sizes are carefully monitored to ensure they are appropriate for the wide range of ages using the provision (2-9 years old).

Communicating with children and families:

We communicate with families about food and drink by:

- Promoting our food and nutrition policy in ways described earlier.
- Display menus on a daily basis.
- Consulting with parents about the food and drink we provide through parent surveys.
- Providing parents with feedback about how well their child eats in the setting if there is cause for concern or a request for information from the parent.
- Provide information to parents about how to provide a healthy packed lunch.
- Providing nutrition tips and recipes through our newsletters.
- Planning food-based activities for children to experience new foods and practice cookery skills.

The eating environment and social aspects of meal times:

We provide a bright and welcoming cafe area for children to have meals and snacks in. The cafe is free from distractions such as television or other activities. Staff supervise children whilst eating and engage with them about food choices and preferences. We recognise that staff are important role models for children and are able to encourage healthy eating behaviours, introduce children to new foods and support the children to try them. However, staff will respect children's choices and will never unduly pressurise them to eat or finish something.

Children are encouraged to help set up the cafe area if they wish to and to assist staff to tidy up by bringing their plate and cup to the washing up bowl provided on a low level counter when they have finished. They use a self-serve system to promote independence and an awareness of how much food is appropriate.

We allow all children to eat at their own pace and ensure they are not rushed.

Crockery and utensils provided are appropriate to the age of the children. We use glasses and ceramic crockery made from duralex, inside to encourage children to take care of our resources and to appreciate that if they drop an item it might break. Plastic beakers, plates and bowls are used in the outside spaces. This encourages children to develop life skills, children's independence in using these is encouraged e.g learning to pour their own drink from a jug.

Celebrations and special occasions:

We believe it is important that children are given an opportunity to celebrate special occasions such as birthdays. We recognise that parents and children like to acknowledge birthdays by giving out small gifts to their peers, we do not allow food or drink items to be handed out in order to protect children with allergies and not place financial pressure on any family. We ask that birthday treats are limited to members of the child's key group and are non-food items e.g stickers, bubbles, colouring pencils.

We understand food and drink can play an important role in cultural festivals and celebrations but that these foods are often high in fat, sugar and salt. Where possible we will mark special occasions and cultural events by organising non-food activities such as craft activities, songs and stories, dressing up, making decorations and displays, playing special games and encouraging children to find out more about events from different cultures. If food and drink activities are organised they will follow healthy eating guidelines as per the government standards Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance.

Food as a reward:

We do not allow food to be used as a reward e.g for positive behaviour or winning a competition. Where it is deemed appropriate to provide rewards these should be non-food items such as stickers, or displaying a child's work.

Providing food for all:

We gather information from parents about special dietary needs through our registration forms and via conversation at our induction meetings. We discuss with parents how we can best meet their child's needs and plan accordingly to ensure every child feels valued and included. This is communicated to staff via each child's EyLog profile and by producing a food placemat for each child at the induction visit.

We display information on allergens alongside our menus.

We provide alternatives for children with identified food allergies, or dietary needs e.g vegetarianism, cultural requirements, so that they still receive a balanced diet. Where a parent wishes to provide alternative food brought in from home we will work with them to accommodate this within the facilities available to us.

Encouraging fussy eaters to eat well:

We recognise the importance of managing fussy eating or fear of food sensitively by:

- Encouraging role modelling from peers who are good eaters by seating them with fussy eaters at meal and snack times.
- Ensuring staff sit with children and engage positively by encouraging and discussing food choices.
- Continue to expose children to foods they may not like, recognising that repeated exposure is often necessary for them to like something.
- Ensuring there is as much variety in our menus as possible in terms of nutritional value but also taste, texture, colour and appearance of food.

- We praise children for trying new foods but never pressurise them to do so. Children will never be punished for not liking something or being fearful of trying.

Food brought in from home:

Packed lunches: All children attending a full day at holiday club are requested to bring a packed lunch.

All children attending a full day at pre-school may order a hot dinner from the school by completing our forms or provide a packed lunch.

In line with the [Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance](#), we must follow the guidelines:

Drinks: we can only allow water or milk to be provided in the setting. Therefore, we ask parents not to bring in bottles or cartons of juice or smoothies into packed lunches. We continue to provide drinks including water and semi-skimmed milk for the children throughout the day including mealtimes.

Food: we must avoid foods that are high in saturated fat, salt, and/or sugars therefore advise parents to limit salty snacks such as crisps and request that they do not pack confectionary (sweets or chocolate items e.g. chocolate spread, chocolate brioche, marshmallows etc) items in their child's packed lunch.

All foods must be cut in line with the choking hazards guidelines: [Food safety advice on choking hazards in settings - Foundation Years](#) e.g. any small fruits (smaller than a 2P piece) must be cut into quarters lengthways. When checking lunch boxes, if we find that items are not in line with our food and nutrition policy e.g. not cut appropriately or includes sweets or chocolate, they will be bagged and a note will be sent home detailing why the food has not been provided to your child.

We continue to be a nut and popcorn free setting due to allergies and choking hazards and therefore children cannot bring these items into their preschool or holiday club sessions.

We provide packed lunch guidance to parents which suggests what foods children should have in their packed lunch, as per the guidelines from the Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance. As highlighted in the Eatwell Guide there are 4 food groups to include:

- A portion of starchy food e.g bread, pasta, rice.
- At least one portion of fruit or vegetables
- A portion of protein e.g meat, fish, beans, eggs
- A portion of dairy food or alternatives e.g cheese or yoghurt or dairy free options

This information is made available at induction meetings, in our prospectus, made available in our website and promoted in our newsletters.

We are unable to reheat any food provided from home but parents and carers can provide pre-heated food in insulated containers which can be served to their children.

For perishable items that should be kept cool, pack food in insulated sealed bags. If ice packs are unavailable, the '4-hour rule' can be applied. This rule allows food to be stored outside of chilled conditions for up to 4 hours, but this should only be done once during the entire storage.

Please see the Celebrations and Special Occasions section for information on treats provided for birthdays.

Learning about and through food:

Learning through and about food provides us with many ways to meet the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements. Food can support children's learning and development in the following ways:

- Personal, social and emotional development: trying new foods, learning to share and working with others during cookery activities.
- Physical development: Using cutlery, helping prepare food or set up the cafe, washing and tidying up, learning to make healthy food choices that support development.
- Literacy: Reading about food in stories, following recipes or lists of ingredients, exploring language to describe food and its texture, taste, smell, sight.
- Mathematics: Counting utensils, crockery or food, matching or sorting foods, weighing and measuring ingredients.
- Communication and language: Eating together with friends and staff, using new words to extend a vocabulary, expressing our thoughts and ideas.
- Understanding the world: Learning about food from different cultures, growing fruit and vegetables to learn where food comes from.
- Expressive arts and design: Art activities such as potato printing, making funny food faces or creatures.

Cooking with children:

We believe that cooking with children is an enjoyable activity and an effective way to encourage all children to try and eat a wide range of foods. Cooking with children allows them to develop skills such as chopping, mixing and weighing and understand how food changes when mixed or cooked. Children will be given appropriate levels of support to ensure they have the opportunity to learn and extend their abilities without being placed at undue risk of harm.

Food activities will be planned by practitioners and may be delivered as a small group time activity with children's keyworkers or as an adult led activity in groups during session times. The food produced through the activity will either be sent home for consumption or if it is to then be provided as a snack, parents will be notified and we will continue to meet the requirements as set out in 'Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance'.

We will limit opportunities for food activities to involve foods high in sugar, salt or fat such as cakes and biscuits and explore a range of alternatives.

Food safety and hygiene:

We will meet food safety and hygiene regulations, and the food hygiene requirements of the EYFS by:

- Providing healthy, balanced and nutritious snacks
- Obtaining information regarding special dietary requirements, preferences or allergies that a child has or any special health requirements from a parent/carer before a child is admitted into the setting. Record this information on the child's registration form, on their EyLog profile and by producing the appropriate coloured placemat for the child. We will make any changes required by acting on the information provided by parents.
- Ensuring that fresh drinking water is accessible at all times.
- Provide an area which is adequately equipped to provide healthy snacks and drinks for children.
- Maintain suitable facilities to allow for the hygienic preparation of food and drinks.
- Ensure all staff preparing and serving snacks to children have received Food Hygiene training
- Following the guidelines regarding food that present as high-risk choking hazards. ie cutting grapes and cherry tomatoes in quarters longways and not serving popcorn. Finger foods will be cut into strips and not chunks, they should poke out from a child's hand when held in a fist.
- Being a NO NUT premises. Food containing nuts in **bold** on the ingredients list of packaging indicates the item contains nuts or nut products, it will therefore be removed from children's access and returned to the parent/carer at the end of the session. Food labelled as 'may contain nuts' will be permitted. Manufacturers

volunteer to put this label on their products to warn consumers that they may have become accidentally contaminated with another food product during the production process, therefore the risk of contamination is deemed as low.

- Ensure staff complete Allergy Awareness training.
- Notifying Ofsted of any food poisoning affecting two or more children on the premises as soon as possible, but at least within 14 days of the incident.

Sustainability:

We will reduce wastage through careful menu and portion planning.

We will buy seasonal fruit and vegetables to reduce the food miles travelled.

We will recycle all food packaging in line with local facilities.

Protecting children's health:

We recognise the importance of protecting children's health and our contribution to this. We regularly liaise with families if we have concerns about their child's eating behaviour and with their permission provide information to other professionals such as health visitors or dietitians. We engage other professionals such as health visitors, registered nutritionists or dietitians in supporting us to provide information to families, and review and plan our menus, policies and activities.

We recognise the importance of children maintaining a healthy weight and pay careful attention to portion sizes across the age range we support (2-11 years old). On occasion where we need to alter our menus at short notice, we ensure the alternative provided is of similar nutritional value.

Evaluation and review of the setting's approach to food and drink provision:

We plan to evaluate our approach to food and drink provision throughout the setting and review this food policy by:

- Using the 'Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance' to annually evaluate our approach to food and drink provision and the Menu Planning Checklist to evaluate our food and drink provision, particularly when planning new menus.
- Gain feedback from families, staff, committee members and children.
- Keeping up to date with current good practice on meeting the welfare requirements for food and drink.
- Regularly review staff training and development plans for food safety, hygiene and nutrition.
- Reviewing the food policy at least once a year.

This policy was adopted by Rainbow Pre-school & Extended Services

On 17th September 2015

Date reviewed: 14th October 2025

Signed on behalf of the provider H Adams

Name of signatory Hannah Adams

Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner) Head of Teaching and Child Development