

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Health

Where children are provided with meals, snacks, and drinks, they must be healthy, balanced and nutritious.



6.5 Food, drink and safer eating

Policy statement

This policy provides information about how we ensure that nutritious food and suitable drinks are provided regularly to meet the dietary requirements of all children in our care to support their growth, development, learning, health, and wellbeing.

Infant feeding

- At Jolly Tots we support parental choices regarding infant feeding, whether this is breast feeding or bottled formula feeding. Our parents are never made to feel uncomfortable concerning their choices and we follow their choice of feeding once their child starts at Jolly Tots.
- With regards to breast feeding, mothers are supported to do this and are made to feel welcomed and comfortable to do so within the setting. We have suitable storage for expressed milk.
- Formula feeds are made up as and when required rather than in advance.
- We advise parents to seek support from their Health Visitor and/or GP if they have any concerns regarding feeding their child.
- Only breast milk, formula milk or cooled boiled water will be given as drinks up until 12 months. From 12 months, with parental permission, cow's milk (or a dietary alternative where a child has an intolerance/allergy) can be introduced as a drink alongside water. If a parent prefers to continue with expressed breast milk or formula milk after their child has turned 1, we will respect their wishes and continue with this.
- We have a cold-water steriliser for babies bottles and feeding equipment, which is used where necessary

Weaning

- We work closely with parents through the weaning stages of feeding and provide appropriate weaning foods and drinks.
- We have a food list that we carefully go through with parents, and we don't give any foods to their child without their permission.
- We ask parents to introduce new foods at home particularly common allergy foods, before giving us permission to introduce them.

- Our staff can advise on appropriate foods if required. However, we advise parents to seek support/guidance from their Health Visitor and/or GP if they have any issues regarding weaning.

Safer eating

- Whilst children are eating, staff sit with them whenever possible. There is always at least one member of staff present with a valid paediatric first aid certificate.
- Before a child is admitted to the setting, we ensure we have all relevant information regarding dietary requirements, preferences, allergies, intolerances and health requirements in which a child may have. This information is shared with all staff preparing and handling food. We have regular ongoing conversations with parents/carers to ensure this information is kept up to date.
- All staff are trained on the symptoms and treatments of anaphylaxis and allergic reactions. Where a child has a known allergy, they must have a care plan and medication available, which is easily accessible within the room at all times.
- Room leaders are responsible for checking that the food being provided to each individual child meets their requirements.
- Ongoing conversations are held with parents regarding the stage their child is at with regards to solid foods and understanding textures, assumptions are not made by age. Food is prepared in a suitable way for each child's individual needs. Practitioners work in partnership with parents to help children to move onto the next stage at a pace which is appropriate for the child.
- Food is prepared in a way to prevent choking.
- Children are in sight and hearing of a member of staff whilst eating. Staff are aware that choking can be completely silent. Where possible children sit facing a staff member so they can be encouraged to eat in an appropriate way to prevent choking, food sharing and to be aware of any unexpected allergic reactions.
- If a child experiences a choking incident, this is recorded in a timely manner on an incident report sheet which includes details of where and how the child choked. Parents are informed of the incident and asked to sign the report. These records are monitored and reviewed periodically to identify common features and concerns. Appropriate action will be taken to address and reduce the risk of choking.
- Babies and young children are seated safely in a highchair or appropriately sized low chair whilst eating and distractions at mealtimes are minimised.

Food and drink

- We implement systems to ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary requirements.
- All children are provided with food and drinks that are healthy, varied, and appropriate to their needs. This includes children with special dietary requirements and/or allergies.
- We plan menus to include foods from other countries/cultures and change the menu accordingly when celebrating any festival.

- Where we have parents/carers/families from other countries, we ask them to provide a traditional recipe.
- We provide a vegetarian/vegan alternative when meat, fish or animal produce are being served. We have meals throughout our menu that are vegetarian to ensure all children feel included.
- We avoid foods with large quantities of saturated fat, sugar, salt, artificial additives, preservatives, and colourings.
- We don't provide food that contains any type of nut in the ingredients. Where it states, 'may contain traces of' or 'produced in a factory with...' or anything similar, we check with parents of children who are known to have nut allergies if these are ok to be given to their child.
- To protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with each other.
- Children who attend our breakfast club are given a substantial breakfast when they arrive.
- Children attending morning and afternoon sessions are offered a healthy snack. Milk and water are offered to drink.
- Parents opting for their child to have lunch and/or tea provided by us are offered healthy, nutritious, and balanced meals in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance.
- Drinking water is available at all times.
- Fizzy drinks, high energy drinks, hot drinks and squash are not served to the children.
- We do not use food as a reward or punishment.
- Children are not expected to eat everything on their plates if they feel full. Children will be encouraged but never forced, to try new foods.
- Children are allowed second helpings if they are hungry. We monitor the children's food intake and ensure there are procedures in place to prevent over-eating.
- We document all children's food intake and verbally feedback to parents at the end of the day. Written information can be provided upon parental request.
- We work closely with parents to overcome any feeding/eating issues and advise them to seek support/guidance from their Health Visitor and/or GP if issues persist.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all our staff and volunteers are fully informed about them.
- We show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. We do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child, or make a child feel singled out because of her/his diet or allergy.
- We provide children with utensils that are appropriate for their ages and stages of development and that take account of the eating practices in their cultures.
- In circumstances where there is a shortage of food supplies, it may be necessary to ask parents to supply a packed lunch. The following procedures must be followed:
 - . All children's' hands are washed prior to being given food or drink.
 - . Staff who are eating with the children must role model hygiene best practice.
 - . Tables are never overcrowded at mealtimes. Some social distancing is encouraged however it

is acknowledged that children will play in close proximity for the rest of the session.

Menus

- We plan menus in advance, for the term ahead.
- Menus follow a rotation to ensure a varied balanced diet is provided. There is a mixture of familiar and new foods on each menu.
- Daily menus are displayed in the entrance for all parents and children to see.
- Foods containing allergens are clearly marked. Detailed allergen information regarding specific recipes/foods is available on request.
- A copy of our recipes is available to parents upon request.
- Menus are developed using seasonal foods.
- Our menus incorporate foods from a variety of cultures and are suitable/adaptable to meet all dietary requirements of the children.

Packed lunches

Where packed lunches are provided, we:

- Inform parents who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in our setting.
- Ask parents to make sure there is an ice pack in the lunch box or to tell us if anything needs to be refrigerated.
- Advise parents on suitable containers for food to promote their child's independence.
- Inform parents of our policy on healthy eating.
- Request parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit and natural yoghurt for dessert. We discourage sweet drinks and will provide children with water.
- We request that the contents of a packed lunch are healthy and nutritious in line with our policy. Therefore, packed lunches that contain crisps, processed foods, sweet drinks, and sweet products such as cakes or biscuits are not encouraged. We reserve the right to return this food to the parent as a last resort.
- We provide children bringing packed lunches with plates, cups, and cutlery; and ensure that adults sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.

Establishing positive eating habits

- Staff will sit with the children while they eat to provide a positive role model for healthy eating and good table manners.
- Children are offered snacks and meals at regular intervals.
- Children are encouraged to enjoy sitting together and helping each other to develop good eating skills and table manners.
- We include specific activities to celebrate special occasions and festivals. If parents wish to provide treats for such occasions, we encourage them to provide non-food items such as stickers or bubbles

to take home. Any food items brought as treats for the children are sent home and given to the children at their parents' discretion.

- Children are encouraged to play outside every day, weather permitting, without sun cream for the recommended time, as stated in our Safety in the Sun Policy. This ensures that they have an opportunity to be exposed to summer sunlight to help their bodies make Vitamin D.

Staff training

- All our staff have received training in food hygiene/safety as appropriate to their roles. As refresher training, staff are required to read 'Safer Food, Better Business' and are made aware of any updates or regulation changes. Online training is also undertaken to refresh or update knowledge.
- Staff are happy to provide information to parents to support them with healthy food choices and practices as appropriate.

Legal framework

- Regulation (EC) 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Hygiene of Foodstuffs.(amended March 2021)

Further guidance

- Safer Food, Better Business (Food Standards Agency 2025)
- Every Baby Matters (EBM) Strategy (2021)
- EBM NHS nutrition guidelines (2022) reviewed January 2023
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2023-25)
- Bradford Districts Child Poverty Strategy (2022-27)
- Bradford Districts Food Strategy (2023)
- Breastfeeding Strategy for Bradford (2019-24)
- Gov.uk
- Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance (DfE, 2025)
- Food Allergy and anaphylaxis – NHS
- Weaning – Start for life – NHS
- Food safety – help for early years providers [education.gov.uk](https://www.education.gov.uk)

Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications

- Nutritional Guidance for the Under Fives (HSC Public Health Agency)
- The Early Years Essential Cookbook (2009)

This policy was adopted by	Jolly Tots Pre-School Nursery	(provider)
on	<hr/> 01.09.2025	(date)
Date to be reviewed	<hr/> September 2026	(date)
Signed on behalf of the management	<hr/>	
Name of signatory	<hr/> Lee Davison	
Role of signatory (e.g., chair/owner)	<hr/> Manager	
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