

Nutrition (Healthy Eating) Policy

(Updated in accordance with EYFS April 2025 Nutrition Guidance and EYFS September 2025 Framework)

Policy Statement:

At Butterflies Nursery, we are dedicated to providing a safe, nourishing, and developmentally appropriate food environment for all children. This policy aligns with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Nutrition Guidance (April 2025) and the EYFS reforms effective from September 2025. We aim to promote healthy dietary habits, prevent food-related incidents, and collaborate closely with families to support the nutritional needs of every child.

Age-Appropriate Nutrition and Feeding Practices

Infants (0–6 months):

- We fully support exclusive breastfeeding or formula feeding during this stage.
- Breast milk will be stored, labelled, and warmed safely following NHS and Food Standards Agency guidance.
- Formula will only be prepared and served using water at 70°C or higher, as per government guidance.
- Bottles will never be propped and feeding is always supervised to reduce choking risk and support bonding.

Infants (6–12 months):

- Weaning will be introduced gradually in consultation with parents and based on individual readiness.
- Foods will be appropriately textured (mashed/pureed) and free of added salt, sugar, or honey.
- Common allergens (e.g., eggs, dairy, nuts) will be introduced one at a time and closely monitored for reactions.
- Children will be seated in a highchair or low chair, always supervised during feeding.

Toddlers and Young Children (12 months–5 years):

- Meals are balanced and align with government portion size guidance: each meal includes a starchy food, fruit or vegetable, protein, and dairy (or alternatives).
- Snacks are healthy and low in sugar/salt. Water is available at all times.
- Foods that pose a choking risk (whole grapes, popcorn, raw carrot sticks, etc.) are cut appropriately or avoided.
- Mealtimes are calm, social experiences with adults role-modelling positive eating behaviours.
- We avoid processed foods, sweetened drinks, and high-fat/salt/sugar products.

Allergen Management and Choking Prevention

- Before a child starts, we collect comprehensive dietary information, including allergies, intolerances, and preferences.
- Allergy action plans are created with input from parents and healthcare professionals and updated regularly.
- A designated staff member is responsible for verifying each child's food is safe.
- Children are never permitted to share food and are closely observed during meals.
- Choking incidents are documented and reviewed as safeguarding "near misses".
- At least one **Paediatric First Aid (PFA)** trained person is always present during meal and snack times.

Breastfeeding and Formula Support

- Breastfeeding is welcomed and supported on-site.
- Expressed milk is stored and served following safety protocols.
- Formula provided by parents is prepared to NHS standards.
- Responsive feeding is practised to meet the infant's needs, comfort, and feeding cues.

Communication with Parents

- Menus are shared weekly with parents and tailored where possible to cultural, ethical, and dietary needs.
- Ongoing communication is encouraged around food introduction, preferences, and concerns.
- Parents are involved in planning for dietary needs, weaning timelines, allergy action plans, and texture progression.
- We provide resources to support healthy eating at home, including government guidance on portion sizes, weaning, and food safety.
- Feedback is welcomed to inform continuous improvement.

Mealtime Environment

- Children are encouraged to serve themselves when developmentally ready to foster independence.
- Mealtimes are screen-free, calm, and offer positive interactions.
- Children are encouraged but not forced to try new foods.
- Practitioners sit at the same level or facing the children to monitor for allergic reactions or choking.

Food Safety and Hygiene

- All food handlers have **Level 2 Food Hygiene (Early Years)** certification.
- Food is stored, prepared, and served following Food Standards Agency (FSA) guidance.
- Kitchen and preparation areas are cleaned daily, and equipment is sanitised.
- Food temperatures are checked regularly with calibrated thermometers.

Sustainability and Food Waste

- Menus include seasonal and local ingredients where possible.
- Children are taught about sustainable eating and food origins through discussion and activities.
- Food waste is minimised and logged as part of our sustainability commitment.

Alignment with EYFS 2025 Changes:

- This policy aligns with new EYFS 2025 requirements by embedding nutrition, food safety, and safer eating principles into daily practice.
- It includes mandatory staff supervision while children are eating, attention to allergy management, and specific seating and feeding practices to reduce choking.
- It ensures that allergy action plans, parental collaboration, and PFA-trained supervision are embedded in the setting's operations.
- We reflect the EYFS 2025 emphasis on supporting individual health, development, and safeguarding during food routines.

Review and Monitoring:

This policy will be reviewed annually or more frequently if changes occur in legislation, guidance, or local authority requirements. Input from families, staff, and health professionals is welcomed to maintain a high standard of practice.

Signed: Chrissie Day

Date: 16/7/2025