

## **Highfield Nursery School**

### **Nutrition Policy**

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<b>Purpose</b>	The purpose of this nutrition policy is to ensure that all children in our care receive a healthy, balanced, and age-appropriate diet that supports their growth, development, and lifelong wellbeing. This policy aims to promote positive eating habits from an early age, align with current government guidance and best practices, and provide a consistent approach to nutrition across all meals and snacks. It also supports staff, parents, and carers in working together to create a food environment that fosters healthy attitudes toward eating and nutrition.
<b>Links with other policies</b>	<b>Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions</b> <b>The First Aid Policy</b> <b>Charging and remissions policy</b> <b>anaphylaxis</b>
<b>Links with DFE guidance</b>	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-nutrition">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-nutrition</a>

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## Introduction

At Highfield Nursery School, we believe that good nutrition is essential for children's physical and cognitive development, emotional well-being, and ability to learn and play. We are committed to providing food and drink that supports healthy growth, fosters positive eating habits, and reflects the latest government guidance, specifically the Nutrition Guidance for Early Years Providers in England (2024), supporting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework.

## 1. Aims and Objectives

Our policy aims to:

- Promote the health and well-being of all children in our care.
- Provide nutritionally balanced meals and snacks in accordance with national guidance.
- Support children to develop healthy relationships with food.
- Respect and accommodate dietary requirements, whether medical, religious, or cultural.
- Educate children and engage families on the importance of good nutrition.
- Encourage independence and social skills through mealtime routines.

## 2. Food and Drink Provision for children aged 9 months- 2 years

### *3.1 Breastfeeding and Infant Formula*

We are committed to supporting the nutritional needs of infants in our care, recognizing the importance of both breastfeeding and the appropriate use of infant formula. Our practices align with national guidelines to ensure the health and well-being of every child.

#### *Breastfeeding:*

- **Support and Encouragement:** We actively support breastfeeding as the optimal source of nutrition for infants. Parents and carers are encouraged to continue breastfeeding for as long as they choose.
- **Expressed Breast Milk:** We accommodate the storage and feeding of expressed breast milk. All expressed milk brought into the setting must be clearly labelled with the child's name and the date it was expressed.
- **Storage and Handling:** Expressed breast milk is stored in a dedicated refrigerator at the appropriate temperature. Staff follow strict hygiene protocols when handling and feeding expressed milk, including thorough handwashing and sterilization of feeding equipment.
- **Feeding Practices:** Infants are fed responsively, observing cues for hunger and fullness. We ensure a calm and comfortable environment during feeding times to support the bonding experience between the child and caregiver.

#### *Infant Formula:*

- **Use of First Infant Formula:** For infants who are not exclusively breastfed, we support the use of first infant formula (first milk) as the sole alternative until the child is one year old, unless a different formula is prescribed by a healthcare professional.
- **Preparation and Hygiene:** Formula is prepared following the manufacturer's instructions, using water that is at least 70°C to ensure safety. All feeding equipment, including bottles and teats, are sterilized before use. Staff wash their hands thoroughly before preparing feeds.

- **Storage:** Prepared formula is used immediately and not stored for future use. Any unused formula is discarded after a feed to prevent the risk of bacterial growth.
- **Monitoring and Communication:** We work closely with parents and carers to monitor infants' feeding patterns and preferences. Any concerns or observations are promptly communicated to ensure consistency between home and the setting.

By adhering to these practices, we aim to provide a supportive environment that respects parental choices and promotes the healthy development of infants through appropriate feeding methods.

### *3.2 Introducing solids and weaning*

We are committed to supporting the healthy development of infants by following national guidelines on introducing solid foods, also known as complementary feeding or weaning. Our approach ensures that each child's transition from milk to solid foods is safe, responsive, and tailored to their individual needs.

- **Signs of Readiness:** We look for developmental signs indicating readiness for solid foods, including the ability to:
  - Sit upright and hold their head steady.
  - Coordinate eyes, hands, and mouth to pick up food and bring it to their mouth.
  - Swallow food without pushing it back out
- **First Foods:** We begin with single vegetables and fruits, such as mashed or soft-cooked sticks of parsnip, broccoli, potato, sweet potato, carrot, apple, or pear. Introducing a variety of vegetables, including those with bitter flavours, helps prevent fussy eating later on.
- **Texture Progression:** Starting with puréed or mashed foods, we gradually introduce lumpier textures and soft finger foods as the child becomes more comfortable with chewing and swallowing.
- **Responsive Feeding:** We encourage infants to explore food at their own pace, respecting their hunger and fullness cues. This includes allowing them to self-feed with fingers when they show interest.
- **Food Safety:** All foods are prepared following strict hygiene practices. We avoid adding salt or sugar to foods and ensure that foods are appropriately prepared to minimize choking risks, such as cutting small, round foods like grapes and cherry tomatoes into small pieces.
- **Allergen Introduction:** Common allergenic foods are introduced one at a time and in small amounts from around 6 months, monitoring for any adverse reactions.
- *3.3 If you opt out and choose to provide your own food: these are the provision requirements:*

To ensure all children receive safe, age-appropriate, and nutritionally balanced meals in line with the UK Government's *Nutrition guidance for early years providers in England*, we ask

parents and carers of children aged 0–2 years to follow the guidelines below when providing food for their child.

### *General Principles*

- All food provided must be appropriate for the child's age and stage of development, with particular attention paid to the risk of choking and food allergies.
- Foods must not contain added salt or sugar, and sweet foods should be avoided or kept to a minimum.
- Drinks provided should be plain water or full-fat cow's milk (if over 12 months old and not breastfed). Breastmilk or infant formula should be provided for children under 12 months unless otherwise agreed.

### *Infants Aged 0–6 Months*

- Babies under 6 months should be exclusively breastfed or formula-fed, in line with NHS guidance.
- Parents must supply sufficient expressed breastmilk or first infant formula for the day, clearly labelled with the child's name and date. This must be an unopened tin.
- No solid food should be provided unless advised by a healthcare professional.

### *Infants Aged 6–12 Months*

- Parents should provide a variety of soft, mashed, or finely chopped foods that are:
  - o Rich in iron (e.g., meat, fish, pulses)
  - o High in energy and nutrients (e.g., full-fat dairy, avocado, nut butters – no whole nuts)
  - o Low in salt and sugar
- Finger foods may be included but must be safe and appropriately sized to reduce choking risk.
- No honey should be given before 12 months due to the risk of infant botulism.
- Foods that are small and hard (e.g. whole grapes, cherry tomatoes, hard raw vegetables) must be cut appropriately or avoided.

### *Children Aged 12–24 Months*

- Meals and snacks should include:
  - o Starchy foods (e.g., bread, potatoes, rice, pasta)
  - o Fruit and vegetables (fresh, frozen, or tinned in natural juice)
  - o Dairy or dairy alternatives (full-fat, unsweetened options)
  - o Sources of protein (e.g., meat, fish, eggs, beans, lentils)
- Only plain water or full-fat cow's milk should be provided to drink.
- Processed foods (e.g., crisps, sugary snacks, shop-bought baked goods) should not be included.
- Foods must be cut to safe sizes and textures to avoid choking hazards.

### 3.4 Allergy and Special Dietary Requirements

- Parents must inform the nursery of any food allergies, intolerances, or cultural or medical dietary requirements.
- All food provided must be clearly labelled and comply with the child's individual dietary plan, if applicable.

We appreciate your cooperation in helping us promote a healthy, safe, and developmentally appropriate diet for all children in our care.

### 3.5 Balanced menus:

Our approach to menu planning is guided by the following principles:

- **Balanced and Varied Diet:** We ensure that every meal and snack contributes to a balanced diet across the day and week. Menus include appropriate servings of fruit and vegetables, starchy carbohydrates, protein-rich foods, and dairy or calcium-fortified alternatives.
- **Nutritional Standards:** All food and drink provided meet the nutritional standards outlined in the guidance. We limit foods high in saturated fat, salt, and sugar, and avoid sugary drinks, confectionery, and processed foods where possible. Fried foods are limited to once a week.
- **Age-Appropriate Provision:** We plan meals that are developmentally appropriate, particularly for children aged 0–2, including appropriate textures, portion sizes, and types of milk and dairy products. We follow specific recommendations for introducing new foods and textures to support healthy weaning and early eating habits.
- **Variety and Exposure:** Menus include a wide variety of ingredients to encourage children to try new foods and flavours. We aim to serve a diverse range of fruits, vegetables, wholegrains, and protein sources each week.
- **Cultural and Dietary Needs:** We take into account individual dietary requirements, allergies, intolerances, cultural and religious needs, and parental preferences. Alternative options are always available to ensure all children can enjoy safe and inclusive meals.
- **Healthy Drinks:** Children are given access to fresh drinking water throughout the day. Only plain milk or water is served as a drink. We do not provide sugary drinks, juice, squash, or smoothies.
- **Menu Review and Communication:** Menus are reviewed regularly (at least termly) and adapted in line with seasonal produce, children's preferences, and the latest nutritional guidance. Menus are clearly displayed for parents and staff and shared in advance to promote transparency and engagement.

By planning menus in this way, we help lay the foundations for healthy lifelong eating habits and ensure that all children receive the nutrition they need to thrive.

### 3. Food and Drink Provision for children aged 2 years- 5 years

Breakfast:

At our breakfast club, we provide all children with a **healthy, balanced breakfast** to help them start the day with the energy and focus they need for learning and play. Our breakfast includes a selection of nutritious options such as wholegrain cereals, toast, fruit, and milk or water. We aim to create a calm, welcoming environment where children can enjoy their food and prepare positively for the school day.

Lunch:

At our Lunch Club, parents and carers are required to provide a **nutritious packed lunch** for their child. To support children's health, wellbeing, and positive eating habits, we ask that all packed lunches follow the principles set out in the **UK government's guidance on healthy eating for children**.

Packed lunches should include:

#### *4.1 Food Brought from Home: Guidance for Parents of Children Aged 2–5*

We work in partnership with parents and carers to support the health, wellbeing, and development of every child. Where parents provide food from home, we ask that all meals and snacks follow the *Nutrition Guidance for Early Years Providers in England (2023)* to ensure consistency with the healthy eating practices we promote in the setting.

Parents must provide food that meets the following requirements:

#### *Balanced meals:*

Meals should include a variety of foods from the main food groups:

- **Fruit and Vegetables:** Include at least one portion of vegetables and/or fruit with each meal. Avoid fruit tinned in syrup and dried fruit as a snack (dried fruit should only be included as part of a meal).
- **Starchy Carbohydrates:** Include a portion of foods such as bread, rice, pasta, potatoes, or other wholegrains. Where possible, choose wholegrain or a mix of wholegrain and white versions.
- **Protein-Rich Foods:** Include foods such as beans, lentils, eggs, meat, fish, or meat alternatives. Limit processed meats (e.g. sausages, ham) to once per week.
- **Dairy or Fortified Alternatives:** Include a portion of milk, cheese, plain yoghurt or calcium-fortified non-dairy alternatives. Avoid sweetened or flavoured yoghurts and fromage frais.

### *Drinks:*

- We will provide **plain water or milk**.
- Parents should **not bring in** juice, squash, fizzy drinks, flavoured water, or smoothies.

### *Foods to avoid:*

Please do **not** include:

- Foods high in saturated fat, salt, or sugar (e.g. cakes, chocolate, crisps).
- Flavoured yoghurts or fromage frais with added sugar.
- Sugar-coated cereals or instant noodle/pasta pots.
- Artificial sweeteners or sugary drinks.

### *Portion sizes and packaging:*

- Please ensure food is cut appropriately for the child's age and ability.
- Grapes, cherry tomatoes, and similar foods must be cut in half lengthways to reduce choking risk.
- Food should be packed in a clearly labelled container with an ice pack, as we may not be able to refrigerate all items.

If a packed lunch does not meet these guidelines, we will work sensitively with parents to support healthy choices in line with our nutrition policy.

After School club:

At our afterschool club, we provide all children with a **nutritious light tea** to support their wellbeing and energy levels after a busy day at school. Our light tea is designed to be a simple, balanced meal that complements their daily dietary needs without replacing their evening meal at home. We aim to offer a variety of healthy options that are appealing to children, including fresh fruit and vegetables, wholegrains, dairy, and protein-rich foods, while avoiding foods high in sugar, salt, or saturated fats.

## **4. Drinks**

- Fresh drinking water is available and offered during mealtimes and throughout the day, when required, we offer these through an open top cup.
- We do not serve juice, squash, or fizzy drinks.

## **5. Dietary Requirements and Allergies**

We fully respect and accommodate:

- Medical diets, including food allergies, intolerances (e.g., dairy or gluten), and coeliac disease.
- Religious and cultural dietary requirements, such as halal, vegetarian, or kosher.



- Parental preferences, where possible and reasonable.
- Children with additional needs and/or medical needs who require reasonable adjustments

We maintain:

- A comprehensive record of each child's dietary needs.
- Allergen information charts in food preparation and serving areas.

Staff are trained in recognising allergic reactions and emergency procedures, including the use of EpiPens where necessary.

## **6. Mealtime Environment and Practices**

We foster a calm, inclusive, and social environment during meals, where children are encouraged to:

- Sit together at tables with adults modelling positive eating behaviours.
- Try new foods without pressure.
- Use child-friendly cutlery and serve themselves where developmentally appropriate.
- Follow routines such as washing hands before and after eating.
- Staff sit at the table with the children, always ensuring that they always have eyes on the children as they eat.

We discourage:

- Using food as a reward or punishment.
- Pressuring children to finish all food on their plate.

## **7. Celebrations**

We value and enjoy celebrating birthdays, festivals, and special occasions as part of our inclusive and joyful learning environment. These events offer important opportunities for social development, cultural learning, and community building.

In line with the *Nutrition Guidance for Early Years Providers in England (2023)*, we are committed to promoting healthy eating — and where appropriate this will be included during celebrations. We aim to ensure that special occasions are marked in ways that are enjoyable, inclusive, and promote our healthy eating ethos. We aim to strike a balance to ensure celebrations are celebrated and we do not lose sight of the importance of the celebration.

### **8.1 Our Approach to Celebrations where applicable:**

- **Food-Free or Healthy Focus:** We will celebrate special occasions in creative, non-food-focused ways — such as singing, stories, special activities, dress-up days,

dancing, or art — or we provide snacks that reflect the occasion and are within moderation.

- **Healthy Choices:** If food is part of a celebration, we will ensure that it is done with moderation and aim to have a balance of foods/snacks that follow the same standards as our everyday provision.
- **Parent Contributions:** We kindly ask that families **do not bring in birthday cakes, sweets, or other high-sugar items** to share with the group. If parents wish to contribute to a celebration, we welcome donations of:
  - A favourite book to read to the group
  - A healthy snack (such as fruit platters or vegetable sticks)
  - A small gift for the class (e.g. stickers, bubbles, party favours etc)
  - We will celebrate children's birthdays with a cake, to ensure this reflects moderation we will pick a day each month to celebrate the birthday for those children that month.
- **Cultural and Religious Events:** Where food is part of celebrating cultural or religious occasions, we plan ahead to include appropriate, healthy options and support children's understanding of the event in an inclusive way.

By celebrating in ways that support our healthy eating approach, we help children form positive relationships with food and reinforce good habits for life, while still making every celebration's special and memorable.

Please speak with a member of staff if you have questions or suggestions around upcoming celebrations.

## 8. Nutrition Education

Learning Through Play and Activities:

- Cooking and tasting sessions- which are balanced and support children developing a healthy relationship with food as well as understanding foods that require moderation.
- Growing fruits and vegetables in our garden.
- Storybooks, songs, and role-play involving food.
- Themed nutrition days and cultural food celebrations.

## 9. Parental Engagement

- Share menus and nutrition guidance with parents and carers.
- Provide workshops and newsletters about healthy lunchboxes and home meals.
- Encourage consistent messages between home and nursery regarding food choices.

## 10. Food Safety and Hygiene

- All food is prepared in compliance with Food Standards Agency (FSA) hygiene regulations.
- We conduct regular food hygiene audits and maintain appropriate hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP) procedures.
- Staff receive Level 2 Food Hygiene Training and refreshers as needed.
- Food is stored, prepared, and served at safe temperatures, and allergy controls are strictly implemented.

## 11. Monitoring and Review

- The policy is reviewed annually or in response to new statutory guidance.
- Feedback is collected from children (where appropriate), staff, and families.
- Menus are evaluated in line with the Eat Better Start Better guidelines and the School Food Standards where applicable.

## 12. Roles and Responsibilities

- The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team are responsible for policy oversight.
- The Nursery Practitioner is responsible for food preparation and compliance with nutrition guidelines.
- All staff are expected to model good eating habits and promote the policy's values.
- Parents and carers are encouraged to collaborate and support the nursery's approach.

## 13. Useful Links and materials

Food allergy quality standards (The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, March 2016) <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs118>

Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance, April 2025  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-nutrition>

Support for children who are fussy eaters: <https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/media/270391/fussy-eaters-information-sheet.pdf>

 A_healthy_balanced _diet_for_children.p	 Portion_sizes.pdf	 5532-booklet-sept2 1 Nutrition.org gui

 healthy eating info.docx		
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## 14. Appendices

### Appendix 1: The following guidelines are used when providing healthy, balanced and nutritious food.

- Provide – Where the guidelines advise that a food or drink should be provided use these to plan your meals, drinks and snacks.
- Limit – Where the guidelines advise that foods should be limited, these should be restricted as detailed in the specific guideline. This will help to decrease the 14 amounts of sugar, salt and saturated fat in children’s diets and increase the variety of foods they are offered.
- Avoid – Where the guidelines advise that a food or drink should be avoided, these should not be provided as part of any meals, drinks or snacks.

Food Group	Examples	Guidance
<b>Fruit and Vegetables</b>	Fresh, frozen, tinned or dried fruit and vegetables; pulses (e.g. lentils, beans)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide at least 1 portion at each main meal and some snacks (excluding dried fruit).</li> <li>• Offer a variety of fruit and vegetables daily and weekly.</li> <li>• Limit baked beans to once per week if counted as a vegetable.</li> <li>• Dried fruit should only be provided as part of a meal, not as a snack.</li> <li>• Avoid fruit tinned in syrup; choose those in juice.</li> <li>• Choose tinned vegetables and pulses with no added salt or sugar or tinned in water.</li> </ul>
<b>Starchy Carbohydrates</b>	Bread; potatoes, sweet potatoes; pasta, noodles; rice, other grains; breakfast cereals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include a portion of starchy food at each main meal daily.</li> <li>• Offer plain starchy snacks (e.g. plain crackers, unsalted/unflavoured rice or corn cakes) daily.</li> <li>• Provide at least 3 different types of starchy foods and a variety of wholegrain and white versions each</li> </ul>

		<p>week.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer wholegrain versions at least once per breakfast, lunch, and tea weekly.</li> <li>• Choose breakfast cereals low in sugar and salt ('low' or 'green' label).</li> <li>• Choose breads with low or medium salt content.</li> <li>• Limit fried starchy foods (e.g. chips, fried rice) to once per week.</li> <li>• Limit tinned pasta in sauce; choose no added sugar versions.</li> <li>• Avoid high-sugar cereals ('red' label).</li> <li>• Avoid instant/flavoured dried pasta, rice, and noodles.</li> </ul>
<b>Dairy and Fortified Plant-Based Alternatives</b>	Milk; cheese; yoghurt and fromage frais	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide 3 portions of unsweetened dairy or alternatives per day (including food from home).</li> <li>• Non-dairy alternatives must be unsweetened and calcium-fortified (e.g. oat, soya milk).</li> <li>• Use full-fat dairy for children under 2; gradually introduce lower-fat options after age 2.</li> <li>• Avoid sweetened yoghurts and fromage frais, including non-dairy options—choose plain, unsweetened varieties.</li> </ul>
<b>Proteins</b>	Beans, pulses, nuts; meat and poultry; fish and shellfish; eggs; meat alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include a protein portion at lunch and tea daily.</li> <li>• Provide a variety of protein sources across the week.</li> <li>• Include at least one lunch and one tea weekly using beans, lentils, pulses or meat alternatives.</li> <li>• Ensure vegetarian/vegan meals contain varied protein sources.</li> <li>• Serve oily fish (e.g. salmon, sardines, mackerel) at least once every 3 weeks, max twice per week.</li> <li>• Limit processed meat (e.g. sausages), fish (e.g. fish fingers), and meat alternative products (e.g. vegetarian sausages) to once per week each.</li> </ul>
<b>All Foods</b>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid foods high in saturated fat, salt, and/or sugar (e.g. cakes, pastries, biscuits, crisps, confectionery).</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid artificial sweeteners, as they may promote a preference for sweet foods.</li> </ul>
<b>Drinks</b>	Water; milk; unsweetened, calcium-fortified non-dairy drinks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure children have access to water throughout the day.</li> <li>• Provide only fresh tap water and plain milk to drink.</li> <li>• From age 1: provide whole milk, semi-skimmed milk, or suitable non-dairy alternatives.</li> <li>• Avoid skimmed and 1% cow's milk.</li> <li>• Avoid sugary drinks (e.g. fruit juice, squash, smoothies).</li> </ul>