



Harvard Park Policies and Procedures:

**Food Safety and Nutrition**

## 52. Food Safety and Nutrition

### Policy Statement

Our setting is a suitable, clean, and safe place for children to be cared for, where they can grow and learn. We meet all statutory requirements for food safety and fulfil the criteria for meeting the relevant Early Years Foundation Stage Safeguarding and Welfare requirements.

Our setting regards snack and mealtimes as an important part of our day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. We promote healthy eating at snack and mealtimes. We aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs.

We recognise that we have a corporate responsibility and duty of care for those who work in and receive a service from our setting, but individual employees and service users also have responsibility for ensuring their own safety as well as that of others. Risk assessment is the key means through which this is achieved.

### Procedures

We follow these procedures to promote healthy eating in our setting.

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we find out from parents/carers their children's dietary needs and preferences, including allergies (See the managing children who are infectious, sick and with allergies policy).
- We take guidance from the Food Standard Agency regarding our responsibilities around allergens.
- General hygiene and safety procedures are followed in food preparation areas.
- Parents/carers fill out a dietary information sheet about their child's dietary needs which is kept in our information folders for each individual room and/or setting and in their registration record. Parents/carers are invited to meet the cook if they wish but with children with allergies a one-to-one meeting is set up with the chef (day nursery only) and the manager (pre-school).
- Parents/carers share information about their children's particular dietary needs with staff when they enroll their children and on an on-going basis with their key-person. This information is shared with staff who involved in the care of the child.
- We consider every child's individual development needs and work in partnership with parents/carers to help children to move on to the next stage regarding weaning as per the guidance listed.
- We display a photo of the child with current and up to date information about their individual dietary needs. Copies of these are display on the notice board in the kitchen, one in their relevant room and with severe allergies which require medical administration, a copy is kept in the secondary office on the medical cupboard (safely out of reach from children). These state

the child's name, when they started Harvard Park, what their dietary requirement or allergy is and if precautions need to be taken.

- Allergies are displayed in orange rectangles, where an EpiPen is present, a copy of their Allergy Action Plan is displayed; other dietary needs are displayed in white squares and are re-checked when a child transitions into the next room. We implement systems to ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and preferences.
- We follow the guidelines with the 14 allergens, and they are marked on all menus. We also offer a vegetarian option every day. Food provided by the setting for the children have any allergenic ingredients are identified on the menus.
- Care is taken to ensure that children with food allergies and intolerances do not have contact with food products that they are allergic too.
- We operate a system of colour coded plates; GREEN = Vegetarian, WHITE = Allergies, BLUE, YELLOW, PURPLE, ORANGE (Tiger club only) and PINK (Baby Studio only) = Normal diets. We do promote children learning about their own dietary needs i.e. which colour plate to choose if you are a vegetarian, etc.
- We plan menus in advance, involving children and parents/carers in the planning.
- We also send these out via email or our EyLog platform when changes are made or the menu is in a new rotation.
- We follow the main advice on dietary guidelines and the legal requirements for identifying food allergens when planning menus based on the 4 food groups
  - Meat, fish and protein alternatives
  - Milk and dairy products
  - Cereals and grains
  - Fresh fruit and vegetables.
- We provide nutritious food at all meals and snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt as well as artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- We provide nutritionally sound meals and snacks which promote health and reduce the risk of obesity and heart disease that may begin in childhood.
- Following dietary guidelines to promote health also means taking account of guidelines to reduce risk of disease caused by unhealthy eating.
- Through discussion with parents/carers and research reading, we obtain information about the dietary rules of the religious groups to which children and their parents/carers belong and of vegetarians and vegans, as well as about food allergies.
- We include foods from the diet of each of the children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.
- We take care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products and are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts. To protect children with food allergies,

we do not allow children sharing and swapping their food with one another. We operate a no nuts policy across both settings – parents/carers and employees are regularly reminded of this.

- We require staff to show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. Staff do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child or make a child feel singled out because of their diet or allergy.
- We organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate. This is also an invaluable time to introduce and build knowledge and understanding of the names and types of food that keep us healthy, where food comes from, new foods and new vocabulary.
- We use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, self-serving food, drink and feeding themselves.
- We provide children with utensils that are appropriate for their ages and stages of development.
- We inform the children about how to obtain drinking water and that they can ask for water at any time during the session/day. A jug with cups is on the side for the children to self-select. For non-verbal children, we set out small breaks during their session to ensure they are taking water on board. Where necessary, we asked parents/carers to provide a bottle for their child which is topped up with fresh water throughout the session.
- Volunteers and students DO NOT serve children with allergies and are monitored when supporting children at meal and snack times.
- We ensure that children are supervised at mealtimes and that children are always within sight and hearing of a member of staff.
- We provide water and milk throughout the child's sessions. For children who drink milk, we provide whole pasteurised milk. Although we slowly introduce semi-skimmed milk from the age of 2 years – firstly into meals and dishes such as cereals or in a white sauce before offering it to drink.
- For each child in the Baby Studio, we provide parents/carers with daily diary feeding routines, intake and preferences. (Day Nursery only)
- We notify Ofsted of any food poisoning affecting 2 or more children in our care as soon as possible and at least within 14 days.
- Risk assessments are conducted for each individual child who has a food allergy or specific dietary requirements.
- If a child chokes at mealtime and intervention is given, we record details of the incident and ensure that parents/carers are informed.

### ***For the Pre-School in Isleworth***

We cannot provide cooked meals, nor can we provide a re-heating system, and children are required to bring packed lunches we: -

- Ensure perishable contents of packed lunches are refrigerated or contain ice packs to keep food cool.
- Inform parents/carers of our policy on healthy eating.
- Encourage parents/carers to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk-based deserts such as low sugar yoghurt or crème fraiche where we can only provide cold food from home. We discourage sweet/fizzy drinks and can provide children with water or milk.
- Encourage parents/carers to consider the risk of choking in the foods provided in lunch boxes. We check lunchboxes and ensure risky foods are cut up or removed to minimise this risk.
- Discourage packed lunch contents that consist largely of crisps, processed foods, sweet drinks and sweet products such as cakes or biscuits. We reserve the right to return this food to the parent as a last resort and charge for a healthy meal to be provided.
- Plates, cups and cutlery are available to all children who have a packed lunch.
- Ensure staff sits with the children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.
- In accordance with parents/carers wishes, we offer children arriving early in the morning, and/or staying late, an appropriate meal or snack.
- We inform parents/carers who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in our setting.
- We give parents/carers who provide food for their children information about suitable containers for food.
- To protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.

The only meal we will provide at Pre-School is snack. A balanced choice of snack will be made available both in the morning and afternoon with a choice of milk or water.

### **Allergies and food intolerance**

Before a child start at Harvard Park, parents/carers are asked if their child has any known allergies or food intolerances. This information is recorded on the registration form and an all about me sheet. On going discussions must take place with parents/carers and where appropriate health professionals to develop allergy action plans for managing any know allergies and food intolerances. This information must be kept up to date on a child's registration form and shared with all staff.

- All staff at Harvard Park must be aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis and the difference between allergies and food intolerances.
- If a child has an allergy or food intolerance, a generic risk assessment form is completed with the following information:

- The risk identified – the allergen (i.e. the substance, material or living creature the child is allergic to such as nuts, eggs, bee stings, cats etc.)
- The level of risk, taking into consideration the likelihood of the child encountering the allergen.
- Control measures such as prevention from contact with the allergen
- Review measures.

A Health care plan form and risk assessment must be completed with:

- the nature of the reaction e.g. anaphylactic shock reaction, including rash, reddening of the skin, swelling, breathing problems etc.
- Managing the allergic reactions, medication used and method (e.g. EpiPen)
- o The child's name is added to the dietary requirements list, and an allergen card is made for the cook/chef's dietary needs board, the secondary office and for the child's current room.
- o A copy of the risk assessment and health care plan is kept in the child's personal file and is shared with all staff and is also kept on the cooks notice board.
- o Parents/carers show staff how to administer medication in the event of an allergic reaction.
- o No nuts or nut products are used in the setting. Nor are they accepted in pre-packed food.
- o Parents/carers are made aware so that no nuts or nut products are brought into the setting.
- o Any food containing food allergens are identified on children's menu.

### **Oral Medication**

- Oral medication must be prescribed or have manufactures instructions written on them.
- Staff must be provided with clear written instructions for administering such medication.
- All risk assessment procedures are adhered to for the correct storage and administration of the medication.
- The setting must have parents/carers prior written consent. Consent is kept on file.

### **Menu planning and nutrition**

Food provides a healthy, balanced diet for growth and development. Foods containing any of the 14 allergens identified by the FSA are identified on our menus. Dietary guidance to promote health and reduced risk of disease is followed. When planning menus, the setting manager and cook/chef ensure that:

- Parents/carers and staff can contribute ideas for menus which are confirmed each week in advance. A 3-to-6-week cycle, reviewed seasonally, is a good way of working out menus.
- Menus reflect cultural backgrounds, religious restrictions, and food preferences of some ethnic groups.
- Menus are clearly displayed so that parents/carers and staff know what is provided. This is also sent out to parents/carers when they start Harvard Park and communicated daily during handovers.

- Foods that contain any of the 14 major allergens are identified on the menu that is displayed for parents/carers.
- Parents/carers must share information about their children's dietary needs with staff when they enrol their children and on an on-going basis with their key-person.
- Key persons regularly share information about the children's levels or appetite and enjoyment of food with parents/carers

Staff refer to <https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/food-safety> which includes:

- Example menus for early years settings and recipes: (pages 22 -25)  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6839b752210698b3364e86fc/Early\\_years\\_foundation\\_stage\\_nutrition\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6839b752210698b3364e86fc/Early_years_foundation_stage_nutrition_guidance.pdf)
- Eat better, Start better – Foundation years: <https://www.foodforlife.org.uk/media/3brhywix/eat-better-start-better.pdf>

### **Pre-Prepared cooked chilled meals and hot meals from suppliers – day nursery only**

In the event of an emergency, such as loss of power to the kitchen, absence of chef/cook or appliances breaking, a food supplier maybe sought after. If this happens, the suppliers instructions for safe storage, heating and serving must be followed.

- Ingredients are checked to identify allergens (this will be clearly indicated on packaging).
- A temperature probe is used to check that cooked chilled foods are heated correctly.
- Foods delivered hot are checked as above.
- Foods are served within the time stipulated by the supplier.
- Left-overs are not kept and reheated for another day.
- The guidance in Safer Food Better Business (Food Standards Agency, 2020) is always followed.

### **Packed Lunches**

Where children have packed lunches, staff promote health eating ensuring that parents/carers are given advice and information about what is appropriate content for a child's lunch box.

Parents/carers are also advised to take measures to ensure children's lunch box contents remain cool i.e. ice-packs, as the setting down not have refrigerated storage.

### **How we reduce the risk of choking**

#### **Food preparation**

- o We remove any stones and pips from fruit before serving
- o We cut small round foods, like grapes, strawberries and cherry tomatoes, lengthways and into quarters

- We cut large fruits like melon, and hard fruit or vegetables like raw apple and carrot into slices instead of small chunks
- We do not offer raisins as a snack to children under 12 months – although these can be chopped up as part of a meal
- We soften hard fruit and vegetables (such as carrot and apple) and remove the skins when first given to babies from around 6 months
- Sausages are avoided due to their high salt content, but if offered to children these should be cut into thin strips rather than chunks and remove the skins
- We remove bones from meat or fish
- We do not give whole seeds to children under 5 years old
- We cut cheese into strips rather than chunks
- We do not give popcorn as a snack
- We do not give children marshmallows or jelly cubes from a packet either to eat or as part of messy play activities
- We do not give children hard sweets and discourage parents/carers to do the same.

**Supervision:** Children are seated safely in a highchair or appropriately sized low chair while eating with an adult seated within close proximity to the children. Children are never left alone while they are eating, and staff are familiar with paediatric first aid advice for children who are choking.

### **Legal references**

Regulation (EC) 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the hygiene of foodstuffs.

Food Information Regulations 2014

The Childcare Act 2006

Further guidance

Safer Food Better Business for Caterers (Food Standards Agency)

<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/safer-food-better-business-for-caterers>

[Food safety - Help for early years providers - GOV.UK \(education.gov.uk\)](#)

[Food safety advice for children age 5 and under](#)

[Food and drinks to avoid](#)

[Safe weaning](#)

[How to prepare infant formula bottles](#)

[Allergies](#)

[Hygiene](#)

[Early Years choking hazards poster \(foundationyears.org.uk\)](#)

[Early Years choking hazards table \(foundationyears.org.uk\)](#)

[Child Accident Prevention Trust - choking avoidance poster](#)

[Choking hazards in the home and how to avoid them \(rospa.com\)](#)

[Paediatric Allergy Action Plans - BSACI](#)

[Food allergy - NHS](#)

[Anaphylaxis - NHS](#)

[Weaning - Best Start in Life - NHS](#)

[Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance \(2025\)](#)

This Policies and Procedures pack was adjusted by Harvard Park.

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Signed on behalf of the Directors and Proprietors

**Nicki Saunders and Tracey Milstead**