



Harvard Park Policies and Procedures:
**Food hygiene, preparation, storage and
purchase**

53. Food hygiene, preparation, storage and purchase

Policy Statement

In our setting we provide and/or serve food for children on the following basis:

- Snacks – (both at Pre-School and Day Nursery)
- Meals – Breakfast, Lunch and Tea (Day Nursery only)

We maintain the highest possible food hygiene standards regarding the purchase, storage, preparation and serving of food. We are registered as a food provider with the local authority - Environmental Health Department.

General

- Those responsible for handling food have up to date certificated training on food safety.
- Cooks/Chefs refer to Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance (2025) which contains guidelines on menu planning, food safety, managing food allergies and reading food labels.
- The setting manager is responsible for ensuring that the requirements in Safer Food Better business are implemented
- Cooks/Chefs and all staff responsible for preparing food have undertaken the Food Allergy Online Training CPD Module available at: [Home | FSA Food Allergy Training](#)
- The setting manager is responsible for overseeing the work of the cook and all food handlers to ensure hygiene and allergy procedures are complied with.
- The cook/chef and setting manager has responsibility for conducting risk assessment based on the 'Hazard analysis and Critical control Point' method set out in the Safer Food Better Business
- Cooks/Chefs carry out and record daily opening and closing checks, 4 weekly reviews and dated records of deep cleaning.
- The setting manager is responsible for informing the owners/trustees/directors who then reports to Ofsted of any food poisoning affecting 2 or more children looked after on the premises. Notification must be made as soon as possible and withing 14 days of the incident.

Purchasing and Storing food

- Food is purchased from reputable suppliers,
- Pre-Packed food (any food or ingredient that is made by one business and sold by another such as a retailer or caterer) is checked for allergen ingredients and this information is communicated to parents/carers alongside menu information. For example, a tin of baked beans or a pie brought at a supermarket or the ingredients for a recipe prepared onsite.

- If food is not pre-packed (described as loose food), such as sandwiches brought from a bakery is served, then allergen information will have been provided by the retailer, this information must then be shared in the same way with parents/carers.
- Parents/carers are requested not to bring food that contains (or may contain) nuts. Staff check packets to make sure they do not contain nuts or nut products.
- Bulk buy is avoided where food may go out of date before use.
- All opened dried food stuffs are stored in airtight containers.
- Dried packaged food is not decanted from packaging into large bins or containers as this prevents monitoring of sell by/use by dates and allergen information.
- Food is regularly checked for sell by/use dates and any expired items are discarded.
- Bottles and jars are cleaned before returning to the cupboards.
- 'Squeezy' plastic bottles are not used for sauces.
- Items are not stored on the floor. Floors are kept clear so they can be easily swept.
- Perishable foods such as dairy produce, meat and fish are to be used the next/same day. Soft fruits and easily perishable vegetables are kept in the fridge at 1-5 degrees Celsius.
- Packaged or frozen food should be used by the use by dates.
- Food left over should not be frozen unless it has been prepared for freezing, such as home-made bread or stews. Hot food should be left to cool for up to 1.5 hours and then quickly frozen.
- Freezer containers should be labelled, dated and used within 1 -3 months.
- Fridge and freezer thermometers should be in place. Recommended temperatures for fridges are 37 degrees Fahrenheit (3 degrees Celsius), and freezers 0 degrees Fahrenheit (-18 degrees Celsius). Temperatures must be recorded daily to ensure current temperatures are being maintained.
- Freezers are defrosted every 3 months or according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Meat/fish is stored on lower shelves and drip-free dishes.
- Fruit and vegetables stored in the fridge are washed thoroughly before refrigeration to reduce risk of pests and E.coli contamination.
- Staff's own food or drink should be kept in separate designated area of the fridge; where possible, a fridge should be kept in the staff room to avoid mix ups.
- Items in fridges must be checked regularly to ensure they are not past use by dates.

Meeting Dietary requirements

Snacks and mealtimes are an important part of the day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. We aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs and preferences.

- Staff discuss and record children's dietary needs, allergies and any ethnic or cultural food preferences with their parents/carers. A child's special dietary requirements are recorded on registration to the setting and information is shared with all staff.

- If a child has a known food allergy, our procedure for allergies and food intolerances is followed.
- Staff record information about each child's dietary needs in the individual child's registration form and paperwork; parents/carers signed the form to signify that is correct. Similarly, parents/carers are the individuals who fill out the paperwork.
- Up to date information about individual children's dietary needs is displayed so that all staff and volunteers are fully informed.
- Staff ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consentient with their dietary needs and cultural or ethnic preferences, as well as parents/carers wishes (known as parental request). At each mealtime, a member of staff is responsible for checking that the food provided meets the dietary requirements for each child.
- The menu of meals and snacks are displayed or electronically shared with parents/carers so they can view them. Foods that contain any food allergens are identified.
- Staff aim to include food diets from children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.
- Through on-going discussion with parents/carers and research by staff, staff obtain information about the dietary rules of religious groups to which children, and their parents/carers belong, and of vegetarians and vegans, as well as food allergies. Staff take account of this information when providing food and drink.
- Staff provide a vegetarian alternative when meat and/or fish are offered and make every effort to ensure Halal meat or Kosher food is available to the children that require it.
- Where it is not possible to source and provide Halal meat or Kosher food, a vegetarian option is available; this will be discussed and agreed with parents/carers at the time of the child's registration to the setting.
- All staff show sensitivity in providing for children's diets, allergies and cultural or ethnic food preferences. A child's diet or allergy is never used as a label for the child, they are not made to feel 'singled out' because of their diet, allergy or cultural/ethnic food preferences.
- Fresh drinking water is available through the day. Staff inform children how to obtain the drinking water and that they can ask for water at any time of the day.
- Meal and snack times are organised as social occasions.

Fussy/faddy eating

- Children who are showing signs of 'strong food preferences, or aversions to food' are not forced to eat anything they do not want to.
- Staff recognise the signs that a child has had enough and remove uneaten food without comment.
- Children are not made to stay at the table after others have left if they refuse to eat certain items of food.

- Staff work in partnership with parents/carers to support them with children who are showing signs of 'strong food preferences or aversions' and sign post them to further advice, for example, How to Manage Simple Faddy eating in Toddlers (Infant & Toddler forum): <https://infantandtoddlerforum.org/health-and-childcare=professionals/factsheets/>

Preparation of Food

- Food handlers must check the contents of food/packets to ensure they do not contain allergens.
- Food allergens must be identified on the menus and displayed for parents/carers.
- Food handlers wash hands and cover any cuts or abrasions before handling food.
- Separate food boards and knives are used for chopping food, usually colour coded.
- Raw and cooked foods are prepared separately.
- Meat and fish should be washed and patted dry with paper towels. This does not include chicken which must not be washed because of the risk of campylobacter.
- All fruit and vegetables are washed before preparing.
- Food left out is covered, for example when cooling down.
- Frozen meat, fish and prepared foods are thawed properly before cooking.
- Meat and fish are cooked thoroughly; a food probe is used to check the temperature of roasted meat and baked meat products.
- Where a microwave is used, food is cooked accordingly to manufacturer's instructions.
- Microwaved food is left to stand for a few minutes before serving.
- A food probe is used to check temperature of food, including where heated in a microwave; it is checked in several places to avoid hot spots.
- Food is cooked in time for serving and is not prepared in advance of serving times.
- Hot cupboards or ovens are not used to keep food warm.
- Potatoes and vegetables are peeled when needed, not in advance and left in water.
- Food prepared and cooked for different religious dietary needs and preferences, such as Halal or Kosher meat is cooked in separate pans and served separately.
- A separate toaster is kept and used for child with a wheat or gluten allergy.
- Food prepared for children with dietary needs and preferences is clearly labelled and every effort is made to prevent cross-contamination.
- Raw eggs are not to be given in any form, such as mousse.
- When given to children, eggs are fully cooked.

Serving food

- There is a named person who is responsible for ensuring that the food being provided meets all the requirements for each child.
- Food is served for children in separate vessels for each table.

- Staff risk assesses the likelihood of children with dietary restrictions accessing the food of other children and must take appropriate action to prevent this from happening, for example:
 - Check the list of children's dietary requirements displayed in the food preparation area
 - Coloured plates
 - Place mats
 - Other methods agreed by the setting manager.
- Children with allergies/food preferences are not made to feel 'singled out' by the methods used to manage their food allergy/food preferences.
- Food served to the children with identified allergies is checked by the key person to ensure that the meal (and its ingredients) does not contain any of the allergens for that child. This is then signed off by the keyworker after a discussion with the cook/chef.
- The child's key person remains present throughout the child's mealtime.
- Food is taken from the kitchen to the rooms on a trolley, not carried across rooms.
- Tables are cleaned before and after, with soapy water or a suitable non-bleach product.
- Members of staff serving food wash their hands and cover any cuts with a blue plaster.

E.coli Prevention

Staff who are preparing and handling food, especially food that is not pre-prepared for consumption e.g. fruit and vegetables grown on the premises, must be aware of the potential spread of E.coli and must clean and store food in accordance with E.coli 0157 guidance, available at:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/e-coli-cross-contamination-guidance#.U7FCVGIOWdl>

Milk kitchen or milk preparation area

- Members of staff wash their hands on entering the preparation area.
- All surfaces are cleaned daily using sterilising solution, including contact points, such as cupboard doors and handles.
- Inside cupboards are cleaned weekly with sterilising solution.
- Fridge's are cleaned daily and weekly using the same method as for cupboards.
- Plastics spoons used for measuring and mixing feed are washed and sterilised.
- Feeding spoons and bowls for babies less than one year old are washed using detergent and hot water, and are steamed after use.
- Plastic pots are provided for cooling 'cold gel' teething soothers in freezer or fridge compartments.
- Medication stored in the milk kitchen fridge is named and kept on a separate shelf.
- Each bottle-fed baby has enough bottles to last them for their session; these are kept in their bags along with spare teats and personal dummies.
- Baby milk formula is kept in named containers for each baby.
- Milk or weaning feeds provided by parents/carers are labelled and refrigerated immediately.

- Baby feeds are prepared by the key-person, or allocated back up key-persons, who have been briefed about the baby's dietary needs and are responsible for checking that the food being provided meets all the requirements for each baby. Any other staff preparing feed must do so under supervision.

Milk and Baby food preparation and storage

Purchasing and storing food

- Where parents/carers provide infant formula to be made up at the setting, this is checked to make sure it is in date and that the seal is not broken, then labelled with the child's, date it was taken in and date it was opened.
- Parents/carers must not send in bottles containing pre-boiled or cooled water ready for formula to be added. They should instead send in empty, sterilised bottles in accordance with current NHS guidance on the preparation of formula milk.
- If parents/carers are providing formula milk already made up at home, or breast milk, it should already be made up into sterilised bottles and clear labelled with the child's name.
- Parents/carers are advised to follow the manufacturers guidance and to transport the prepared feeds, or breast milk, in a cool bag. On arrival, feeds are taken out of the cool bag and put straight into the fridge.
- Made up feeds or breast milk is always used on the same day – never left for the next.
- In line with current Food Standard Agency guidance, parents/carers are advised not to give toddlers and young children (ages 1 – 4.5 years) rice drinks as a substitute for breast milk, infant formula or cow's milk. Parents/carers should speak to their child's health visitor for further guidance if their child has a milk intolerance and needs an alternative.
- A store of infant formula is usually kept onsite for those children who attend full time. This is regularly checked to make sure it is still in date. Parents/carers are consulted before it is made up prior to starting at Harvard Park.
- If parents/carers provide weaning cereals, these need to be checked to make sure they are in date and should be in unopened packets. These are labelled with the child's name.
- Parents/carers are informed that they should not bring in food that contains nuts. Staff check packets to make sure they do not contain nuts or nut products.
- Packaged baby cereal is kept in plastic airtight containers to prevent contamination and to ensure freshness.

Preparation

- Members of staff wash hands before or on entering the milk preparation area.
- Preparation of feeds and weaning food is restricted to key-person or co-workers, other staff/students preparing food are supervised by a permanent member of staff or key person who is clear about the requirements for each child.

- All weaning foods provided by the setting i.e. bread, cakes, biscuits, cheese and any foods in the 14 allergens list are identified and listed on the child's menus
- Scoops of milk are levelled off with a knife to make sure they are the correct amount.
- All water is boiled first before making milk feeds, mixing food or preparing a drink for all babies under 1 year and should be allowed to cool for no more than 30 minutes. Water that has already been boiled once, should not be boiled again.
- Water given to babies over 6 months as a drink does not need to be boiled first, for babies under 6 months the above guidance applies.
- Bottles are cooled under cold running water and the temperature check on the inside of an adult's wrist to ensure that it is body temperature, which means it should feel warm or cool but not hot.
- Only sterilised bottles, spoons, plates are to be used for babies under 1 year and these are to be kept in the milk preparation area.
- Raw fruit or vegetables given to babies are washed, peeled, cut or blended.
- Finger foods, such as rusks, are served in a dish.
- Babies are slowly introduced to food in the setting and there is ongoing discussion between parents/carers and staff about the stage their child is at regarding the introduction of solid food, including the textures the child is familiar with. Weaning is done at the child's pace in partnership with parents/carers and assumptions are not made based on a child's chronological age.

Further guidance on making up bottles in advance for use at the setting can be found at:

<https://www.nhs.uk/baby/breastfeeding-and-bottle-feeding/bottle-feeding/formula-milk-questions/>

Guidance for the storage of breast milk is available from: <https://www.nhs.uk/best-start-in-life/baby/feeding-your-baby/breastfeeding/expressing-your-breast-milk/storing-breast-milk/>

Procedures

- The cook/chef is in charge, and the cook/chef is responsible for food preparation and understands the principles of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) as it applies to their business - For Day Nursery Only. At the preschool, the same applies for any staff that are responsible for any form of food preparation. This is set out in Safer Food Better Business. The basis for this is risk assessment as it applies to the purchase, storage, preparation and serving of food to prevent growth of bacteria and food contamination
- All staff follow the guidelines of Safer Food Better Business.
- All our staff who are involved in the preparation and handling of food have received training in food hygiene.

- The cook/chef or persons responsible for food preparation and serving carries out daily opening and closing checks on the kitchen to ensure standards are met consistently. (See Safer Food Better Business.)
- We use reliable suppliers for the food we purchase.

- Food is stored at correct temperatures and is checked to ensure it is in-date and not subject to contamination by pests, rodents or mould.
- Packed lunches are stored in a cool place and when necessary, an ice pack is present to keep food cool; un-refrigerated food is served to children within 4 hours of preparation at home.
- Food preparation areas are cleaned before use as well as after use.
- There are separate facilities for hand-washing and for washing up.
- All surfaces are clean and non-porous.
- All utensils, crockery etc. are clean and stored appropriately.
- Waste food is disposed of daily.
- Cleaning materials and other dangerous materials are stored out of children's reach.
- Children do not have unsupervised access to the kitchen.
- When children take part in cooking activities, they:
 - are always supervised.
 - understand the importance of hand washing and simple hygiene rules
 - are kept away from hot surfaces and hot water; and
 - do not have unsupervised access to electrical equipment such as blenders etc.

- When bottles of formula or food are brought in by parents/carers all manufactures instructions will be strictly followed, when preparing any such food for children.
- A list of all children's food allergies will be prominently displayed on kitchen notice board and within the relevant room (**Day Nursery**) kitchen cupboard (**Pre School**) with a photo.
- Hair net's and necessary hygiene practise (I.e. gloves when wearing plasters) must be complied with daily by all who enter the kitchen.
- Water is to be changed and replenished at the end of each session. Children's bottles should be taken home and sterilised at home.

Reporting of food poisoning

Food poisoning can occur for several reasons; not all cases of sickness or diarrhoea are because of food poisoning, and not all cases of sickness or diarrhoea are reportable.

- Where children and/or adults have been diagnosed by a GP or hospital doctor to be suffering from food poisoning and where it seems possible that the source of the outbreak is within the setting, the manager will contact the Environmental Health Department to report the outbreak and will comply with any investigation.

- We notify Ofsted as soon as reasonably practicable of any confirmed cases of food poisoning affecting 2 or more children looked after on the premises, and always within 14 days of the incident.
- We have awarded been awarded 5 stars on the door for over 15 years *****

Further Guidance

Safer Food Better Business : <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/safer-food-better-business-sfbb>

Campylobacter (Food Standards Agency): <https://www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/campylobacter>

Food allergy/anaphylaxis guidance

<https://www.bsaci.org/resources/resources/paediatric-action-plans/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/anaphylaxis/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/food-allergy/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/baby/weaning-and-feeding/food-allergies-in-babies-and-young-children/>

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6839b752210698b3364e86fc/Early_years_foundation_stage_nutrition_guidance.pdf

<https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/top-allergy-types.pdf>

<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/allergen-checklist-for-food-businesses>

This Policies and Procedures pack was adjusted by Harvard Park.

Date meeting was held on 30/04/2026

Signed on behalf of the Directors and Proprietors

Nicki Saunders and Tracey Milstead