



Hart Hill Nursery School

Food and Nutrition Policy

Updated Autumn Term 2024

Ratified by SLT on 18-12-2024

Signed *M. Dall*

To be updated Autumn Term 2027



Rationale

At Hart Hill Nursery School, we understand that what children eat and drink is important, and the habits they develop from a young age will impact their future health. We value the importance of providing children with a nutritious, balanced diet that will encourage them to make healthy, informed choices. We share responsibility with parents to give guidance on the health issues and the risks of persistent unhealthy eating practices.

We believe that food can be used in a variety of educational ways. Pupils are encouraged to learn about holidays, religious festivals, special events and the various foods associated with these events, and are keen to encourage children to experiment with unfamiliar foods to help widen their food choices and understanding of a balanced diet.

We strive to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community. We know that we cannot guarantee to be a completely nut free environment, however, this policy is to be adhered to by all staff members, parents and pupils, with the intention of minimising the risk of anaphylaxis occurring whilst at school due to nut allergies as we aim to be a nut free school.

Aims

Hart Hill Nursery School aims to

- Work with children and their families to understand a balanced diet and correct portion sizing is the healthiest way to ensure that all children receive the correct nutrition
- Ensure that all equipment used is fit for purpose and age/stage appropriate for the children, linked to our Health and Safety Policies and Procedures
- Make eating an enjoyable, social experience for all children, to help mitigate any eating fears or memories and promote healthy, positive eating habits
- Work hard to be a nut free school, so that all children can explore without fear of an allergic reaction
- Encourage children to learn about foods from the religions and cultures across the school and local community
- Use every opportunity to teach educational and independent skills linked to eating
- Ensure the necessary control measures are in place to identify allergens and potential risks, in partnership with parents
- Minimise the potential risk to nuts and plan for effective response to possible emergencies
- Develop good habits around food, nutrition and dental hygiene for children, during the sessions and alongside parents

Roles and Responsibilities

The governing body is responsible for ensuring the overall implementation of this policy. They are responsible for ensuring that the school follows its commitment to minimising risk to allergic reactions and that the school actively source regular allergy and anaphylaxis training, at least every two years. They will ensure that this policy does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture or religion. They will handle complaints regarding this policy, as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedure.

The Headteacher is responsible for the day to day implementation and management of the policy and will work with class teams to ensure that pupil's needs are being met. They will ensure that the equipment is suitable for its use and provide separate facilities for hand-washing and for washing up in the kitchen/ food preparation areas.

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that all staff members are trained in basic food safety and hygiene, in accordance with the school's Health and Safety Policy. They will make the school environment as nut-free as physically possible. They are also responsible for ensuring parents are given adequate notice of any changes to aspects of food provision and that parents know it is their responsibility to inform the school of any allergies, care plans and updates for their child.

The medical lead is responsible for ensuring that all children who have an allergy, have an Individual Health Plan, made in partnership with parents, to highlight triggers and relevant first aid or medical attention that may be required. This will be stored on the CPOMS system and alerted to the key classroom staff. The medical lead must ensure that all first aiders are trained in adrenaline auto-injectors and the management of anaphylaxis, at least every two years.

The admin staff are responsible for ensuring that all information from children's registration forms are transferred to the SIMS system accurately. Where a parent highlights an allergy, the admin team is responsible for highlighting this with the SENDCO, the medical lead and the class teacher/room leader.

All first aiders are responsible for responding to incidents of anaphylaxis in accordance with first aid policy and ensuring that their training remains current. They will liaise with paramedics, should they be called to respond to an incident of anaphylaxis.

All staff working with the children are responsible for sitting with the children while they eat and being advocates of healthy eating. They will discourage children from sharing or swapping food in order to protect children with food allergies. All staff will treat children equally, taking account of the eating practices in their cultures. As the school is nut-free, staff are responsible for being good role models, by not bringing nuts into the school building, including products that contain nuts.

Midday supervisors and Kitchen Assistants are responsible for knowing the allergies of all the children in their class, and any foods that are served that may contain something that could result in an allergic reaction. The Kitchen Assistant must also ensure fridges, freezers and cupboards are cleaned regularly, as well as ensure that the fridge and freezer are at the correct working temperature before food is stored.

Midday Supervisors will always sit with the children at lunchtime, to make the time a family/social event, as if the child was at home, ensuring that they are using every opportunity to teach both independent skills and personal and social development, in line with the school's expectations in the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

Parents and families are responsible for providing the setting with information on their child's dietary requirements. They must inform the school of any allergies and provide a relevant care plan, so that the school can work in partnership to keep their child as safe as possible. They are responsible for working with the school to ensure that all medical forms are signed and all medication is up to date. The school cannot be held responsible for failure to respond to an allergic reaction that parents have not made staff aware of in the correct way, or through official communication methods. They will support the school in discussing specialist food for their child, where they may have an allergy, intolerance or medical need and may be asked to provide alternatives, so that the child does not miss out of vital educational opportunities.

Food and Drink Served

As a nut free school, all food products containing nuts are prohibited. The school expects parents to check food products when preparing packed lunches. The school will ensure that food purchased or prepared on site will not contain nuts.

Drinking water will be accessible throughout the day and children will be encouraged to drink regularly. Milk will be served with either the morning or afternoon snack, depending on the session times for each group of children (full time children will be offered milk once a day). Soya drinks are only given as a substitute for cow's milk, when provided by a parent, with an accompanying doctor's letter describing a significant intolerance or allergy.

Where parents provide a packed lunch for their child, the Midday Supervisors will monitor that the contents is a healthy balance across the working week, reporting any concerns to the family workers or class teacher, so that families can be supported to improve the provision. Any food that is not consumed during the day will be sent home with the child, so the parent is clear with how much their child has eaten in school.

The Eating Environment

The eating environment will be comfortable and relaxed. Children will be given plenty of time to feed themselves and hold feeding utensils/cutlery; they will be given cutlery that is suitable for their age and stage of development, where parents do not provide this in a child's packed lunch box.

Staff will sit with the children while they eat and encourage interaction at each table. They will ensure that children are drinking and eating enough, and will discuss any concerns straight back to the class teacher, so that parents can be communicated with effectively; they will also add any concerns regarding eating on the school's Cpoms system for monitoring by the family workers. Staff will encourage and model good eating habits, skills and table manners. Meal times will be used to help children develop independence, through making food choices, serving food and drink, and feeding themselves.

Celebrations and Special Occasions

Although the school follows the understand of a healthy lifestyle, the school strongly believes that children need to learn the benefit of everything in moderation, and to promote the longer term gain from making informed sensible choices about food. To help promote this, the school will supply 'party food' for special events, such as class parties, to ensure it includes a variety of food, including a good amount of healthy food, with a small portion of sweeter food.

The school understands that parents may want to share foods to celebrate birthdays and other special occasions. To support this, any food that parents provide will be sent home with children, and not consumed on the school premises. This will ensure parents are aware of what their child is eating, but also so the parent can make the decision about the best time to have the treat.

The school asks that any parents who wish to share a treat with the other in a class, follow this policy, in terms of a healthy balanced diet and portion sizes for the young children who attend the school.

Allergies and Special Requirements

It is the parent's responsibility to make the school aware of any allergies their child has and the actions that need to be taken if a reaction occurs. Failure to do this, could result in their child being at risk and the school unable to fully safeguard them from harm.

The school will ensure that children with allergies are not exposed to foods that trigger allergies, and that the whole school community is aware of the allergy, in a discreet and unbiased way.

Any staff who have allergies, will inform the School Business Manager to ensure a care plan and relevant information is held on file. Staff will be informed on a need to know basis, to ensure confidentiality and the staff member's dignity.

Eating Habits

At meal times, children who struggle with eating will be seated with pupils that are more adventurous with their food to encourage the adoption of different food preferences. Children will never be forced to finish everything on their plate; where a child is anxious about food small servings will be given, with the opportunity to have second helpings if the first serving is finished.

Children will be regularly exposed to new foods in order to increase their liking for, and consumption of, a variety of new foods. Children are encouraged to hold, then sniff, then lick the food before trying and no child is ever forced to eat anything they do not want too.

In addition to this, favourite foods will not be used as a reward to encourage children to eat foods they do not like, as this could increase the fear of food or increase the anxiety with eating habits.

Where children have severe and complex needs and parents are concerned about their intake of food in school, the school will support trying to encourage children to eat a sensory breakfast, as part of the morning and afternoon session, as well as the child's packed lunch (where they attend all day).

Food Safety and Hygiene

Food will be stored, prepared and presented in a safe and hygienic environment. Children will be taught basic hygiene, such as not eating food that has fallen on the floor and washing their hands before eating and after using the toilet.

All staff involved in preparing food for children, or helping them eat, will be required to receive food hygiene before being responsible for preparing or handling food, in line with the requirements of Food Safety Act 1990.

Communication with Parents

Parents can access this policy via the school website. Parents will be provided with information on the tasting sessions, cooking sessions and snacks that their children are given, where requested.

Class teams will ensure that parents have given regular feedback on how well their child is eating, through updates from the Midday Supervisory Team.

Where a child has a particular food allergy or a significant anxiety over food, staff will work in partnership with parents to develop a safe and secure plan, ensuring consistency with the methods used at home, where appropriate.

Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored for effectiveness by the Headteacher and is reviewed as part of the three yearly policy review cycle. Any changes to this policy, will be communicated by the Headteacher to all staff members. Parents will receive information via Parentmail of any changes to this policy.