Food Handling, Hygiene and Nutrition Policy

1. Introduction

Home from Home regards snack and meal times as an important part of the setting's session/day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. We encourage lots of interaction and conversation between both children and adults. At meal times we aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs and preferences, accounting for allergies too.

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

- Breakfast (Provide and serve)
- Snacks (Provide and serve)
- Hot lunches (Provided by little Tums and serve)
- Tea (Provide and serve

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

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Bottle/breast feeding & sterilising policy
- Lunchbox guidelines
- Managing sickness
- Cleaning policy

This policy is written using the Early years nutrition guidance and Safer food better business.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure safe practise among food handlers and mealtime supervisors in accordance with Home from Home policies.

2. Contents

The following sections are included in this policy document:

1. Introduction
2. Contents
3. Legal framework for handling of food

4. Roles and responsibilities
5. Aims
6. Healthy eating
7. Allergies and intolerances
8. Food hygiene
9. Reporting of food poisoning
10. Purchasing and storing food
11. Food preparation
12. Serving food
13. Food for play and cooking activities
14. Meal time supervision
15. Review
16. Version control

3. Legal framework for handling of food

- Food safety Act 1990
- Food Safety and Hygiene Regulations 2013
- The Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2006
- The General Food Regulations 2004

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Health and Safety Officers – Nicola Law & Sophie Eade

5. Aims

- To recognise that we have responsibility and duty of care for those who work in and receive a service from our provision, 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.
- To implement and follow food hygiene procedures in the kitchen and food preparation areas.
- To provide nutritionally sound snacks and meals, which promote health and reduce the risk of obesity and heart disease that may begin in childhood.
- To ensure that children are supervised at mealtimes and that children are within sight and hearing of a member of staff.
- To have a staff undertake allergen training, and follow the main advice on dietary guidelines to promote health and the legal requirements for identifying food allergens when planning snack and tea menus.

6. Healthy Eating

- At Home from Home Nursery, we believe that nutritious food and drink are essential for children's wellbeing.
- During meal and snack times, we will always encourage children to gain an understanding of how food and water is an essential part of growing big and strong. Our aim is to meet the dietary and cultural requirements to promote children's

healthy growth and development. All Children will always have access to fresh drinking water during their day and during mealtimes.

- We will ensure that all meals and snacks are nutritious, healthy, and balanced.
- Multicultural diet is always offered, to make sure those children from all backgrounds encounter familiar tastes and that all children have the opportunity also to try new food.
- We base our portion sizes we give children using the NHS guidance and regularly review this to ensure the children are eating the right amount for their bodies.
- If parents provide a packed lunch, they must follow Home from Home's lunchbox guidance.

7. Allergies and intolerances

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we find out from parents their children's dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies.
- We record information about each child's dietary needs in her/his all about me form and parents sign this to signify that it is correct.
- We regularly consult with parents to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs - including any allergies - are up to date. Parents sign the up-dated record to signify that it is correct.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all staff and volunteers are fully informed about them.
- We implement systems to ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and preferences as well as their parents' wishes.
- At snack times and through cooking activities we avoid giving the children large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings. We use sugar alternatives such as agave nectar or honey. These are not served to children under the age of 12 months. Agave nectar is suitable for younger children.
- 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. The staff are aware of the procedure regarding children with allergies. We are extremely thorough with the cleaning of food areas; separate utensils are used during food preparation. The staff wear aprons during mealtimes and food preparation. A separate member of staff supports a child with allergies during feeding times to avoid cross contamination.
- In the Baby room; to stop the risk of cross contamination we seat the children with allergies in a separate highchair.
- Staff are aware that they must not consume nuts or any food product containing nuts throughout their working day at nursery. Home from Home is a **NO NUTS** premises.

- We respect and support any religious or cultural beliefs regarding dietary requirements. Employees will familiarise themselves with any unknown customs or beliefs and regularly share experiences and information reflecting diversity to make mealtimes an enjoyable and inclusive time for all.
- We require employees to show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. Employees do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child or make a child feel singled out because of her/his diet or allergy.

8. Food hygiene

- All employees involved in food handling and preparation, have up to date certificated training on food safety and complete a Food allergy awareness course which includes training on handling allergens.
- All employees read the 'Safer food better business' (SFBB) and signs off to say they understand.
- The managers refer to the 'Early Years Foundation Stage - nutrition guidance (2025)' which contains guidance on menu planning, food safety, managing food allergies and reading food labels.
- The manager has responsibility for conducting risk assessments based on the method set out in Safer Food Better Business. The basis of this is risk assessment is applied to purchase, storage, preparation and serving of food to prevent growth of bacteria and food contamination.
- Employees carry out and record daily opening/closing checks, daily cleaning, and records of deep cleaning to ensure standards are consistently met.

9. Reporting of food poisoning

- Food poisoning can occur for a number of reasons; not all cases of sickness or diarrhoea are as a result 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 and the Health Protection Agency, to report the outbreak and will comply with any investigation.
- Parents should refer to the 'Managing Children Who Are Sick, Infectious or With Allergies Policy when managing illness
- Employees should refer to the Staff Sickness and Absence Policy when managing illness.

10. Purchasing and storing food

<u>Snacks/Tea food</u>

- Food is purchased from reputable suppliers.

- We supply nutritious food for all snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- Snack foods, included that stored in the fridge, are stored at the correct temperatures (see below) and checked that they are in-date and not subject to contamination by pests, rodents or mould.
- All opened dried food are stored in airtight containers or airtight bags. Any food that is opened that goes in the fridge is labelled with the date it has been opened and the date it needs to be disposed of.
- Items are not stored on the floor; floors are kept clear so they can be easily swept.
- Easily perishable food and vegetables are kept in the fridge at between 1 to 5 Celsius.
- Frozen food is not used. In the summer ice lollies may be purchased but these will be stored as instructions.
- Fridge thermometers should be in place. Recommended temperatures for fridge is 3 – 5 degrees Celsius, temperatures must be checked and recorded daily to ensure correct temperatures are being maintained.
- The Fridge's must be cleaned weekly

Staff's own food or drink

- This is kept in separate fridge in the staff room or training room.

Packed lunches

- Packed lunches provided by parents/carers are stored in a cool place; un-refrigerated food is served to children within 4 hours of preparation at home.

Hot meals

- We provide hot meals that are prepared by an outside company (Little Tum's)
- The food is prepared offsite and delivered to the setting where we serve it to the children
- A member of staff checks the temperature of the food so it is at suitable temperature for children to consume. This is between 63 C – 75 C.
- We can reheat the food only once. Food that has already been reheated once before cannot be heated again and is served cold. This is to prevent possible food poisoning.
- This is conducted and recorded according to food hygiene standard set temps and recording requirements.

11. Food preparation

For food preparation surfaces and utensils

- All food preparation surfaces are clean and non-porous.
- Food preparation areas are cleaned before and after use.

- To keep kitchen surfaces free from grime, dirt and bacteria, a four-step cleaning procedure should be followed: Pre-clean, Sanitise, Rinse, Air dry.
- To Sanitise we use 'Selgiene Ultra' this is made on site weekly by mixing one part Selgiene to 10 parts water. The selgiene is sprayed on the surface and left for 30 seconds before being rinsed off.
- All utensils, crockery etc. are clean and stored appropriately.
- There are clearly marked separate facilities for hand washing and for washing up.
- Cleaning materials and other dangerous materials are stored out of children's reach.
- Children do not have access to the kitchen unsupervised.

Maintaining personal hygiene whilst handling food

- Food handlers wash hands thoroughly with hot water and soap, prior to food preparation, drying them with paper towels.
- Home from Home has a supply of single use aprons solely for food handling purposes. The person responsible for preparing food uses a new apron and a new pair of gloves (if required to cover any cuts or abrasions) prior to handling any food. Once utilised, these items are disposed of appropriately.
- Good hand hygiene is observed throughout the setting.

Food preparation for specific dietary needs/preferences

- We take care not to provide food containing nut or nut products and are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts.
- Food handlers must check the content of food/packets to ensure they know which allergens are in the food.
- Food allergens must be identified on the menus and displayed for parents on the menu board.
- 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 or mayonnaise. If given to children, eggs are fully cooked.
- Food cooked for vegetarians must ensure it does not come into contact with meat or fish or products.

Food handling and preparation

- Separate boards and knives are used for chopping food.
- All loose vegetables and fruit are washed and prepared freshly each day.
- Food left out is covered, for example when cooling down.
- Waste food is disposed of daily in the food waste bin.
- Food is prepared in lines with guidance to prevent choking e.g., grapes are cut in quarters.

12. Serving food

- Children are taught the importance of hand washing and simple hygiene rules. They wash their hands immediately prior to snack time.
- Children are supervised, in sight and hearing of employees, at all times during food times. Food is served on clean plates or bowls.
- Food served to children with identified allergies is checked to ensure that the food (and its ingredients) does not contain any of the allergens for that child. Employees risk assess to eliminate cross contamination of known allergens
- Children with allergies/food preferences are not made to feel 'singled out' by the methods used to manage their allergy/food preference.
- Tables are cleaned before and after use, with Selgiene. Employee's wash and dry their hands prior to serving any food, cover any cuts with a blue plaster/glove and continue to wear apron (See maintaining personal hygiene above).

13. Food for play and cooking activities

Food for play

- Food for play may include dough, corn flour, jelly, pasta, rice, food colourings/flavourings.
- Employees are constantly alert to the potential hazards of food play, in particular choking hazards and signs of previously undetected allergies.
- Pulses are not recommended as they can be poisonous when raw or may choke.
- We do not allow Jelly cubes to be used unless it has been 'melted' down
- The use of raw vegetables for printing is only used under strict supervision.
- Dried food that is used for play should be kept away from food used for cooking.
- Foods that are cooked and used for play, such as dough, have a limited shelf life.
- Cornflour is always mixed with water before given for play.
- Cornflower and cooked pasta are discarded after an activity; high risk of bacteria forming.
- Utensils used for play food are washed thoroughly after use.
- Food play activities are suspended during outbreaks of illness.

Cooking activities

- Children are supervised at all times during cooking activities.
- Children taking part in cooking activities do not have access to electrical equipment such as blenders etc.
- Before undertaking any cooking activity with children, employees should check for allergies and intolerances by checking children's records.
- Children are taught basic hygiene skills such as the need to wash hands thoroughly before handling food, and again after going to the toilet, blowing their nose or coughing.
- The area to be used for cooking is cleaned thoroughly.
- Utensils provided are for children to use only when cooking, including chopping/rolling boards, bowls, wooden spoons, jugs, and are stored in the kitchen.
- Employees encourage children to handle food in a hygienic manner.
- Food ready for cooking or cooling is not left uncovered if unattended.

- Cooked food to go home is to be wrapped or put in a paper food bag and refrigerated (if necessary) until home time.

14. Meal time supervision

Employees **MUST** sit with the children whenever they eat food so that the mealtime is a social occasion we cater for each individual and adapt to support each child with their feeding skills. One employee should sit with each table. We allow children the opportunity to feed freely and enjoy their meal using the method they feel most comfortable with. Employees praise and encourage all children during mealtimes to help create a healthy independent child. To help model good eating behaviours employees can take sample portions of food provided for children whilst supervising meal times.

Employees will model healthy eating habits at all times in the presence of children. This includes only drinking water whilst caring for children in the rooms and only whole food items such as fruits or vegetables may be bought in to the main rooms by employees to consume, this is to ensure no allergens are unintentionally exposed to the children.

Employees should provide their own food for consumption during their own break times. Employees must NOT bring their own food into the rooms to consume whilst caring for children"

15. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or in line with any statutory or policy changes

16. Version Control

Version	Date	Status	Comments	By
1	May 2025	Draft - finalised	Used current food and drink policy and have made into a more thorough policy including food hygiene	Sophie Eade
2	May 2026	Reviewed		Sophie Eade
3	July 2026	Updated section 14	Clarified in line with query raised around staff eating nursery supplied food	Julia Pattenden
4				
5				