

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Health

Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, they must be healthy, balanced and nutritious. Early Years providers must meet to ensure that children learn, develop well and are kept healthy and safe.

Early Years Food and Nutrition policy

Policy Introduction

This policy has been developed in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements and with regard to the Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance, May 2025. It recognises that good nutrition is fundamental to children's health, development, and learning outcomes.

Our Aims:

Our primary aim is to work with Cupcakes Catering to provide nutritious, balanced hot meals for lunch and the pre-school to provide healthy nutritious snacks, supporting children's optimal growth and development during the Early Years. We are committed to creating positive mealtime experiences, not only supporting children's physical development, but also promoting lifelong healthy eating habits through enjoyable, social dining experiences.

The safety and wellbeing of all children remain paramount during all aspects of food preparation, serving, and consumption, with robust procedures in place to protect every child in our care. We work collaboratively with parents and carers as partners to meet each child's individual dietary needs, recognising that consistency between home and pre-school supports the best outcomes for children. We view food experiences as valuable opportunities for holistic learning and development, incorporating nutrition education naturally into our curriculum.

1. Staff Supervision and Safety Requirements

Staff Positioning During Meals

All staff members are required to see pupils whilst eating, ensuring continuous visual supervision and the ability to respond immediately to any situation that may arise, particularly choking incidents. We have three staff members over lunch meal times and one staff member to supervisor the children during snack times, if snack is being offered in small groups. If the children are sitting all together, two staff members supervisor snack time.

First Aid Requirements

When Early Years children are eating, a member of staff holding either a current Paediatric First Aid qualification or a current Full Paediatric First Aid qualification is present. This essential safety requirement applies to all meal and snack times without exception, ensuring that should any emergency arise, particularly choking incidents which can occur silently and require immediate intervention, appropriately trained staff are immediately available to respond. All Little Greys staff hold Paediatric First Aid Qualification.

2.Pre-Admission Requirements

Essential Information Required:

Before any child joins Little Gregs, we obtain comprehensive information about their dietary requirements, which may stem from cultural, religious, or personal family preferences that are integral to their identity and wellbeing. We gather detailed information on food preferences and familiar foods that enable children to feel comfortable and secure in their new environment. Critical to child safety, we collect thorough documentation, details regarding any food allergies, including medical information and emergency procedures that must be followed in the event of an adverse reaction. Additionally, we record information about food intolerances, documenting associated symptoms and the specific management strategies that have proven effective for each individual child. We also gather information about any special health requirements that may impact nutrition or feeding practices, ensuring we can provide appropriate care that supports each child's individual needs. Within the room and kitchen is displayed individual requirements for children, which staff have access to and updates are shared with all staff.

3.Meal and Snack provision

Nutritional Standards

Little Gregs Pre-school has regard for the Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance, May 2025, and follows these guidelines unless there are documented reasons for alternative approaches.

Meal Scheduling

Meals and snacks are thoughtfully provided at regular intervals throughout the day, with careful attention to children's natural rhythms and nutritional needs. Portion sizes are carefully calibrated to be age-appropriate while allowing children the opportunity to request additional servings, supporting their natural ability to self-regulate their intake. Our mealtimes are deliberately designed to be relaxed, calm occasions, encouraging shared conversation and social interaction, creating positive associations with food and eating that will benefit children throughout their lives.

Food and Quality and Variety

All food served is carefully selected to meet the comprehensive nutritional requirements necessary for growing children during these critical developmental years. Menus are thoughtfully designed by Cupcakes, they prioritise fresh, wholesome ingredients wherever possible, recognising that quality nutrition forms the foundation for optimal physical and cognitive development. Throughout all aspects of food preparation, we adhere strictly to relevant health and safety guidelines, maintaining the highest standards to protect the wellbeing of every child in our care.

4.Responsibility and Monitoring

Designated Responsibility

At each mealtime and snack time, there is a designated member of staff responsible for checking that the food being provided meets all requirements for each child.

Daily Checks Include:

Our comprehensive daily monitoring ensures that each child's special dietary requirements are met with accuracy, consistency, and careful attention to individual needs. Allergenic foods are robustly managed through appropriate separation, labelling, and handling procedures that eliminate cross-contamination risks. Additionally, we check that portion sizes are suitable for each child's age, developmental stage, and appetite patterns, supporting healthy growth while respecting individual differences in nutritional needs.

Record Keeping

We prioritise regular, meaningful communication with parents about their child's eating patterns, sharing both successes and any areas where additional support might be beneficial. Throughout this process, we maintain up-to-date dietary requirement records that are easily accessible to all relevant staff members, ensuring consistent and safe care across all interactions.

5. Allergy and Special Dietary Management

Allergy Management and Intolerances

We take the management of allergies extremely seriously. We maintain records for all children with known allergies, working closely with parents and healthcare professionals to ensure all aspects of the child's condition are understood and managed appropriately. Clear labelling and physical separation of allergenic foods is maintained throughout our food preparation, storage, and serving processes, with dedicated equipment and preparation areas used where necessary to prevent cross-contamination.

All staff receive thorough training on recognising the early signs of allergic reactions and responding appropriately, including when and how to seek emergency medical assistance. Emergency medication prescribed for individual children is kept readily available in designated, easily accessible locations, with multiple staff members trained in its proper administration and emergency protocols clearly posted and regularly reviewed.

If a food intolerance is suspected, we work closely with parents to monitor symptoms and keep a food diary to support further investigation.

Special Diets

We are committed to accommodating medical and dietary needs and, as far as reasonably possible, respecting religious and cultural practices, recognising that food is often central to family identity and wellbeing. Through meeting with parents, we ensure that our understanding of each child's special dietary needs remains current and accurate as children grow and family circumstances evolve. When complex medical dietary requirements are involved, we actively seek consultation with healthcare professionals to ensure our approach is both safe

and nutritionally appropriate. For every child with specific dietary needs, we provide suitable alternative options that are equally nutritious, ensuring no child feels excluded or different during mealtimes.

6. Drinks Provision

Healthy Drinks Options

Water and milk serve as our primary drink offerings, recognising these as the healthiest options for supporting both dental health and overall physical development in young children. Milk is offered at morning and afternoon snack time.

7. Children with Additional Support Needs and Other Special Diets

At Little Gregs, we are committed to meeting the individual dietary needs of all children, including those with additional support needs or special diets. We recognise that some children may require food to be prepared in a specific way due to medical, developmental, or sensory needs, and may need one-to-one support during mealtimes. We also consider sensory sensitivities, such as aversions to certain textures or smells, when planning meals and creating a calm, supportive eating environment.

If a child has a medically prescribed diet, we request written confirmation from a health professional. We work closely with parents, carers, dietitians, and specialist teachers within EYIS to ensure we have clear, up-to-date information about suitable foods, exclusions, any supplements and special measures required. This information is shared with all relevant staff to ensure safe and consistent care.

8. Child Involvement and Independence

Active Participation

Children are actively involved in age-appropriate food preparation activities supporting their development while building positive relationships with food and cooking. These meaningful opportunities extend to table setting, food serving, and clearing activities, helping children develop independence and understanding of mealtime routines. Food exploration activities are thoughtfully incorporated into our broader learning curriculum, using cooking and food preparation as natural opportunities to develop fine motor skills, mathematical concepts, scientific understanding, and cultural awareness.

Choice and Autonomy

We maintain a firm policy that food is never used as a reward or punishment, recognising that such practices can create unhealthy relationships with eating that may persist throughout life. Children's individual preferences are respected and accommodated where possible, while gentle encouragement is provided to try new foods and expand dietary variety. We trust in children's natural ability to self-regulate their appetite and nutritional intake,

allowing them to eat according to their hunger cues rather than imposed adult expectations about portion sizes or food combinations.

9. Parent Partnership

Communication

Cupcake provides a three-week rolling menu, which is shared with parents on a weekly basis via email. Paper copies are also available to parents upon request.

Staff provide parents with updates on children's food and dietary intake at home-time collection.

10. Health and Safety

Food Safety

All aspects of food preparation, storage, and serving are conducted in strict accordance with current food safety regulations, with regular monitoring and documentation to ensure consistent compliance. Temperature monitoring of refrigeration and cooking equipment is conducted regularly and systematically, with records maintained to demonstrate ongoing food safety management. Throughout all food-related activities, we maintain a clean and hygienic eating environment that supports both health and the enjoyment of mealtimes. All Early Years staff hold a Level 2 qualification in Food Hygiene.

Choking Prevention

Continuous, attentive supervision is maintained during all eating times, with staff positioned to observe all children clearly and respond immediately to any signs of difficulty. All staff receive thorough training in choking response procedures, including recognition of choking signs and appropriate emergency interventions, with regular practice sessions to maintain competency. Seating arrangements are deliberately planned to ensure clear visibility of all children and enabling rapid response to any emergency situation.

11. Monitoring and Evaluation

Regular Review

This policy undergoes comprehensive review annually or more frequently, as required by changes in regulatory guidance, best practice recommendations, or specific needs identified within Little Gregs.

Our commitment to continuous improvement is demonstrated through our willingness to adapt practices based on emerging research, best practice developments, and the evolving needs within Little Gregs.

Staff Training

At Little Gregs, we ensure all staff are fully equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to keep children safe and healthy.

This includes completing mandatory training in Paediatric First Aid, Food Hygiene (Level 2), Allergy Awareness, and Nutrition.

New team members receive thorough induction training, which includes our safer eating protocols, so they feel confident in supporting children's dietary needs from day one. Ongoing training and refreshers are provided to keep everyone up to date with best practice and current guidance.