

General Welfare Requirement: Safeguarding and Promoting Children's Welfare

The provider must promote the good health of the children, take necessary steps to prevent the spread of infection, and take appropriate action when they are ill.

Promoting health and hygiene

1.21 Food and Drink - Healthy Eating Policy

Policy statement for St Joseph's Pre-school

St Joseph's Pre-school regards snack and meal times as an important part of the Pre-school's day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. St Joseph's Pre-school is obligated, through the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, to promote children's health and well-being, by ensuring that any food and drink provided is healthy, balanced and nutritious¹. Within this framework there is a requirement that providers 'should' have regard to the EYFS nutrition guidance document². This means providers must take this guidance into account and should follow it unless there is good reason not to. St Joseph's Pre-school complies with this requirement.

Work around healthy eating is a high priority. We promote healthy eating at snack and meal times, we aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs. Thus encouraging healthy eating habits from an early age and to improve the overall nutrition of children. No nuts or nut products are used by the setting, and we ask that parents to not include such products in the snacks they provide for their child to avoid cross-contamination.

To promote healthy eating we notify parents our advice and guidance through emails and letters. We also organise a Health week in July, where we focus on a different area of health every day, including eating healthily.

All our early years staff hold a current paediatric first aid certificate. They are also aware of symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis, the differences between allergies and intolerances and that children can develop allergies at any time.

Procedures

We follow these procedures to promote healthy eating in our setting, to comply with government initiatives and for the general well-being of the children.

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we find out from parents their children's dietary needs and preferences, including any known allergies, see policy 1.18³.
- We record information about each child's dietary needs in her/his registration record and parents sign the record 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 and intolerances - are up-to-date. Parents sign the up-dated record to signify that it is correct and the information is shared with staff.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all staff and volunteers are fully informed about them.

¹ Early Years Foundation Stage : Food and Drink

² Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance – guidance for group and school-based providers and childminders in England (April 2025)

³ Policy 1.18 Managing children with allergies, or who are sick or infectious (including reporting notifiable diseases)

- 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.
- We give guidance to parents in our information pack on snacks for parents to provide their child on a daily basis. See Appendix 1.
- We also direct parents to the Foods Standards Agency's "[Early Years Choking Hazards Table](#)".
- Our guidance includes a variety of foods from the four main food groups:
 - meat, fish and protein alternatives;
 - dairy foods or dairy alternatives;
 - grains, cereals and starch vegetables; and
 - fruit and vegetables.

The Department for Education (DfE) has a [poster on the 4 food groups](#), and Public Health England has produced an [Eatwell Guide](#) which applies to children from the age of 2.

- We introduce the children to different foods from a variety of cultural backgrounds when talking to them about festivals/faith days or it coincides with a topic the Pre-school is looking at. Having the children eat together encourages them to try new foods. All staff involved in the preparing and handling of such food will have been informed of any special dietary or food allergies/intolerances of the children attending the setting. All food served to children is prepared in a way to prevent choking⁴.
- 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 avoid the risk of a child with a known nut allergy being exposed to nuts during snack time and/or lunchtime, we ask parents not to provide packed lunches that include nuts or nut products (eg. snack bars, peanut butter, Nutella, pesto etc). Through discussion with parents and research reading by staff, we obtain information about the dietary rules of the religious groups to which children and their parents belong, and of vegetarians and vegans, and about food allergies. We take account of this information and monitor what the children eat.
- 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 her/his diet or allergy.
- We organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate.
- All children are reminded to wash their hands before snack time and lunchtime.
- Whilst children are eating there will always be a member of staff in the room with a valid paediatric first aid certificate.
- At snack and lunch time, where possible staff will sit facing the children whilst they eat. This is so they can make sure children are eating in a way to prevent choking and so they can prevent food sharing and be aware of unexpected allergic reactions. It also promote mealtimes as a social occasion.
- We use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.
- In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- We provide children with utensils that are appropriate for their ages and stages of development and that take account of the eating practices in their cultures.
- We have fresh drinking water constantly available for the children. We inform the children about how to obtain the water and that they can ask for water at any time during the day.

⁴ The Food Standards Agency has 2 posters on [how to prepare food safely to avoid choking](#)

- We inform parents who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in the setting.
- We give parents who provide food for their children information about suitable containers for food.
- For children who drink milk, we provide whole pasteurised milk.
- We have fresh drinking water constantly available for the children. We inform the children about how to obtain the water and that they can ask for water at any time during the day.

Mid morning snacks

The Pre-school recommend that these snacks, provided by parents/carers, should include:

- fresh fruit and/or vegetables with a carbohydrate accompaniment such as wholemeal bread, crackers or bread sticks; and
- a choice of fresh milk or water is supplied to drink.

We discourage parents/carers from including confectionary, such as sweets and chocolate bars etc, for their child's snack. However, should your child have diabetes and thus need a carefully timed intake of calories, then please ensure that the Lead Practitioner is made aware.

Parents are reminded to follow guidance regarding the preparation of certain foods for snacks which can cause choking incidents. This includes, but is not exclusive of, grapes, cherry tomatoes, olives and peperami.

Packed lunches

Packed lunches can contribute to almost a third of a child's weekly food intake and, therefore, need to be balanced and nutritious.

Where children choose to bring in a packed lunch rather than have a cooked meal, we ask parents/carers to provide a healthy balanced lunch, and:

- use insulated bags with freezer blocks/ice packs to keep food cool where possible. Please ensure that the bag has your child's name on;
- if a child's lunch box contains perishable foods, then please ensure there are sufficient cooling packs within the box. Note that St Joseph's Pre-school does not have fridge space available to accommodate such items.
- We do have a microwave at the setting, but are not permitted to heat up the food for children, in case it is heated incorrectly and makes your child ill;
- inform parents of our policy on healthy eating and new parents to the pre-school;
- encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk based deserts such as yoghurt or crème fraîche where we can only provide cold food from home. We discourage sweet drinks and can provide children with water or diluted fresh fruit juice. Examples are:
 - sandwiches – small in size with children's favourite fillings (excluding peanut based fillings);
 - yoghurts or crème fraîche;
 - small portion of breadsticks, rice cakes, cheese and crackers or other savoury snacks; and
 - fresh fruit and/or vegetables – though we do discourage kiwi fruit;
 - other suggestions: dried fruit, cold meats, pasta or rice salads, raw vegetables with dips, jellies.

The DfE have produced a [guide to portion sizes](#) for children aged 5 and under.

- discourage packed lunch contents that consist largely of crisps, processed foods, sweet drinks and sweet products such as cakes or biscuits⁵. We reserve the right to return this food to the parent as a last resort;
- provide children, bringing packed lunches, with plates, cups and cutlery; and
- ensure staff sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.

If a child arrives at St Joseph's Pre-school without a packed lunch and they are not recorded as wanting a cooked lunch, via Caterlink at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, the family will be contacted and expected to make arrangements for a healthy packed lunch to be delivered to the Pre-school by 12pm.

To promote healthy eating, St Joseph's Pre-school will periodically send out a reminder email to parents/carers attaching this policy. We also recommend parents/carers have a look on the internet, for example www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk "[Eating well: Packed lunches for 1 to under-5 year old](#)" or North Yorkshire County Council's [Healthy Packed Lunch leaflet](#). **NB:** Appendix 1 of this policy also has suggestions.

Caterlink cooked lunches, via St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Caterlink are specialist caterers in the education sector. Healthy eating is at the very heart of their approach to food and they encourage balanced diets. Their policy is to purchase a range of seasonal produce from local and regional suppliers. They are regularly inspected by the Environmental Team at Stroud District Council and have a [food hygiene rating of 5 \(very good\)](#)⁶ at the Primary School.

To order a lunch for your child:

- parents/carers are asked to email the Lead Practitioner with their child's meal choices by 8.30am on the morning of the day they wish their child to have a hot meal.
- If the parent feels the child is able to choose independently, practitioners will guide the child to order at registration depending on any preferences or allergies.
- Once the first dinner is ordered a ParentPay account will be set up by St Joseph's Catholic Primary School's admin team.
- If your child has any dietary needs/allergies, a letter from your Doctor will need to be provided to the school's admin team along with a completed allergy form.
- School dinner prices are updated in line with inflation etc, therefore, please speak to the Pre-school team to find the current pricing.

Special diets, allergies and eating disorders⁷

NB: St Joseph's Pre-school requests that NO food that contains nuts or nut products is allowed for snack time or contained in packed lunches.

The Pre-school understands that some children may have verified medical conditions requiring special diets that do not allow for the standards to be met exactly. In this case, parents/carers are urged to be responsible in ensuring that packed lunches are as healthy as possible. If any of the foods that the setting request are not included in snacks/lunches need to be part of your child's daily diet, please inform your child's key person.

⁵ Replace cakes, pastries and biscuits with fruit bread and teacakes

⁶ Last inspection : 20 February 2024

⁷ For example: Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake disorder ([ARFID](#))

Planning food activities

Cooking is a great experience for young children and helps to create a positive relationship with food. Some children have limited opportunities to cook or learn about food at home. We periodically plan educational and fun cooking activities for children in the setting⁸.

Waste and disposal

St Joseph's Pre-school will, within reason, send any uneaten packed lunch food items back home. The rationale for this is that parents/carers can also monitor what their child has consumed during the day and then raise any concerns over their child's food intake with the Pre-school.

Birthdays and other celebrations

We welcome cakes and sweets being brought in for the children by their peers to celebrate Birthdays or any other celebrations. Slices of cakes/individual cakes are generally eaten at snack time. If sweets are brought into the Pre-school to share amongst the children, they will be sent home in your child's bag. Any food shared in the setting is checked for potential allergens.

Recording of incidents

When a child experiences a choking incident that requires intervention, St Joseph's Pre-school will record details of where and how the child choked and parents and/or carers made aware. The records are reviewed periodically to identify if there are trends or common features of incidents that could be addressed to reduce the risk of choking. Appropriate action will be taken to address any identified concerns.

Legal Framework

- Regulation (EC) 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the hygiene of foodstuffs
- Food Safety Act 1990

Further guidance

- Food Standards Agency (www.food.gov.uk)
 - Safer food, better business for caterers
 - Safer food, better business for childminders
 - [Early Years Choking Hazards Table](#)
- [The Eatwell Guide - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Food safety - Help for early years providers](#) - GOV.UK (education.gov.uk)
- [Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance: guidance for group and school-based providers and childminders in England](#) – GOV.UK (April 2025)
- [Early Years Foundation Stage](#) (EYFS) statutory framework (latest version)
- [Food Hygiene Ratings](#)
- Department for Education Guidance "[Allergy guidance for schools](#)"
- Council for Disabled Children "[Disabled children & the Equality Act 2010: What early years providers need to know and do](#)" (latest version)
- www.arfidawarenessuk.org

Associated policies and procedures

- 1.18 Managing children with allergies, or who are sick or infectious (including reporting notifiable diseases)
- 1.21.1 Physical, Active and Nutrition Co-ordinator (PANCo)
- 3.7 Food Hygiene

⁸ See the DfE's information on [planning food activities with children](#)

Version Number	Author	Purpose of Change	Date
1.0	K Coupe	Reviewed and page numbered	Sept 2014
2.0	Committee	Reviewed	Oct 2016
3.0	K Coupe & N Powers	Reviewed, updated – incorporate healthy eating policy - and version controlled	01 May 2019 Committee Meeting
4.0	K Coupe & N Finn-Powers	Updated to as follows: • to include the “associate policies and procedures” section as per EY Safeguarding Audit s175/157 2023; • wording amended to reflect current practice at the setting; • removal of reference to snack rota and amendment to Appendix 1	17 Sept 2023 Committee Member (S Webb)
5.0	K Coupe	Reviewed and updated in line with EYFS 2025. • new “Recording of Incidents” section included; • reference to Foods Standards Agency’s “Early Years Choking Hazards Table” – as Appendix 2 (standalone document) & hyperlink	27 Jan 2025 Committee Member (H Heaven)
6.0	K Coupe and N Finn-Powers	Reviewed and updated with more information about: • packed lunches; • birthdays and other celebrations; • special diets and allergies; • Caterlink; and • planning food activities. Hyperlinks included where applicable, eg “Early Years Choking Hazards Table”. Updated to reflect “EYFS nutrition guidance” April 2025 issued by DfE	05 May 2025 Committee Member (B Wheeler)
7.0	K Coupe	Updated to avoid “indirect discrimination” re the eating of high calorie snacks between meals for those children who need to have a carefully timed intake of calories (eg. diabetes). As per the Council for Disabled Children’s guidance for EY providers re disability duties and the Equality Act 2010	23 August 2025 Chair (A Hitchings)
8.0	K Coupe and N Finn-Powers	Reference to eating disorders such as Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID). Hyperlink to website. Associated policies list updated – reference to PANCo	4 Sept 2025 Committee Member (L Finn-Powers)

Appendix 1: St Joseph's Pre-school – snack ideas

For ideas on what to provide your child as a snack.

Fruit ▪ Strawberries ▪ Blueberries ▪ grapes (red or white or a mix) – cut up to avoid choking ▪ orange or Satsuma segments ▪ banana ▪ apple or pear – cut up ▪ pineapple slices ▪ melon slice – without seeds (if applicable) ▪ mango ▪ plum(s) – cut up ▪ peach or nectarine cut into segments ▪ apricot cut in half (▪ mixed fruit/seeds, eg. - raisins and/or pumpkin seeds - dried apricots - dried bananas - dried pineapple - dried apple - dried dates - dried prunes	Vegetables ▪ carrot sticks ▪ cucumber sticks ▪ cherry tomatoes – cut up to avoid choking ▪ baby sweetcorn ▪ sugar snap peas ▪ mange tout ▪ peppers sticks
Carbohydrates ▪ breadsticks ▪ cheese crackers ▪ whole wheat crackers ▪ rice cake ▪ Pumpkin seeds ▪ oat cakes ▪ Small fruit (bread) – one slice ▪ Small malt loaf (eg. Soreen) – one slice ▪ mini bagel ▪ small plain or fruit muffin	Protein ▪ cheese – cut into cubes ▪ cream cheese – on bread/crackers/bagel etc ▪ cheese spread (eg. Dairylea) – on bread/crackers/bagel etc. ▪ small pot of hummus

We are not saying crisps or cakes or biscuits are not allowed, but we would recommend that their intake is limited. However, if your child has a specific medical condition that requires them to eat high calorie snacks between meals (eg. for diabetes) or eat a certain type of food (eg. if they have an eating disorder), please ensure that your child's key person and the Lead Practitioner are made aware. *What we would ask though, is that there are no nuts as some children have nut allergies and we would recommend against kiwi fruit.* Mix and match as you wish, but for a balance we would recommend that the snack contains at least some fruit and/or vegetable.

Please also refer to the Food Standards Agency's "[Early Years Choking Hazards Table](#)".