

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 to promote children's health and well-being, by ensuring that any food and drink provided is healthy, balanced and nutritious¹. We promote healthy eating at snack and meal times, we aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs. 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 1.18².
- 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 updated 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.
- 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" – see Appendix 2 (separate document).
- Our guidance includes a variety of foods from the four main food groups:
 - meat, fish and protein alternatives;
 - dairy foods;
 - grains, cereals and starch vegetables; and
 - fruit and vegetables.

¹ Early Years Foundation Stage : Food and Drink

² Policy 1.18 Managing children with allergies, or who are sick or infectious (including reporting notifiable diseases)

- 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. 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.
- 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 lunchtime, we ask parents not to provide packed lunches that include nuts or nut products (eg. snack bars, peanut butter, 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.
- Whilst children are eating there will always be a member of staff in the room with a valid paediatric first aid certificate.
- 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.
- 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.
- In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- For children who drink milk, we provide whole pasteurised milk.

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.

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

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

- ensure perishable contents of packed lunches are refrigerated or contain an ice pack to keep food cool;

- inform parents of our policy on healthy eating and new parents to the pre-school;
- inform parents of whether we have facilities to microwave cooked food brought from home;
- 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 fraiche;
 - small portion of crisps or savoury snacks; and
 - fresh fruit and/or vegetables;
 - other suggestions: dried fruit, cold meats, pasta or rice salads, raw vegetables with dips, jellies.
- discourage packed lunch contents that consist largely of crisps, processed foods, sweet drinks and sweet products such as cakes or biscuits. 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.

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 \(EYFS\)](#) statutory framework (latest version)

Associated policies and procedures

- No 1.18 Managing children with allergies, or who are sick or infectious (including reporting notifiable diseases)
- No 3.7 Food Hygiene

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	01 May 2019

Version Number	Author	Purpose of Change	Date
		healthy eating policy - and version controlled	Committee Meeting
4.0	K Coupe & N Finn-Powers	Updated to as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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)

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

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

<p>Fruit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - raisins and/or pumpkin seeds - dried apricots - dried bananas - dried pineapple - dried apple - dried dates - dried prunes 	<p>Vegetables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ carrot sticks ▪ cucumber sticks ▪ cherry tomatoes – cut up to avoid choking ▪ baby sweetcorn ▪ sugar snap peas ▪ mange tout ▪ peppers sticks
<p>Carbohydrates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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 	<p>Protein</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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. *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 Appendix 2: Early Years Choking Hazards Table (separate document) courtesy of the Food Standards Agency.