



Moorfield Early Years Food and Nutrition Policy

1. Policy Statement

At Moorfield Early Years, we are committed to promoting the health and well-being of every child through the provision of nutritious, balanced and safe meals and snacks. Our approach aligns with the DfE's EYFS nutrition guidance (April 2025), ensuring children develop healthy eating habits from an early age. It takes into consideration breakfast, lunch, dinner and two snacks.

2. Aims

- Provide meals and snacks that are healthy, balanced, and nutritious.
- Encourage positive attitudes towards food and healthy lifestyles.
- Support children in making informed food choices.
- Ensure all dietary needs, including allergies and intolerances, are met safely.
- Promote safe eating practices to prevent choking and other hazards.

3. Nutritional Guidelines

3.1 Balanced Diet

If in our care for the whole day, we follow the '5-4-3-2' model daily:

- 5 or more portions of fruit and vegetables
- 4 portions of starchy carbohydrates
- 3 portions of dairy or plant-based alternatives
- 2 portions of protein

This ensures children receive a variety of nutrients essential for growth and development.

3.2 Food Groups

Meals and snacks include items from the following groups:

- Starchy Carbohydrates: bread, pasta, rice, potatoes etc.
- Fruits and Vegetables: fresh, frozen, canned, or dried options
- Proteins: meat, fish, eggs, beans, pulses
- Dairy and Alternatives: milk, cheese, yoghurt

Foods high in saturated fat, salt, and sugars are limited and offered only occasionally in small amounts.

3.3 Drinks

Children are provided with water throughout the day and milk (and alternatives) at snack times. Sugary drinks, including fruit juices and smoothies, are not offered or allowed in order to maintain good oral health.

4.1 Meal and Snack Times

- Children are encouraged to eat together to promote social skills and positive eating behaviours.
- Staff model healthy eating habits during meal times, acting as positive role models.
- Food is never used as a reward or punishment.
- Children are supported to recognise hunger and fullness cues, promoting self-regulation.
- Children will have a snack from home in the morning (fresh fruit or vegetables in their purest form) and a snack from Moorfield in the afternoon (children will sometimes be on a rota to help prepare this).
- We encourage children to try new foods but never pressure them to eat.

4.2 Packed Lunches

Parents are encouraged to provide a balanced lunchbox including:

- Fruit/vegetables
- Starchy food (bread, rice, pasta, potatoes)
- Protein (meat, fish, eggs, beans, pulses)
- Dairy or alternatives (yoghurt, cheese slices, milk, fortified alternatives)

Foods we ask families to avoid:

- Sweets, chocolate bars, sugary yoghurts, biscuits, crisps. (anything with a 'red' label)
- Fizzy or sweetened drinks
- Choking hazards (whole grapes, cherry tomatoes, cheese cubes, popcorn, whole nuts)

If a child's lunch regularly contains unsuitable items, staff will discuss this privately with parents, never in front of children.

5. Special Dietary Requirements

- Information on dietary requirements, allergies, and intolerances is collected before a child joins the setting.

- Individual care plans are developed with parents/carers and healthcare professionals. If an item of food is provided from home that doesn't follow our policy, then written evidence is needed from a healthcare provider to explain this.

- Staff are made aware of dietary needs, and all meals are checked for suitability.

- Allergen information is documented and displayed for each meal and snack.

6. Food Safety and Hygiene

- All food is prepared according to high hygiene standards.

- Staff involved in food preparation hold appropriate food hygiene qualifications.

- Safe weaning and food preparation practices are followed to reduce choking risks.

- All allergy information is shared with staff and displayed in food preparation areas.

7. Safer Eating Practices

- Children are supervised during all eating times.

- At least one staff member trained in paediatric first aid is present during meals.

- Food is prepared in sizes and textures appropriate to each child's age and development.

- Sharing food is discouraged to prevent allergic reactions.

8. Staff Training

- Staff receive training in nutrition, food hygiene, allergy awareness and paediatric first aid.
- Training is updated regularly to reflect current guidelines and best practice.

9. Parental Engagement

- Menus and nutrition policies are shared with parents/carers via the website.
- Parents are encouraged to share details about their child's dietary needs and preferences.

10. Monitoring and Evaluation

- The policy is reviewed annually or following any significant changes.
- Feedback from staff, parents and children informs updates.
- Implementation is monitored through observations and audits.

11. Celebrations and Special Occasions

- We celebrate birthdays in fun, inclusive ways (cards, singing, games).
- Celebrations are inclusive, culturally respectful and support healthy eating practices.
- To support healthy eating, we ask families not to send in cakes, sweets, or party bags.
- Families are welcome to contribute non-food items (stickers, a book for the class, bubbles).
- If food is brought in for special occasions, it must be pre-packaged and clearly labelled with allergens.

12. Cooking and Food Preparation with Children

- Cooking activities are an important part of our curriculum, helping children explore food, develop motor skills and understand nutrition.
- Recipes are chosen to reflect healthy ingredients and simple preparation steps.
- Hygiene practices, such as handwashing and using utensils safely, are taught and supervised.
- Allergies and dietary needs are always taken into account during cooking sessions.

13. Sustainability

- Our food procurement and practices reflect a commitment to sustainability.
- We aim to use local, seasonal, and where possible, organic produce.
- Food waste is minimised through careful planning and composting initiatives.
- Children are educated about sustainable food choices and environmental impact.

14. Food Brought in from Home

- For children who bring food from home (e.g., packed lunches and snacks), we provide guidance to ensure these are healthy and balanced.
- Packed lunches should not contain sweets, chocolate bars, sugary drinks or foods high in sugar, salt or fat, instead, reflecting the same nutritional items as laid out in the DfE guidance.
- All items must be clearly labelled with the child's name.
- We are a nut-free setting, and parents are reminded not to send any items containing nuts or nut products. Parents are also sent a list of allergies within the setting.
- Staff do not reheat food brought in from home to ensure food safety compliance.

14. Safeguarding and Equality

- All children have the right to safe, appropriate food that respects their health, culture, and family preferences.
- We do not allow food-based teasing or comparisons between lunchboxes.
- Staff never comment negatively on a child's food in front of them.

Appendix of 'non-negotiables'

based on the DfE's EYFS Nutrition Guidance 2025

Items to be Avoided

- Dried fruit
- Tinned fruit in syrup
- Foods with the 'red' label for sugar content.
- sweetened yoghurts/ fromage frais (or dairy free alternatives).
- cakes, pastries, biscuits, crisps, chocolate or confectionary with a high sugar content.
- sugary drinks or smoothies

Items to be Provided

- Fruit and vegetables will be offered at all meals.
- A starchy item will be available for all meals.
- One snack a day must be savory crackers/ unsweetened rice or corn cakes.
- There will be a wholegrain starch item once a week.
- Cereals provided will have a 'green' rating for sugar.
- There will be three portions of milk foods over the course of all three meals.
- There will be a protein (or alternative) source with lunch and tea meals.
- One lunch and one tea each week will be made up of beans, lentils or pulses, with a meat alternative.
- Oily fish will be served at least once every three weeks, but never more than once in a week.
- Processed meat (including sausages, meatballs, breaded items) or fish (including fish cakes or fish fingers) or processed vegetarian options are limited to once a week.

Appendix of choking hazards, from Food Standards Agency

Early years food choking hazards



Below is a table of advice on key foods for care givers who are involved with preparing and serving food for babies and young children (under 5 years old)

Vegetable and fruits	Advice
Pips or stones in fruit	Always check beforehand and remove hard pips or stones from fruit.
Small fruits	Cut small round fruits like grapes, cherries, berries, strawberries and cherry tomatoes, into small pieces: cut lengthways and then again cut them in halves (quarters).
Large fruits and firm fruits	Cut large fruits like melon and firm fruits like apple into slices instead of small chunks. For very young children, consider grating or mashing firm fruits, or softening them up] by steaming or simmering.
Vegetables	Cut vegetables like carrots, cucumber and celery into narrow batons. For very young children consider grating or mashing firm vegetables and legumes like butter beans, chickpeas and tofu, or softening them up by steaming or simmering.
Skin on fruit and vegetables	Consider removing the skin from fruit and vegetables, especially for very young children. Peeled fruit and vegetables can be swallowed more easily.
Cooking fruit and vegetables	Consider softening firm fruit and vegetables (such as carrots, broccoli, yam and apples) by steaming or simmering until soft. Serve cut into slices or narrow batons.
Meat and fish	Advice
Sausages and hot dogs	Cut sausages and hot dogs into short strips. Cut them in half and then lengthways or as thinly as possible. Peeling the skin off the sausages helps them to be swallowed more easily.
Meat or fish	Remove bones from meat or fish. Cut meat into strips as thinly as possible. Remove skin and fat from meat and fish, it will help the food pass smoothly down the throat.
Cheese	Advice
Grate or cut cheese	Grate or cut cheese into short strips. Cut lumps of cheese as narrow as possible.
Nuts and seeds	Advice
Chop or flake whole nuts	Chop or flake whole nuts, peanuts and seeds. Whole nuts should not be given to children under five years old.
Bread	Advice
White bread and other breads	White bread can form a ball shape with a dough-like texture at the back of a child's throat, if not chewed properly. Brown bread or toasted white bread are good alternatives. Cut bread, chapatis, naan bread and other breads into narrow strips.
Snacks and other foods	Advice
Popcorn	Do not give babies and young children popcorn.
Chewing gum and marshmallows	Do not give babies and young children chewing gum or marshmallows.
Peanut butter	Do not give babies and young children peanut butter on its own, only use as a spread.
Jelly cubes	Do not give babies and young children raw jelly cubes.
Boiled sweets and ice cubes	Do not give babies and young children boiled, hard, gooey, sticky or cough sweets, or ice cubes.
Raisins and other dried fruits	Do not give babies under the age of 1 whole raisins or dried fruits. Cut them into small pieces.

https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2021/09/Early-Years-Choking-Hazards-Table_FINAL_21-Sept-2021.pdf