

Food and Drink Policy

At Circadian Nest Nursery we believe that food is an important part of a child's day — both for growth and development, and as a social and cultural experience. Lunches are provided from home by parents and carers; the nursery provides fresh drinking water, mid-morning and mid-afternoon snacks, and a warm, unhurried mealtime environment. This policy sits alongside our Packed Lunch Policy and Allergies and Allergic Reactions Policy.

Packed lunches from home

The Packed Lunch Policy sets out the nutritional expectations, foods to avoid (including choking hazards), storage and reheating arrangements, and the procedure where a lunch does not meet the expected standards. Staff may remove food items that present an allergen or choking risk in line with that policy, but will not otherwise add to or alter a child's lunch without parental agreement.

Snacks provided by the nursery

- A mid-morning snack and a mid-afternoon snack are offered each day.
- Snacks are simple, healthy and age-appropriate: typically fresh fruit, vegetable sticks, plain crackers, breadsticks, rice cakes, cheese or yoghurt.
- Whole or chopped grapes, whole nuts, popcorn, marshmallows and other known choking hazards are never offered.
- A snack menu is displayed for parents each week.
- Allergen information for every snack is available in the kitchen and displayed at the serving point.

Drinks

- Fresh drinking water is available to all children at all times from a clearly signed water station.
- Children are encouraged to drink frequently, especially in warm weather and after physical activity.

- Milk is offered with snacks (full-fat cow's milk or an appropriate alternative agreed with parents).
- Squash, fruit juice and other sugary drinks are not offered.

Babies and infant feeding

Feeds for babies under 12 months (breastmilk or formula) are brought from home, clearly labelled with the child's name and the date of expression or preparation. Bottles are stored in the fridge and warmed as needed using a bottle warmer, following NHS guidance on safe preparation and storage. Breastfeeding parents are welcome to feed their baby on the premises at any time. Where weaning foods are provided from home, parents supply each day's food in a labelled container, and staff assist the child at mealtimes.

Allergies, intolerances and special diets

An up-to-date allergy and dietary list is cross-referenced to each child's photo and displayed in every room and the snack serving area. Parents are asked to inform the nursery of any allergy, intolerance, cultural or religious requirement, or parental preference; we will do everything reasonably possible to accommodate these in our snack and drink provision, and we liaise with parents on any food-related risk arising from their child's packed lunch. See our Allergies and Allergic Reactions Policy for the full procedure.

Mealtimes

Lunchtimes are social occasions. Children eat their packed lunches with their key person and peers at a table. Staff sit with the children, model good table manners and conversation, and encourage children to eat at their own pace. Children are never rushed, pressured or bribed, and leftover food is sent home in the lunchbox so parents can see what their child has eaten.

Hygiene

- Children wash their hands before all snacks and lunches, and after using the toilet.

- Tables are cleaned before and after every meal with food-safe sanitiser.
- Staff who handle food directly (serving snacks, supporting babies) wash their hands and wear disposable gloves where appropriate.
- Packed lunches are stored in the fridge on arrival and returned to the lunchbox at the end of lunch.

Promoting healthy choices

We promote healthy food and drink as part of our curriculum. Children help to prepare their snacks where practical, learn about where food comes from, and grow herbs and vegetables in the garden in season. We share information with parents about the EYFS nutrition guidance and suggest practical ideas for a healthy packed lunch.

Safeguarding and food

Concerns about a child's eating, weight, hunger, or the consistent content or quantity of their packed lunch are treated sensitively and discussed with parents at the first opportunity. Where the pattern raises a safeguarding concern, it is referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Samina Farooq) in line with our Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy.

Related policies

- Packed Lunch Policy
- Allergies and Allergic Reactions Policy
- Infection Control Policy
- Medication Policy

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
01/02/2026	Suhail Farooq	01/02/2027