



03 Food safety and nutrition policy

Alongside associated procedures in 03.1-03.4 Food safety and nutrition, this policy was adopted by *Acorns Community Preschool* on 2025.

Aim

Our setting is a suitable, clean, and safe place for children to be cared for, where they can grow and learn. We meet all statutory requirements for food safety and fulfil the criteria for meeting the relevant Early Years Foundation Stage Safeguarding and Welfare requirements

Objectives

- We recognise that we have a corporate responsibility and duty of care for those who work in and receive a service from our provision, but individual employees and service users also have responsibility for ensuring their own safety as well as that of others. Risk assessment is the key means through which this is achieved.
- Procedure 01.3 Kitchen is followed for general hygiene and safety in food preparation areas.
- We provide nutritionally sound snacks which promote health and reduce the risk of obesity and heart disease that may begin in childhood.
- We ensure that children are supervised at mealtimes and that children are within sight and hearing of a member of staff. at all times and where possible staff are sat facing children when eating to ensure they are eating in a way that prevents choking and so they can prevent food sharing and be aware of any unexpected allergic reactions.
- We ensure that there is a qualified Paediatric First Aider present in all rooms when children are eating.
- We follow the main advice on dietary guidelines and the legal requirements for identifying food allergens when planning menus based on the four food groups:
 - meat, fish, and protein alternatives
 - milk and dairy products

- cereals and grains
- fresh fruit and vegetables.
- Following dietary guidelines to promote health also means taking account of guidelines to reduce risk of disease caused by unhealthy eating.
- Parents/carers share information about their children's particular dietary needs and allergies with staff when they enrol their children and on an on-going basis with their key person. This information is shared with all staff who are involved in the care of the child.
- We take into account every child's individual development needs and work in partnership with parents/carers to help children to move on to the next stage with regard to weaning as per the guidance listed below.
- We ensures that all staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis and the differences between allergies and intolerances which may develop at any time.
- Foods provided by the setting for children, have any allergenic ingredients identified on our Snack Allergen Information sheet.
- Care is taken to ensure that children with food allergies and intolerances do not have contact with food products that they are allergic to.
- We notify Ofsted or the childminder agency (CMA if registered with a CMA) of any food poisoning affecting two or more children in our care as soon as possible and at least within 14 days.
- Risk assessments are conducted for each individual child who has a food allergy or specific dietary requirement, basic information is kept on the Allergies and Medical Sheet in the Kitchen.
- If a child chokes at mealtime and intervention is given. We record details of the incident and ensure that parents/carers are informed.

Legal references

Regulation (EC) 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the hygiene of foodstuffs.

Food Information Regulations 2014

The Childcare Act 2006

Further guidance

Safer Food Better Business for Caterers (Food Standards Agency)

<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/safer-food-better-business-for-caterers>

Date	Policy History - Alterations	Initials
31/01/2025	Ensure children are supervised at mealtimes and that children are within sight and hearing of a member of staff.	LG
	We notify Ofsted or the childminder agency (CMA if registered with a CMA) of any food poisoning affecting two or more children in our care as soon as possible and at least within 14 days.	
20/1/2026	Changes about supervision of children eating and intolerances	Lg

Acorns Community Pre-School
Hanover Hall
Jennings Road
Totton



03 Food safety and nutrition procedures

03.01 Food preparation, storage and purchase

General

- All staff have up to date certificated training on food safety.
- Cooks refer to Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance (2025) which contains guidance on menu planning, food safety, managing food allergies and reading food labels.
- The setting manager/supervisor are responsible for ensuring that the requirements in Safer Food Better Business are implemented.
- All staff responsible for preparing food have undertaken the Food Allergy Online Training CPD module available at <http://allergytraining.food.gov.uk/>.
- The setting manager/supervisors are responsible for overseeing the work of the cook and all food handlers to ensure hygiene and allergy procedures are complied with.

- The setting manager/supervisors have responsibility for conducting risk assessment based on the 'Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point' method set out in Safer Food Better Business.
- Staff carry out and record daily opening/closing checks and dated records of deep cleaning.
- The setting manager/supervisors maintain a Food Allergy and Dietary Needs list with:
 - a list of all children with known food allergies, intolerances or dietary needs updated at least once a term (the personal/medical details about the allergy or dietary needs remain in the child's file along with a copy of the risk assessment). This is clearly displayed for all staff and the risk assessment shared with all staff.
 - a record of food used for snacks along with any allergens using
 - a copy of the FSA booklet 'Allergen information for pre packed and loose foods' available at www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/loosefoodsleaflet.pdf

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- a copy of the Food Allergy Online Training CPD certificate for each member of staff that has undertaken the training
- The setting manager/supervisors are responsible for informing the directors who then reports to Ofsted any food poisoning affecting two or more children looked after on the premises. Notification must be made as soon as possible and within 14 days of the incident.

Purchasing and storing food

- Food is purchased from reputable suppliers.
- Pre-packed food (any food or ingredient that is made by one business and sold by another such as a retailer or caterer) is checked for allergen ingredients and this information is communicated to parents alongside menu information. For example, a tin of baked beans or the ingredients for a recipe prepared on site.
- If food that is not pre-packed (described as 'loose food'), such as sandwiches bought from a bakery is served, then allergen information will have been provided by the retailer, this information must then be shared in the same way with parents.
- Parents are requested not to bring food that contains nuts. Staff check packets to make sure they do not contain nuts or nut products.
- Bulk buy is avoided where food may go out of date before use.
- All opened dried food stuffs are stored in airtight containers.
- Dried packaged food is not decanted from packaging into large bins or containers as this prevents monitoring of sell by/use by dates and allergen information.
- Food is regularly checked for sell by/use by dates and any expired items are discarded.
- Bottles and jars are cleaned before returning to the cupboards.
- 'Squeezy' plastic bottles are not used for sauces.
- Items are not stored on the floor; floors are kept clear so they can be easily swept.
- Perishable foods such as dairy produce are to be used by the use by date. Soft fruit and easily perishable vegetables are kept in the fridge at 1- 5 Celsius.
- Packaged frozen food should be used by use by dates.
- Food left over should not be frozen unless it has been prepared for freezing, such as home-made bread or stews. Hot food should be left to cool for up to 1.5 hours and then quickly frozen.
- Freezer containers should be labelled, dated and used within 1-3 months.
- Fridge and freezer thermometers should be in place. Recommended temperatures for fridge 37 degrees Fahrenheit (3 degrees Celsius), and freezers 0 degrees Fahrenheit (-

18 degrees Celsius). Temperatures must be checked and recorded daily to ensure correct temperatures are being maintained.

- Freezers are defrosted every 3 months or according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Meat/fish is stored on lower shelves and in drip-free dishes.
- Fruit and vegetables stored in the fridge are washed thoroughly before refrigeration to reduce risk of pests and E.coli contamination.
- Staff's own food or drink should be kept in separate designated area of the fridge; where possible, a fridge should be kept in the staff room to avoid mix ups.
- Items in fridges must be regularly checked to ensure they are not past use by dates.

Preparation of food

- Food handlers must check the content of food/packets to ensure they do not contain allergens.
- Food allergens must be identified on the Allergen Information Sheet menus available to all parents.
- Food handlers wash hands and cover any cuts or abrasions before handling food.
- Separate boards and knives are used for chopping food.
- Raw and cooked foods are prepared separately.
- Meat and fish should be washed and patted dry with paper towels. This does not include chicken which must not be washed because of the risk of campylobacter.
- All vegetables and fruit are washed before preparing.
- Food left out is covered, for example when cooling down.
- Frozen meat, fish and prepared foods are thawed properly before cooking.
- Meat and fish are cooked thoroughly; a food probe is to be used to check temperature of roasted meat or baked meat products.
- Where a microwave is used, food is cooked according to manufacturer's instructions. Generally, it is not used to heat children's food and never used to heat babies' bottles.
- Microwaved food is left to stand for a few minutes before serving.
- A food probe is used to check temperature of food, including where heated in a microwave; it is checked in a number of places to avoid 'hot spots'.
- Food is cooked in time for serving and is not prepared in advance of serving times.
- Hot cupboards or ovens are not used to keep food warm.
- Potatoes and vegetables are peeled when needed, not in advance and left in water.
- Food prepared and cooked for different religious dietary needs and preferences, such as Halal or Kosher meat is cooked in separate pans and served separately.
- Food cooked for vegetarians does not come into contact with meat or fish or products.

- Food cooked and prepared for children with specific dietary needs is cooked in separate pans and served separately.
- A separate toaster would be available for children with a wheat or gluten allergy.
- Food prepared for children with dietary needs and preferences is clearly labelled and every effort is made to prevent cross-contamination.
- Raw eggs are not to be given in any form, such as mousse or mayonnaise.
- When given to children, eggs are fully cooked.

Serving Food

- There is a named person who is responsible for ensuring that the food being provided meets all the requirements for each child.
- Food is served for children in separate covered containers for each table.
- Staff risk assess the likelihood of children with dietary restrictions accessing the food of other children and must take appropriate action to prevent this from happening, for example: check the list of children's dietary requirements displayed in the food preparation area
- Children with allergies/food preferences are not made to feel 'singled out' by the methods used to manage their allergy/food preference.
- Food served to children with identified allergies is checked by the key person to ensure that the meal (and its ingredients) does not contain any of the allergens for that child.
- The child's key person remains present throughout the child's mealtime.
- Tables are cleaned before and after, with soapy water or a suitable non-bleach product.
- Members of staff serving food wash their hands and cover any cuts with a blue plaster.

E.coli prevention

Staff who are preparing and handling food, especially food that is not pre-prepared for consumption e.g. fruit and vegetables grown on the premises, must be aware of the potential spread of E.coli and must clean and store food in accordance with the E.coli 0157 guidance, available at:

www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/guidancenotes/hygguid/ecoliguide#.U7FCVGIOWdl

Further guidance

Safer Food Better Business www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/safer-food-better-business-sfbb

Campylobacter (Food Standards Agency) www.food.gov.uk/news-updates/campaigns/campylobacter/fsw-2014

Food allergy/anaphylaxis guidance

<https://www.bsaci.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/BSACIAllergyActionPlan2018NoAAI2981-2.pdf>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/anaphylaxis/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/food-allergy/>

[Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance](#)

[Common allergens.pdf](#)

[Allergen checklist for food businesses | Food Standards Agency](#)

Date	Policy History - Alterations	Initials
31/01/2025	New Food Allergy guidance	LG
20/1/2026	Minor changes	lg

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03 Food safety and nutrition procedures

03.02 Food for play and cooking activities

Some parents and staff may have strong views about food being used for play. It is important to be sensitive to these issues. For example, children who are Muslim, Jewish, Rastafarian, or who are vegetarian, should not be given any food to play with that contains animal products (Gelatine). Parents' views should be sought on this. In some cases, it is not appropriate to use food for play at all, particularly in times of austerity.

- Food for play may include dough, corn flour, pasta, rice, food colourings/flavourings.
- Jelly (including jelly cubes) is not used for play.
- Food for play is risk assessed against the 14 allergens referred and is included in the written risk assessment undertaken for children with specific allergies.
- Staff are constantly alert to the potential hazards of food play, in particular choking hazards and signs of previously undetected allergies.
- Pulses are not recommended as they can be poisonous when raw or may choke.
- The use of raw vegetables for printing is discouraged.

- Dried food that is used for play should be kept away from food used for cooking.
- Foods that are cooked and used for play, such as dough, have a limited shelf life.
- Cornflour is always mixed with water before given for play.
- Cornflower and cooked pasta are discarded after an activity; high risk of bacteria forming.
- Utensils used for play food are washed thoroughly after use.

Children's cooking activities

- Before undertaking any cooking activity with children, members of staff should check for allergies and intolerances by checking children's records.
- Children are taught basic hygiene skills such as the need to wash hands thoroughly before handling food, and again after going to the toilet, blowing their nose or coughing.
- The area to be used for cooking is cleaned; a plastic tablecloth is advised.
- Children should wear aprons that are used just for cooking.
- Utensils provided are for children to use only when cooking, including chopping/rolling boards, bowls, wooden spoons, jugs, and are stored in the kitchen.
- Members of staff encourage children to handle food in a hygienic manner.
- Food ready for cooking or cooling is not left uncovered.
- Cooked food to go home is put in a suitable food container and refrigerated when required until home time.
- Food play activities are suspended during outbreaks of illness.

Playdough and raw (uncooked flour)

All flour including cornflour is raw until the point it is heated or cooked. Raw flour poses a risk of E. coli to young children and current advice is that when using uncooked flour or flour products not intended to be eaten e.g. dough for crafts and play, you may wish to use this advice to support how you manage the risks during these activities.

Operators of care settings or other businesses where children and older people are handling raw flour or raw flour products should also take account of this advice when considering how risks associated with these activities are managed as part of their risk assessment process. Children and older people may be more vulnerable to infection so additional care may be needed when handling these products.

See the [Health and Safety Executive's Managing risks and risk assessment at work](#)

If a child or member of staff is allergic to any of the ingredients they must be replaced, and a safe alternative used.

Staff have up to date information about children's allergies or concerns about a potential allergy and these are clearly displayed.

If a younger child is likely to put the playdough/ cornflour in their mouth, a safe alternative is provided.

If a child is likely to eat the playdough due to persistent sensory seeking behaviours the activity will be replaced with a safe alternative.

Children are always supervised when playing with playdough or cornflour.

Children and staff wash their hands before and after the activity.

Uncooked flour should not be used for activities where children are exploring through touch or taste, or there is a likelihood they will put their fingers in their mouths.

For baking activities where flour is used and then the food is cooked, we ensure that the activity is risk assessed, and children do not eat the uncooked flour or the mixture.

Date	Policy History - Alterations	Initials
31/01/2025	New - Playdough and raw flour – adjusted for Acorns	LG
20/1/2026	Update re playdough and raw flour	lg

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03 Food safety and nutrition procedures

03.3 Snack planning, packed lunch and nutrition

Food supplied for children provides a healthy and balanced diet for healthy growth and development. Foods that contain any of 14 allergens identified by the FSA are identified.. The setting follows dietary guidance to promote health and reduce risk of disease caused by unhealthy eating. When planning snack, the setting manager and staff ensure that:

- Snack reflect children’s cultural backgrounds, religious restrictions and the food preferences of some ethnic groups which is discussed with parents.
- Snacks are clearly displayed so that parents and staff know what is being provided.
- Foods that contain any of the 14 major allergens are identified and displayed for parents.
- Parents must share information about their children’s particular dietary needs with staff when they enrol their children and on an on-going basis with their key person.
- Key persons regularly share information about the children’s levels of appetite and enjoyment of food with parents.
- Staff refer to [Help for early years providers : Food safety](#)
- Eat Better, Start Better - Foundation Years.
- A record of children’s dietary needs is recorded on the Allergies Medical Conditions and Dietary Requirements form displayed in the in the kitchen and updated termly.

Packed lunches

Where children have packed lunches, staff promote healthy eating, ensuring that parents are given advice and information about what is appropriate content for a child’s lunch box.

Parents are also advised to take measures to ensure children’s lunch box contents remain cool i.e. ice packs, as the setting may not have facilities for refrigerated storage.

Date	Policy History - Alterations	Initials
31/01/2025	No changes	LG
20/1/2026	Minor changes	lg



03 Food safety and nutrition procedures

03.04 Meeting dietary requirements

Snack and mealtimes are an important part of the day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. We aim to provide nutritious snacks and encourage parents/carers to provide healthy and balanced lunch boxes, which meets the children's individual dietary needs and preferences. and

- Staff discuss and record children's dietary needs, allergies and any ethnic or cultural food preferences with their parents. A child's special dietary requirements are recorded on registration to the setting and information is shared with all staff. This continues as an ongoing dialogue with all parents throughout their time with us.
- If a child has a known food allergy, procedure **04.4 Allergies and food intolerance Policy** is followed.
- Staff record information about each child's dietary needs in the individual child's registration form; parents sign the form to signify that it is correct.
- Up-to-date information about individual children's dietary needs is displayed so that all staff and volunteers are fully informed.
- Staff ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and cultural or ethnic preferences, as well as their parent's wishes. At each mealtime, a member of staff is responsible for checking that the food provided meets the dietary requirements for each child.
- The details of snacks are displayed on the parent notice board for parents to view. Foods that contain any food allergens are identified.
- Staff aim to include food from children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.
- Through on-going discussion with parents and research reading by staff, staff obtain information about the dietary rules of the religious groups to which children and their parents belong, and of vegetarians and vegans, as well as about food allergies. Staff take account of this information when providing food and drink.

- Staff provide a vegetarian alternative when meat and fish are offered and make every effort to ensure Halal meat or Kosher food is available to children who require it.
- Where it is not possible to source and provide Halal meat or Kosher food, a vegetarian option is available; this will be discussed and agreed with parents at the time of the child's registration.
- All staff show sensitivity in providing for children's diets, allergies and cultural or ethnic food preferences. A child's diet or allergy is never used as a label for the child, they are not made to feel 'singled out' because of their diet, allergy or cultural/ethnic food preferences.
- Fresh drinking water is available throughout the day. Staff inform children how to obtain the drinking water and that they can ask for water at any time during the day.
- Meal and snack times are organised as social occasions.

Fussy/faddy eating

- Children who are showing signs of 'strong food preferences, or aversions to food ' are not forced to eat anything they do not want to.
- Staff recognise the signs that a child has had enough and remove uneaten food without comment.
- Children are not made to stay at the table after others have left if they refuse to eat certain items of food.
- Staff work in partnership with parents to support them with children who are showing signs of 'food preference or aversion' and sign post them to further advice, for example, How to Manage Simple Faddy Eating in Toddlers (Infant & Toddler Forum)
<https://infantandtoddlerforum.org/health-and-childcare-professionals/factsheets/>

• Date	Policy History - Alterations	Initials
31/01/2025	A child's special dietary requirements are recorded on registration to the setting and information is shared with all staff Change to 'strong food preferences, or aversions to food '	LG
20/1/2026	Minor changes	lg

