

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Health

Food hygiene

Policy statement

We are committed to maintaining the highest standards of food hygiene and safety in the purchase, storage, preparation, cooking, serving, and disposal of food.

We provide and/or serve food as part of:

- Daily snacks
- Children's packed lunches brought from home
- Occasional cooking or tasting activities as part of the curriculum

Our aim is to ensure that all food provided, prepared or served to children is safe, hygienic and suitable for their individual needs, in line with the EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers effective 1 September 2026, current Food Standards Agency (FSA) requirements, UKHSA health-protection guidance and London Borough of Bromley food-safety requirements.

This policy has been reviewed against the strengthened EYFS safer-eating requirements. Food must be prepared in a way that reduces choking risk, individual dietary and allergy requirements must be understood and followed, and children must be within both sight and hearing of an adult while eating.

Where the setting stores, prepares, distributes or serves food as a food business, the premises must be registered with the London Borough of Bromley Food Safety Team. Bromley states that nurseries and pre-school clubs are included within food-business registration requirements.

Procedures

1. Risk Assessment

- A comprehensive risk assessment underpins all food-related activities, covering:
- Safe food purchase
- Temperature-controlled storage
- Cross-contamination prevention
- Food preparation and cooking
- Personal hygiene
- Cleaning and disposal of waste
- Supervision of children during any food-based activity
- This risk assessment is reviewed at least annually, after any food-safety, choking or allergy incident, and whenever the menu, premises, children's needs, procedures or statutory guidance changes.

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2. Staff Training & Personal Hygiene

- Staff involved in preparing or handling food receive food-hygiene instruction, supervision and/or training appropriate to their duties. The setting determines the level of formal training required according to the food activities undertaken and maintains evidence of staff competence.
- Staff follow personal hygiene rules at all times, including:
- Regular handwashing
- Wearing clean clothing and tying back long hair
- Covering cuts and abrasions
- No handling of food when unwell (diarrhoea, vomiting, infectious illness)
- Staff illness procedures follow UKHSA exclusion guidance.
- Staff who handle food receive allergen-awareness training appropriate to their role and understand the setting's procedures for preventing allergen cross-contact and responding to an allergic reaction.
- Staff with diarrhoea or vomiting do not handle food and follow current UKHSA exclusion guidance. Return to food handling is only when the applicable exclusion period has ended and the person is well enough to resume duties.

3. Food Purchasing

- Food is purchased from reputable and reliable suppliers.
- Deliveries and purchased items are checked for:
- Damage, contamination, or evidence of pests
- Use-by and best-before dates
- Correct packaging and labelling
- Ingredient and allergen information is checked whenever products are purchased or substituted. Staff never assume that a familiar product has unchanged ingredients and retain or record the information needed to identify allergens in food served to children.

4. Safe Storage of Food

- Food is stored at appropriate temperatures and within safe time frames.
- Refrigerator temperatures are checked and recorded regularly. Chilled food is kept at a safe temperature in accordance with the setting's food-safety management procedures and FSA guidance; any temperature outside the safe range is acted on promptly.
- All food is stored in sealed, labelled containers to prevent contamination.
- Dry food is kept in clean, sealed containers in cupboards free from damp or pests.
- Packed lunches requiring refrigeration are kept chilled. Where refrigeration is not available, parents are asked to provide an insulated lunch bag with suitable ice packs; food is not left at unsafe temperatures.

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5. Food Preparation & Cross-Contamination Prevention

- Food-contact surfaces are cleaned before and after use with products and methods suitable for food premises, following manufacturer instructions for dilution and contact time where applicable.
- Separate, clean equipment and safe preparation methods are used where necessary to prevent microbiological cross-contamination and allergen cross-contact. Equipment is thoroughly cleaned between tasks.
- Staff do not prepare food when children's nappies are being changed or during toileting duties.
- All surfaces, utensils, equipment and crockery are:
 - Non-porous
 - Sanitised
 - Stored hygienically
- Waste food is disposed of daily in sealed bins.
- Food is prepared in an age- and developmentally appropriate way to reduce choking risk. Staff follow current EYFS safer-eating guidance when cutting, cooking and serving foods and take account of each child's chewing, swallowing, sensory and developmental needs.
- For a child with a known food allergy or intolerance, staff check the child's current allergy/healthcare plan and ingredient information before serving food. If there is uncertainty about ingredients or cross-contact, the food is not served.
- If food has been prepared incorrectly for a child with an allergy, staff do not simply remove the allergen; a fresh portion is prepared safely using clean equipment and ingredients.

6. Serving Food and Drink

- Food is served using clean, sanitised utensils.
- Allergenic foods are managed in line with the child's current allergy/healthcare plan and the setting's Allergy Management Policy. Written ingredient/allergen information is kept accurate and up to date for food provided by the setting.
- Children are encouraged to follow hygiene practices such as handwashing before eating.
- Children are appropriately supervised throughout snacks and meals and, from 1 September 2026, are within both sight and hearing of an adult while eating. Staff position themselves so they can respond immediately to choking, allergic reaction or other distress.
- Children are seated safely and encouraged to eat at an appropriate pace. Food sharing or swapping is prevented where it could create an allergy, intolerance or other dietary risk.

7. Children's Cooking and Food-Based Activities

- When children are involved in cooking activities:
- They are supervised at all times.
- They are taught about hygiene, including washing hands and tying back long hair.

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- Children are kept away from hot surfaces, ovens, kettles, or hot liquids.
- Children never use electrical equipment unsupervised.
- Before a cooking or tasting activity, staff check children's allergies, intolerances and dietary requirements, assess choking and burn risks, and ensure ingredients and equipment can be used safely for every participating child.

8. Cleaning and Waste Disposal

- The kitchen and food preparation areas are subject to daily cleaning schedules.
- Cleaning materials are stored away from children and never near food.
- Waste is removed daily and bins are cleaned regularly.

9. Reporting Food Poisoning and Infectious Illness

- Food poisoning may arise from various causes. We comply with legal reporting duties:
- The setting contacts the London Borough of Bromley Food Safety/Environmental Health service promptly where food poisoning or a suspected food-borne outbreak may be linked to the setting, and follows any instructions from Environmental Health or UKHSA.
- Where two or more people have similar gastrointestinal illness, or there is another pattern suggesting a food-borne outbreak, the manager seeks public-health/environmental-health advice rather than waiting for a confirmed diagnosis in every case.
- All suspected incidents are recorded, relevant food/ingredient information is preserved where appropriate, and the setting cooperates fully with investigation and control measures.
- Ofsted notification:
- Ofsted is notified of a serious childcare incident as soon as possible and always within 14 days. This includes food poisoning affecting at least two children while in the setting's care, in accordance with Ofsted's current reporting guidance.
- The setting also considers whether any choking, allergic reaction, serious illness or other food-related event meets Ofsted's serious-incident notification criteria and follows the setting's accident/incident and safeguarding procedures.

10. Compliance with Disability and Allergy Requirements

- All food-hygiene procedures take account of children with allergies, intolerances, coeliac disease, disabilities and other medical or dietary needs. Reasonable adjustments are made so children can participate safely and inclusively.
- Allergen cross-contact is actively managed through accurate ingredient information, separation where needed, handwashing, cleaning, safe storage and preparation, and staff training. The setting recognises the 14 allergens that must be declared under food law and also acts on any other ingredient a child must avoid.

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- Emergency allergy medication is accessible in accordance with the child's healthcare/allergy plan, and staff know how to recognise and respond to anaphylaxis and when to call 999.

Legal Framework

- Retained Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs, as it applies in Great Britain
- Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013, as amended
- Food Safety Act 1990
- Food Information Regulations 2014 and retained food-information law, including allergen information requirements
- Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers, effective 1 September 2026
- London Borough of Bromley food-business registration and food-safety requirements

Further Guidance

- Food Standards Agency: Safer Food, Better Business and current food-hygiene/allergen guidance
- UK Health Security Agency: current health-protection and exclusion guidance for children and young people's settings (updated 7 September 2026)
- London Borough of Bromley: Food Safety, Environmental Health and food-business registration guidance
- DfE: EYFS safer-eating and nutrition guidance for early years providers