



Safer Eating Policy

Policy Statement

At Little Explorers, we are committed to promoting the safe preparation, handling, and supervision of food for all children from birth to five years of age. This policy sets out how we ensure that all children are supported with their individual dietary needs and are kept safe during mealtimes in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and best practice guidance.

EYFS Compliance Statement

This policy is implemented in accordance with the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), including Food and Drink, Health, and Staffing requirements.

Dietary Requirements and Health Needs

- Prior to a child starting at the setting, we gather full information on any special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies or intolerances, and any relevant health conditions.
- This information is documented and shared with all staff involved in food preparation, handling, and service.
- We work closely with parents/carers and relevant health professionals to create tailored allergy action plans where appropriate.
- Information is reviewed regularly and updated immediately upon notification of any changes.

Oral Health

We promote good oral health by limiting sugary foods and drinks, encouraging water and milk consumption, and supporting children to develop healthy habits in line with NHS guidance.

Allergen Control

We comply with UK Food Information Regulations (Natasha's Law), ensuring all allergens are clearly identified, communicated, and managed to prevent cross-contamination.

Supervision & Ratios

Children are supervised at all times during eating, with staff deployed in line with EYFS ratio requirements to ensure active and effective supervision.

Hygiene & Safety

Food preparation and storage comply with Environmental Health standards, including temperature control, cleaning schedules, and infection prevention procedures.

Inclusion

We respect and accommodate cultural, religious, and ethical dietary requirements in line with the Equality Act 2010.

Bottle Feeding

Formula and breast milk are prepared, stored, and handled safely in line with NHS guidance.

Risk Assessment

Mealtimes and food-related activities are risk assessed and regularly reviewed to ensure children's safety.

Food Preparation and Individual Needs

- Food is prepared with full consideration of each child's dietary requirements and developmental stage.
- We work with parents/carers to understand each child's weaning journey and the textures they are familiar with. No assumptions are made based on age.
- Staff follow *Start for Life NHS Weaning Guidance* to support children moving safely and confidently through stages of solid food introduction.
- Foods are prepared in line with the child's chewing and swallowing abilities, using age-appropriate textures and ensuring foods are cut safely (e.g., grapes halved lengthways, no whole nuts).

Choking Prevention

- We strictly follow guidance from *Food Safety - Help for Early Years Providers* and the *NHS advice on choking* to reduce risk.
- Children are always seated securely in highchairs or low chairs when eating. They are never allowed to eat while walking or playing.
- Distractions are minimised in designated eating areas to help children focus during mealtimes.
- Staff are vigilant and always maintain sight and hearing of children during meals and snacks.
- Children are not left unattended while eating under any circumstances. Staff are trained to identify the silent signs of choking and sit facing the children whenever possible to prevent food sharing and observe reactions.

- Where appropriate, food is cut, mashed, or softened to ensure safe swallowing and chewing.

Staff Training and Responsibilities

- All staff involved in food preparation or serving receive training on food allergies, anaphylaxis, choking hazards, and safe weaning.
- At least one member of staff with a valid Paediatric First Aid certificate is always present during mealtimes in each room.
- A named staff member is assigned at each snack and meal to ensure food served meets each child's dietary needs.
- All staff are aware of the differences between food allergies and intolerances and that children may develop allergies at any stage, especially during the weaning period.

Responding to Choking or Allergic Reactions

- Any choking incidents requiring intervention are recorded in full, including how and where the incident occurred.
- Parents/carers are informed on the same day, and the incident is reviewed by senior staff.
- Choking and allergy records are monitored to identify any patterns or common risks, and adjustments are made accordingly to minimise future risks.

Resources and Guidance

- Staff use and refer to:
 - *British Society for Allergy and Clinical Immunology (BSACI) Action Plans*
 - *NHS Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Guidance*
 - *Weaning - Start for Life NHS*
 - *GOV.UK Food Safety for Early Years Providers*

Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed annually or in response to updated legislation, guidance, or following any serious incident. Staff are reminded of safer eating procedures regularly during supervision, team meetings, and safeguarding updates.

This policy was adopted on	This policy was reviewed on:
<i>31/07/2025</i>	4th May 2026