The Stacey Pre-School
Play • Explore • Discover • Learn

03 Food Safety and Nutrition Policy

Alongside associated procedures in 03.1-03.6 Food safety and nutrition, this policy was adopted by *The Stacey Pre-School* on *10.01.26*

Aim

The Stacey Pre-School 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 responsibility and duty of care for those who work in and receive a service from The Stacey Pre-School, 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 meals and 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.
- The Stacey Pre-School 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 the menus.
- 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 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.
- 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)

Paediatric Allergy Action Plans - BSACI

Food allergy - NHS

Anaphylaxis - NHS

Weaning - Start for Life - NHS

Help for early years providers : Food safety

Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance (2025)

Allergy action plan

03.1 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 is responsible for ensuring that the requirements in **Safer Food Better Business** are implemented.
- Cooks and 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 is responsible for overseeing the work of the cook and all food handlers to ensure hygiene and allergy procedures are complied with.
- The setting manager has responsibility for conducting risk assessment based on the 'Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point' method set out in Safer Food Better Business.
- Cooks carry out and record daily opening/closing checks, four weekly reviews and dated records of deep cleaning.
- The cook and setting manager maintain a Food Allergy and Dietary Needs folder 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 displayed for all staff and the risk assessment shared.
  - a record of food menus along with any allergens
  - a copy of the FSA booklet '**Allergen information for pre-packed and loose foods'** available at https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/allergen-information-for-pre-packed-and-loose-foods
  - a copy of the Food Allergy Online Training CPD certificate for the cook and each member of staff that has undertaken the training

- The setting manager is responsible for informing the trustees who then reports to Ofsted or the childminding agency of 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 meat pie bought at a supermarket or 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/carers are requested not to bring food that contains (or may contain) 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 – unless the labels are affixed to the container.
- 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, meat and fish are to be used the next/same day.
- 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 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 menus and displayed for parents.
- Food handlers wash hands and cover any cuts or abrasions before handling food.
- Separate boards and knives are used for chopping food, usually colour coded.
- 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. It is not used to reheat 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 several 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 is kept and used 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
  - coloured plates
  - place mats
  - other methods as agreed by the setting manager
- 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.
- Food is taken from the kitchen to the rooms on a trolley, not carried across rooms.
- 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#.U7FCVGlOWdI

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

03.2 Food for play and cooking activities

Some parents/carers 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 vegetarian, should not be given any food to play with that contains animal products (Gelatine). Parents/carers' views should be sought on this.

In some cases, it is not appropriate to use food for play, 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 or may cause choking.
- 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; as there is a 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 paper food bag and refrigerated 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.

Other activities with flour

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.

Baking: You can do baking activities where flour is used and then the food is cooked. You must ensure that the activity is risk assessed, and children do not eat the uncooked flour or the mixture.

03.3 Milk and baby food preparation and storage

Purchasing and storing food

Note: All bullet points greyed out is because the advice does not apply to The Stacey Pre-School e.g. children are admitted from the age of 2 and/or are fully weaned, etc. The information is retained should the current child profile change i.e. should the setting begin to accept babies or toddlers.

- Where parents/carers provide infant formula to be made up at the setting, this is checked to make sure it is in date and that the seal is not broken, then labelled with the child's name.
- Parents/carers must not send in bottles containing pre-boiled and cooled water ready for formula to be added. They should instead send in empty, sterilised bottles in accordance with current NHS guidance on the preparation of formula milk.
- If parents/carers are providing formula milk already made up at home, or breast milk, it should already be made up into sterilised bottles and clearly labelled with the child's name.
- Parents/carers are advised to follow the manufacturer's guidance and to transport the prepared feeds or breast milk in a cool bag. On arrival, feeds are taken out of the cool bag and put straight into the fridge.
- Made up feeds or breast milk is always used on the same day.
- In line with current Food Standards Agency guidance, parents are advised not to give toddlers and young children (ages 1 – 4.5 years) rice drinks as a substitute for breast milk, infant formula or cow's milk. Parents/carers should speak to their child's health visitor for further guidance if their child has a milk intolerance and needs an alternative.
- A small store of infant formula is usually kept in case of emergency. This is regularly checked to make sure it is still in date. Parents are consulted before it is made up.
- If parents/carers provide weaning cereals, these need to be checked to make sure they are in date and should be in unopened packets. These are labelled with the child's name.
- Parents/carers are informed that they should not bring in food that contains nuts. Staff check packets to make sure they do not contain nuts or nut products.
- Packaged baby cereal is kept in plastic airtight containers to prevent contamination and to ensure freshness.

Preparation

- Members of staff wash hands before or on entering the milk kitchen.
- Preparation of feeds and weaning food is restricted to key persons or co-workers; other staff/students preparing food are supervised by a permanent staff member or key person who is clear about the requirements for each child.
- All weaning foods provided by the setting i.e. bread, cakes, biscuits, cheese and any foods in the 14 allergens list are identified and listed on children's menus.
- Scoops of milk are levelled off with a knife to make sure they are the correct amount.
- All water is boiled first before making milk feed, mixing food or preparing a drink for all babies under one year and should be allowed to cool for no more than 30 minutes. Water that has already been boiled once should not be boiled again.
- Water given to babies over 6 months old as a drink does not need to be boiled first, for babies under 6 months the above guidance applies.
- Bottles are cooled under cold running water and the temperature checked on the inside of an adult's wrist to ensure that it is body temperature, which means it should feel warm or cool but not hot.
- Only sterilised bottles, spoons, plates are to be used for babies under one year and these are to be kept in the milk kitchen.
- Vinyl gloves are used to prepare milk feeds or weaning food for babies.
- Raw fruit or vegetables given to babies are washed, peeled, cut or blended.

- Finger foods, such as rusks, are served in a dish.
- Babies are slowly introduced to food in the setting and there is ongoing discussion between parents/carers and staff about the stage their child is at regarding the introduction of solid food, including the textures the child is familiar with. Weaning is done at the child's pace in partnership with parents/carers and assumptions are not made based on a child's chronological age.

Further guidance on making up bottles in advance for use at the setting can be found at: www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/breastfeeding-and-bottle-feeding/bottle-feeding/formula-milk-questions/

Guidance for the storage of breast milk is available from: www.nhs.uk/start4life/baby/feeding-your-baby/breastfeeding/expressing-your-breast-milk/storing-breast-milk/

03.4 Menu planning and nutrition

Note: The Stacey Pre-School does not provide or cook meals on the premises, however snack time at forest school may include activities such as cooking porridge on the camp fire, in which case the following procedures may be relevant.

Food provides a healthy, balanced diet for growth and development. Foods containing any of 14 allergens identified by the FSA are identified on menus. Dietary guidance to promote health and reduce risk of disease is followed. When planning menus, the setting manager and cook ensure that:

- Parents/carers and staff can contribute ideas for menus which are confirmed each week in advance. A four- to six-week cycle reviewed seasonally is a good way of working out menus.
- Menus reflect cultural backgrounds, religious restrictions and food preferences of some ethnic groups.
- Menus are clearly displayed so that parents and staff know what is being provided.
- Foods that contain any of the 14 major allergens are identified on the menu that is displayed for parents/carers.
- Parents/carers 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/carers.
- Staff refer to Help for early years providers : Food safety which includes:

  Example menus for early years settings in England: Guidance and Example menus for early years settings in England : Recipes
- Eat Better, Start Better - Foundation Years.
- The setting manager maintains a record of children's dietary needs in a Food Allergy and Dietary Needs folder.

Pre-prepared cook chilled meals and hot meals from suppliers

If the setting uses a food supplier to provide either hot meals prepared off site or chilled/frozen meals to be heated on site, the supplier's instructions for safe storage, heating and serving must be followed.

- Ingredients are checked to identify allergens (this will be clearly indicated on packaging).
- A temperature probe is used to check that cook chilled foods are heated correctly.
- Foods delivered hot are checked as above.
- Foods are served within the time stipulated by the supplier.
- Left-overs are not kept and reheated for another day.
- The guidance in Safer Food Better Business (Food Standards Agency 2020) is always followed.

Packed lunches

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

All parents are advised they must not include nuts in their child's lunch box.

Parents/carers 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.

03.5 Meeting dietary requirements

Snack and mealtimes are an important part of the day at The Stacey Pre-School. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. We aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs and preferences.

- Staff discuss and record children's dietary needs, allergies and any ethnic or cultural food preferences with their parents/carers. 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 at The Stacey Pre-School**
- If a child has a known food allergy, procedure **04.4 Allergies and food intolerance** is followed.
- Staff record information about each child's dietary needs in the individual child's registration form; parents/carers 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/carer'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 menus of meal and snacks are displayed on the notice board for parents/carers to view. Foods that contain any food allergens are identified.
- Staff aim to include food diets from children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.
- Through on-going discussion with parents/carers and research by staff, staff obtain information about the dietary rules of religious groups to which children and their parents belong, and of vegetarians and vegans, as well as 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/carers 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/

03.6 Breast feeding

We recognise the important benefits of breastfeeding for both mothers and their babies. All mothers have the right to make informed choices, and staff will ensure that clear and impartial information is available. Staff will fully support parent/carer's choices.

We promote the Department of Health's recommendations on feeding infants, as follows.

- Breastmilk is the best form of nutrition for infants.
- Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended for the first six months (26 weeks) of an infant's life.
- Six months is the recommended age for the introduction of solid foods for infants.
- Breastfeeding (and/or breast milk substitutes, if used) should continue beyond the first six months, along with appropriate types and amounts of solid foods.

General

- Support is offered to promote and maximise the benefits of breastfeeding to new and expectant mothers attending the setting. Information is provided in the form of leaflets and 'signposting' to support groups and other sources of information.
- Publicity materials for bottle feeding and formula milk are not displayed within the setting.
- Mothers are enabled and supported to feed their babies within the setting. Every effort will be made for mothers who wish to feed their babies in private to do so.
- Toilet and baby changing areas are not offered as areas for breastfeeding as these cannot offer a hygienic environment.
- If a visitor to the setting objects to a mother breastfeeding, the 'complainant' will be moved to an area where they can no longer view the mother. The mother will not be disturbed.
- Staff co-operate with healthcare professionals and voluntary support groups to ensure a consistent approach to the promotion of breastfeeding benefits throughout the setting. This will be achieved by sharing of information and resources
- Staff do not discriminate against any mother in her chosen method of feeding and will not dictate choices to mothers

Further Information and resources

Breastfeeding and bottle-feeding advice (NHS) www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/breastfeeding-and-bottle-feeding/

03.6 Our Snack Provision & Firepit Cooking Policy

03.6.1
Policy Statement

At The Stacey Pre-School, we recognise the importance of providing healthy, balanced and nutritious food to support children's growth, development, wellbeing and lifelong relationship with food.

We aim to create positive, enjoyable and inclusive food experiences that encourage children to explore a variety of flavours, textures and ingredients while developing independence, confidence and healthy eating habits.

Our approach reflects the Pre-School's child-led, play-based learning philosophy and positive environmental ethos. We particularly value opportunities for children to develop an understanding of food through practical experiences, including preparing snacks, exploring seasonal produce, learning about growing food and participating in supervised cooking activities in our dedicated forest school area.

This policy has been developed with reference to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework and the Department for Education's Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance.

03.6.2
Policy Aims

We aim to:

- Provide nutritious, varied and age-appropriate snacks and cooking experiences.
- Encourage children to enjoy a wide range of fruit, vegetables and other nutritious foods.
- Promote positive attitudes towards food, eating and healthy lifestyles.
- Support children's independence and confidence in making appropriate food choices.
- Respect individual dietary, medical, cultural and religious requirements.
- Ensure safe food preparation, handling, serving and supervision.
- Reduce unnecessary added sugar, salt and highly processed foods.
- Promote environmental awareness through seasonal ingredients, reducing food waste and outdoor cooking experiences.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers to support children's nutritional wellbeing.

03.6.3
Our Approach to Healthy Eating

We recognise that children benefit from experiencing a varied diet incorporating the main food groups.

When planning snacks and cooking activities, we consider the nutritional value, variety, portion size and suitability of the foods offered.

We aim to include:

- A wide variety of fruit and vegetables.
- Starchy carbohydrates, including appropriate wholegrain options.
- Dairy foods or suitable fortified alternatives.
- Sources of protein, including beans, pulses and other suitable ingredients.
- Fresh drinking water, which is available and accessible throughout the session.

We aim to limit foods containing high levels of added sugar, salt and saturated fat, choosing healthier alternatives wherever practicable.

We recognise that individual food preferences develop over time. Children will be encouraged, but never pressured, to explore and taste unfamiliar foods.

03.6.4
Our Regular Snack Provision

The Stacey Pre-School provides a varied selection of snacks that are rotated to offer children different tastes, textures and nutritional benefits.

Fresh Fruit
Our regular fruit choices include:

- Apples
- Oranges
- Raspberries
- Blueberries
- Strawberries
- Bananas
- Pears
- Kiwi fruit
- Watermelon

Fruit is offered in appropriate portions and prepared safely according to children's ages, developmental abilities and individual needs. We aim to provide variety across the week and encourage children to become familiar with different seasonal fruits.

Where appropriate, children are supported to participate in washing, peeling and preparing fruit under close adult supervision.

Bread, Crackers and Other Starchy Snacks
Our snack provision may also include:

- Crackers
- Crackerbread
- Breadsticks
- Bread or toast
- Bagels, crumpets, muffins
- Suitable wholegrain alternatives

We aim to choose varieties lower in salt and added sugar and include wholegrain options where possible. These foods may be served alongside fruit, vegetables or suitable dairy products to offer a varied and nutritious snack.

Cheese and Dairy Products
Our regular dairy choices include:

- Hard cheese
- Cheese spread

We use pasteurised dairy products suitable for young children and consider their salt content when selecting products. Hard cheese is prepared in appropriate strips or other safe shapes rather than large, hard cubes. Cheese spread is used in moderation, with consideration given to healthier and lower-salt alternatives. Suitable dairy-free alternatives will be provided where necessary to meet individual dietary requirements.

03.6.5
Forest School Cooking and Outdoor Food Experiences

Outdoor cooking forms an important part of The Stacey Pre-School's educational provision and environmental ethos.

Our dedicated forest school area provides opportunities for children to learn about food preparation, cooking, natural resources, seasonal ingredients, healthy eating and responsible use of outdoor environments.

All firepit cooking activities are planned, risk assessed and closely supervised by appropriately trained and authorised staff.

Our regular forest school cooking experiences include:

Porridge
Porridge is prepared using oats with milk, water or a suitable alternative.

Where appropriate, fresh fruit such as bananas, strawberries, raspberries, blueberries or apples may be added.

We avoid unnecessary added sugar and encourage children to appreciate the natural flavours of the ingredients.

Rice Pudding
Rice pudding is prepared using rice and milk or a suitable alternative.

We aim to prepare rice pudding with little or no added sugar, using suitable fruit to provide natural sweetness and additional nutritional value where appropriate.

Rice is cooked, served and stored in accordance with food safety guidance, recognising the particular risks associated with incorrect handling or storage of cooked rice.

Homemade Soups
Children may participate in preparing and cooking nutritious soups incorporating a variety of vegetables, beans and other suitable ingredients.

These may include:

- Potatoes
- Squash
- Tomatoes
- Peas
- Beans
- Other seasonal vegetables

We aim to use fresh or frozen vegetables and select reduced-salt or no-added-salt ingredients wherever practicable.

Soups are prepared with minimal added salt, and commercial stock products are selected carefully to reduce unnecessary sodium.

Vegetables and beans are cooked until appropriately soft and prepared in a suitable texture for young children.

Risotto
Risotto provides an opportunity for children to explore different grains, vegetables, flavours and cooking processes.

Ingredients may include rice, peas, squash, tomatoes and other seasonal vegetables.

We aim to prepare risotto using nutritious ingredients and low-salt stock or suitable alternatives. Where appropriate, beans, pulses, cheese or other suitable ingredients may be included to provide additional nutritional variety.

Educational Benefits
Through supervised food preparation and forest school cooking, children are encouraged to:

- Develop an understanding of where food comes from.
- Explore seasonal and locally grown produce.
- Develop early mathematical skills through measuring, counting and observing quantities.
- Strengthen communication and language through discussion of ingredients and cooking processes.
- Develop independence and practical life skills.
- Experience different flavours, smells and textures.
- Learn about healthy food choices.
- Develop an understanding of safe and responsible cooking practices.
- Appreciate the importance of caring for the natural environment and reducing food waste.

Participation is always appropriate to children's individual ages, abilities and developmental stages.

03.6.6
Food Safety During Forest School Cooking

The safety and wellbeing of children remain paramount during all outdoor cooking activities. The following procedures will apply:

1. All firepit cooking activities are supported by suitable risk assessments and conducted under the supervision of appropriately trained and authorised staff. We have 2 x fully trained Level 3 Forest School Leaders when firepit cooking activities are taking place.
2. Children must remain within designated safe areas, with clear boundaries established around the firepit and cooking equipment.
3. Only authorised adults may light, manage or extinguish the fire or handle hot cooking equipment.
4. Children may participate in suitable preparation activities, such as washing vegetables, mixing ingredients or measuring quantities, under close supervision.
5. Appropriate handwashing facilities and hygienic food preparation arrangements must be available. We also have a mobile unit suitable for hand washing.
6. Ingredients must be stored, transported and handled safely, with suitable temperature control for perishable foods.
7. Food must be cooked thoroughly, protected from contamination and allowed to cool to a safe temperature before serving.
8. Particular care must be taken with hot liquids, porridge, soup, rice pudding and risotto because these foods can retain heat and present a scalding risk.
9. Food must be served away from the firepit in a safe, designated eating area, with children appropriately seated and supervised.
10. Appropriate fire safety equipment, first aid arrangements and emergency procedures must be available and understood by staff.
11. Children are never given responsibility for handling hot pots, pans, cooking utensils or liquids.
12. Outdoor cooking does not proceed where weather conditions, staffing, equipment, food hygiene arrangements or other circumstances make the activity unsafe.

A separate Forest School Firepit and Outdoor Cooking Risk Assessment will support this policy.

03.6.7
Food Allergies, Intolerances and Special Dietary Requirements

The Stacey Pre-School is committed to ensuring that children with food allergies, intolerances, medical needs and special dietary requirements can participate safely and inclusively in food-related activities.

Before a child starts attending, parents/carers are asked to provide information about:

- Known food allergies and intolerances.
- Relevant medical conditions.
- Religious and cultural dietary requirements.
- Food preferences and restrictions.
- Any additional support required during eating.

This information is recorded, shared appropriately with relevant staff and kept up to date through ongoing communication with families.

Individual allergy action plans will be developed where appropriate, in consultation with parents/carers and relevant healthcare professionals.

At every snack time or cooking activity, a designated member of staff is responsible for checking that the food provided is suitable for each child's recorded dietary requirements.

Staff will check ingredient labels and allergen information, recognising that recipes and product ingredients may change.

Particular attention will be given to allergens potentially present in our regular foods, including:

- Milk and dairy products in cheese, cheese spread, porridge and rice pudding.
- Gluten-containing cereals in some crackers, breadsticks and other grain-based snacks.
- Other allergens that may be present in packaged ingredients, stocks, spreads or recipe additions.

We will take appropriate measures to prevent allergen cross-contact during preparation, cooking and serving.

Staff must be familiar with the symptoms of allergic reactions and anaphylaxis and the setting's emergency procedures.

No child will be excluded unnecessarily from food-related learning experiences because of dietary requirements. Suitable alternatives will be provided wherever reasonably practicable.

03.6.8
Safe Food Preparation and Choking Prevention

We recognise that children aged 2–5 may be at risk of choking and that food must be prepared and presented in a developmentally appropriate way.

Staff will:

- Cut small round foods, including blueberries, cherry tomatoes and similar items, lengthways into quarters.
- Prepare strawberries and other fruit in appropriately sized pieces.
- Remove stones, pips and other inedible parts.
- Prepare hard fruits such as apples and pears in thin slices, softening them where necessary.
- Cut watermelon into appropriate slices or strips, removing seeds and rind.
- Serve hard cheese in suitable strips rather than large cubes.

- Ensure beans, peas and other ingredients are cooked and presented in a form appropriate to each child's chewing and swallowing ability.
- Consider the texture of bread, crackers and breadsticks, particularly for younger children or those with additional feeding needs.
- Ensure that soup, porridge, rice pudding and risotto have cooled sufficiently before serving.
- Adapt textures and portion sizes for children with additional needs or known swallowing difficulties.

Children must be seated appropriately while eating and must not walk, run or play with food in their mouths.

Children must always be within the sight and hearing of an adult during snack and mealtimes and must never be left unattended while eating.

A staff member holding a valid full paediatric first aid certificate will be present in accordance with the EYFS safer eating requirements. Appropriate cover will also be maintained during outdoor eating activities.

03.6.9
Positive Mealtime Experiences

Snack times are valued as opportunities for developing children's independence, communication, social skills and confidence.

We aim to provide a calm, enjoyable and inclusive eating environment.

Practitioners will:

- Encourage children to wash their hands before eating.
- Promote appropriate independence in choosing and serving snacks.
- Model positive attitudes towards nutritious food.
- Encourage conversation and social interaction.
- Support children in recognising feelings of hunger and fullness.
- Offer encouragement to explore unfamiliar foods without pressure.
- Respect individual appetites and preferences.
- Avoid using food as a reward, punishment or means of managing behaviour.
- Support appropriate table manners and consideration for others.

Children are never forced to eat or finish food.

We recognise that some children may have sensory sensitivities, restricted food preferences or additional feeding needs and will work sensitively with families to support them.

03.6.10
Drinks and Hydration

Fresh drinking water is available and accessible to children throughout the Pre-School session, including during outdoor and forest school activities.

Children are encouraged and supported to drink regularly, particularly during physical activity and warm weather.

Plain milk may also be offered as appropriate.

We do not routinely provide squash, fizzy drinks, fruit juice or other sugar-sweetened drinks.

Individual medical or dietary requirements will be considered where necessary.

03.6.11
Food Hygiene and Safe Storage

All food preparation, handling and storage will follow appropriate food hygiene practices and Food Standards Agency guidance.

Staff involved in preparing or handling food must have appropriate knowledge, instruction, supervision and training for their duties and have undertaken Food Hygiene Level 2 training.

Procedures include:

- Thorough handwashing before food preparation and eating.
- Cleaning and sanitising food preparation surfaces and equipment.
- Washing fresh produce where appropriate.
- Checking food packaging, use-by dates and storage instructions.
- Maintaining appropriate refrigeration and temperature controls.
- Preventing cross-contamination and allergen cross-contact.
- Cooking food thoroughly and checking safe serving temperatures.
- Taking particular care with cooked rice and other foods that require controlled cooling and storage.
- Disposing of food safely where hygiene or storage conditions cannot be assured.

Perishable foods used for forest school cooking will be transported and stored safely.

Where outdoor conditions do not permit safe food preparation or storage, the activity will be adapted, relocated or cancelled.

Food hygiene arrangements will take account of the setting's shared use of the Stacey Community Centre premises.

03.6.12
Food, Sustainability and Environmental Learning

In keeping with our environmental ethos, we aim to help children develop respect for food, nature and the resources used to produce meals.

Where practicable, we will:

- Explore seasonal fruits and vegetables.
- Encourage children to learn about growing food.
- Make use of the orchard and outdoor areas for supervised nature and food-related learning.
- Introduce ingredients that reflect seasonal availability.
- Encourage sensible portioning to reduce food waste.
- Reuse appropriate equipment and minimise unnecessary packaging.
- Encourage children to develop an understanding of sustainable food choices.

Any produce grown or collected within the setting will only be eaten following appropriate identification, hygiene checks and risk assessment.

Children must never collect or eat plants, berries, fungi or other natural materials without express adult permission and supervision.

03.6.13
Partnership with Parents and Carers

We recognise the importance of working collaboratively with families to support children's nutrition, wellbeing and positive eating experiences. Parents/carers will be informed about our approach to food and nutrition and are encouraged to share information about their children's dietary needs, preferences and experiences.

We will communicate relevant changes to our snack provision and cooking activities, particularly where allergen or dietary considerations arise.

Parents will be encouraged to inform us promptly of changes to food allergies, intolerances, medical requirements or feeding needs.

We will respect the diversity of family traditions and food practices while ensuring that food offered within the setting is safe and nutritionally appropriate.

Where children bring food from home, families will be given appropriate guidance on food safety, choking prevention, allergens and healthy choices.

03.6.14
Staff Responsibilities

Pre-School Manager: The Pre-School Manager is responsible for overseeing implementation of this policy, ensuring that food provision and related practices meet the requirements of the EYFS and relevant guidance.

This includes overseeing safe food practices, staff awareness, risk assessments, dietary information and ongoing review of snack provision.

Deputy Pre-School Manager: The Deputy Manager supports implementation and monitoring of this policy, including ensuring that children's additional needs and SEND-related dietary requirements are appropriately considered.

Early Years Practitioners: All practitioners are responsible for following this policy, implementing safe food preparation and supervision procedures, checking dietary requirements as assigned, and promoting positive eating experiences.

Staff must report any concerns regarding food safety, allergies, nutrition or children's eating difficulties promptly to the Pre-School Manager.

03.6.15
Monitoring and Review

The Stacey Pre-School will regularly review its snack provision, menus and food-related activities to ensure that these remain healthy, balanced, nutritious, inclusive and appropriate for the children attending.

The Pre-School Manager will consider:

- The variety and nutritional quality of snacks.
- The balance of fruit, vegetables, carbohydrates, dairy and protein sources.
- Children's dietary and developmental needs.
- Food hygiene and safer eating practices.
- Feedback from children, parents/carers and practitioners.
- Changes to EYFS requirements and DfE nutrition guidance.

This policy will be formally reviewed at least annually, or sooner if statutory guidance, setting practices or children's needs change.

03.6.15
Related Policies and Guidance

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Procedures
- Administration of Medication Policy
- Forest School Risk Assessments
- Firepit and Outdoor Cooking Risk Assessment
- First Aid and Accident Reporting Procedures
- SEND and Inclusion Policy
- EYFS Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers
- DfE Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance
- Food Standards Agency Food Safety Guidance