

Food from home policy

This policy has been created in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework, Safer Food Better Business for Childminders, and national nutrition guidance.

Policy created: 1st April 2026

This policy is reviewed on an annual basis.

I am committed to supporting every child's health, safety and wellbeing—especially around food. I understand that some families may choose or need to send food from home. This may be personal preference or due to cultural, dietary, or medical reasons. I fully support this where it can be done safely, and in line with recommended food safety, allergen, and nutritional practices.

My aim is to work in partnership with families to ensure that all food provided—whether by me or brought from home—follows best practice in:

- Allergen awareness and control
- Food safety and hygiene
- Safe preparation, storage and reheating
- Supporting their stage of development
- Balanced nutrition and inclusive mealtime experiences

I want to make it easy for parents to understand how to safely send food from home and what to expect depending on the approach in my setting.

Why food from home needs careful management

Allergy awareness

Some children have food allergies or intolerances, which can pose a serious health risk. I work closely with families to understand and manage these needs carefully. **While I do not operate a blanket “nut-free” policy, I may restrict certain ingredients in my setting depending on the needs of the children attending (adapt policy wording for your setting).** If your child has a food allergy or intolerance, we will agree a health care plan together. This plan will outline how we manage risks, what foods should be avoided, and what steps to take in case of a reaction. This helps ensure that everyone caring for your child is fully informed and prepared. If you have an allergy action plan in place for your child from a medical professional please ensure this is shared with me.

Safer eating - reducing risk of choking

Please do not send in any foods that may pose a choking hazard for young children, such as whole nuts or round foods like grapes and cherry tomatoes (Round fruits must be cut lengthways into

quarters). Families are asked to always prepare food in a way that is suitable for their child's stage of development.

In line with safer food guidance, I follow best practices when handling, storing, or reheating food:

- Please send food in a clearly named insulated meal bag with an ice pack.
- Food must be consumed within 4 hours if not refrigerated.
- High-risk foods (e.g. cooked rice, meat, dairy) should be packed carefully and safely.

Reheating food

I am able to reheat food provided from home if agreed in advance. Please ensure food is suitable for reheating and provide written information on contents and storage.

Storage and facilities

I can store packed lunches in a fridge.

Please label your child's food clearly and ensure it arrives in a sealed container.

Supporting healthy choices

Mealtimes are an important part of early learning. I encourage:

- Balanced meals including a variety of food groups
- A shared mealtime experience to support social and emotional development
- Independence and confidence with food

I follow the early years nutrition guidance and am happy to share ideas or menus with families who are sending food from home. If you would like support in planning or preparing meals, I'm happy to share ideas and examples of best practice. I can also signpost helpful resources on request to support you in making safe and healthy food choices for your child..

I'm here to work with you to support your child's health, safety and wellbeing—at mealtimes and beyond. Whether your child eats meals I provide or food you send, I will ensure they are cared for in line with current safety and nutrition guidance.