



# ROTHESAY NURSERY SCHOOL

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## FOOD AND NUTRITION POLICY

September 2025

## 1. Purpose of Food Policy

The EYFS requirements state: "Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, these must be healthy, balanced and nutritious."

[Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#). 3.6.2. - September 2025

"Providing healthy, balanced and nutritious food ensures that all children:

- Get the right amount of nutrients and the energy that they need while they are growing rapidly, which is especially important for children who might not have access to healthy food at home. This can help prevent children from becoming overweight or obese.
- Develop positive eating habits early on. Children's early experiences with food can shape future eating habits. This can impact children's long-term health including maintaining a healthy weight, and good oral health.

The early years are a crucial time to reduce health inequalities and set the foundations for a lifetime of good health."

[Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance](#)- April 2025

This policy has been written to give clear guidance to staff, outside visitors, parent and carers, and children about the provision of food during the Nursery day and our approach to the positive promotion of healthy eating.

Good food provision in schools has been shown to lead not only to healthier children, but to improved attainment.

## 2. A Healthy Plate

Children should be encouraged to eat a balanced diet containing a wide variety of foods.

The [Eatwell Guide](#) uses government advice to show what a healthy and balanced diet should look like. It shows what a balance of foods should look like in one day or over a whole week. The advice in the Eatwell Guide applies to children from the age of 2 years.

A healthy balanced diet is based on the 4 main food groups (fruit and vegetables; potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates; dairy or dairy alternatives; beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins.) These provide essential nutrients to help children grow and develop.



The Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance breaks this down further in the following tables

Food	Guideline
<p><b>Fruit and vegetables</b></p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fresh, frozen, tinned or dried fruit and vegetables</li> <li>• pulses such as lentils and beans.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Provide</b> at least 1 portion of vegetables and/or fruit as part at each main meal (breakfast, lunch, dinner) and as part of some snacks (not including dried fruit).</li> <li>• <b>Provide</b> a variety of vegetables or fruit across the day and each week.</li> <li>• <b>Limit</b> baked beans to once a week if this is being counted as a vegetable.</li> <li>• <b>Avoid</b> dried fruit as a snack. It should only be provided as part of a meal.</li> <li>• <b>Avoid</b> fruit tinned in syrup and choose fruit tinned in juice.</li> <li>• <b>Avoid</b> added salt and sugar in tinned vegetables and pulses and choose no added salt and sugar options or those tinned in water.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Starchy Carbohydrates</b></p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• bread</li> <li>• potatoes, sweet potatoes, and other starchy root vegetables</li> <li>• pasta and noodles</li> <li>• rice and other grains</li> <li>• breakfast cereals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Provide</b> a portion of starchy food as part of each main meal (breakfast, lunch and tea) each day.</li> <li>• <b>Provide</b> plain starchy food such as plain savoury crackers, or unsalted unsweetened rice or corn cakes as part of at least 1 snack each day.</li> <li>• <b>Provide</b> at least 3 different types of starchy food and a variety of wholegrain and white starchy foods across breakfasts, snacks, lunch and tea each week.</li> <li>• <b>Provide</b> wholegrain starchy foods for at least 1 breakfast, lunch and tea each week.</li> <li>• <b>Limit</b> sugar and salt content in breakfast cereals. Choose those with the lowest sugar and salt content which are labelled as 'low' (green).</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Limit</b> the salt content in bread and bread products. Choose those with a lower salt content which are labelled as 'low' (green) or 'medium' (amber) in salt.</li> <li>• <b>Limit</b> starchy foods which have been fried to a maximum of once a week (e.g. chips, fried rice and fried noodles).</li> <li>• <b>Limit</b> tinned pasta in sauce (e.g. spaghetti hoops) and choose no added sugar options.</li> <li>• <b>Avoid</b> cereals labelled as 'high' (red) in sugar such as sugar-coated or chocolate-flavoured cereals.</li> <li>• <b>Avoid</b> flavoured dried rice, pasta and noodle products e.g. packets and pots of instant flavoured noodles, pasta and rice.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Dairy and plain, fortified plant-based alternatives</b></p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• milk</li> <li>• cheese</li> <li>• yoghurt and fromage frais.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Provide</b> 3 portions of milk and unsweetened dairy foods each day (which includes those provided at home).</li> <li>• <b>Provide</b> non-dairy alternatives that are unsweetened and calcium fortified (e.g. oat milk or soya milk).</li> <li>• <b>Provide</b> full fat dairy foods (such as cheese and unsweetened yoghurt and fromage frais) for children under the age of 2 and gradually introduce lower-fat dairy options after this age.</li> <li>• <b>Avoid</b> sweetened yoghurts and fromage frais (including non-dairy alternatives) and choose plain unsweetened options.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Proteins</b></p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• beans, pulses and nuts</li> <li>• meat and poultry</li> <li>• fish and shellfish</li> <li>• eggs</li> <li>• meat alternatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Provide</b> a portion of protein as part of lunch and tea each day.</li> <li>• <b>Provide</b> a variety of protein sources as part of lunch and tea across the week.</li> <li>• <b>Provide</b> at least 1 lunch and 1 tea for children each week which uses beans, lentils, pulses or a meat alternative as the protein source.</li> <li>• <b>Provide</b> vegetarian and vegan children with a variety of protein sources such as beans, pulses, and meat alternatives each week as part of lunch and tea.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Provide</b> oily fish (such as salmon, sardines or mackerel) at least once every 3 weeks; this can be provided as part of lunch or tea. When oily fish is not provided as a main meal in the week, you could try to provide oily fish as a snack.</li> <li>• <b>Limit</b> oily fish to a maximum of twice per week.</li> <li>• <b>Limit</b> the provision of processed meat products (e.g. sausages, breaded chicken, meatballs), processed fish products (e.g. fish fingers, fish cakes), and products made from meat alternatives (e.g. vegetarian sausages), to once a week for each of the 3 types as these products can be high in saturated fat and salt.</li> </ul>
<b>For all foods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Avoid</b> foods high in saturated fat, salt, and/or sugars like cakes, sweet and savoury pastries, biscuits, crisps, chocolate and other confectionary.</li> <li>• <b>Avoid</b> artificial sweeteners as they may encourage children to prefer very sweet foods</li> </ul>
<b>Drinks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Provide</b> children with access to water throughout the day.</li> <li>• <b>Provide</b> only fresh tap water and plain milk to drink.</li> <li>• <b>Provide</b> whole milk, semi-skimmed cow's milk or unsweetened calcium fortified non-dairy alternatives for children from 1 year of age.</li> <li>• <b>Avoid</b> skimmed and 1% cow's milk.</li> <li>• <b>Avoid</b> sugary drinks (including fruit juices, squash and smoothies).</li> </ul>

### 3. Portion Sizes

A portion size for a child under 5 is generally smaller than an adult portion.

There are no official guidelines on exactly how much food children need. Portions should be appropriate for a child's body size and appetite.

For toddlers, portion size is usually roughly the size of their clenched fist. About half a piece of fruit or a tablespoon of vegetables is a good portion for a snack.


It can be helpful to start meals with small servings. Children can always ask for more if they are still hungry.

Adults should avoid:

- Making children finish everything on their plate or eating more than they want to.
- Offering rewards to children for finishing everything on their plate (e.g. stickers or dessert.)

## Portion sizes for children aged 5 and under



 Department for Education

Food group	Portion size
A variety of fruit and vegetables (at least 5 portions each day)	
Cooked and raw	40g
Carbohydrates (4 portions each day)	
Cooked rice, pasta and potatoes	80g
Bread	25g
Average sized potato	1
Dairy and alternatives (3 portions each day)	
Milk	150ml
Cheese (sliced or grated)	15g
Cottage cheese	30g
Plain yoghurt	60g
Protein (2 portions each day)	
Baked beans	55g
Egg	55g
Meat, fish and poultry	40g
Most pulses and hummus	40g

### 4. School Food Standards

The School Food Standards (SFS) regulate food and drink provided at school settings at both lunchtime and at other times of the school day. Compliance with the SFS is mandatory for maintained nursery schools such as Rothesay Nursery School. The SFS defines which foods and drinks must be provided, those that are restricted, and those, which must not be provided.

### 5. Food and Drink Provision Throughout the Day

#### 5.1. Breakfast

Breakfast is an important meal and contributes towards energy requirements. Breakfast is an opportunity to provide essential vitamins and minerals.

Breakfast is served from 8-8.30am.

We provide the following foods/drinks at breakfast:

- Low sugar cereals
- Toast/bread including wholegrain varieties
- Low fat spread

- Fruit
- Semi skimmed milk
- Water

If parents indicate that a child has not eaten breakfast before arriving at Nursery children will be offered breakfast at Nursery. If this is a regular occurrence, Keyworkers and or the Family Worker will work with parents to educate them on the importance of eating breakfast.

## **5.2. Snack Times**

Snacks can be an important part of the diet of children and can contribute positively towards a balanced diet. Snacks provide an opportunity to have 1 of your 5-a-day, as well as include other important nutrients in the diet.

We provide the following foods at snack time:

- Fruit and vegetables (excluding dried fruit)
- Plain starchy food such as savoury crackers or unsalted rice cakes.

## **5.3. Packed Lunches**

We encourage parents to provide healthy well-balanced packed lunches. The packed lunch guidance is available as Appendix 1. Where necessary the child's keyworker and or the Family Worker will support families in ensuring that packed lunches are nutritious and the portion size is appropriate.

Staff will encourage children to eat their lunch independently, providing support where appropriate. Where necessary the child's keyworker and or the Family Worker will support families in developing children's independence eating and drinking.

Staff will encourage children to eat, however they will never force a children to eat.

## **5.4. Drinks**

Drinking water is available for all children throughout the day, free of charge. Children are actively encouraged to drink water regularly throughout the day. Lower fat milk is available for children at breakfast, snack and at lunchtimes.

We do not provide any other drinks including fruit juice, squash, flavoured water, soft drinks, fizzy drinks and smoothies due to the sugar content, preservatives, colourings, flavourings and sweeteners.

## **6. Celebrations and Special Occasions**

We are aware that Rothesay serves families from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. It is acknowledged that for some children the only celebration that they may have will be at Nursery. For this reason, children will be permitted to bring a birthday cake into Nursery to share with their friends. Parents will be advised not to bring in sweets, chocolates or party bags (even those that do not contain food.)

## **7. Menu Planning**

Planning snacks as a setting will help in ensuring that children are offered a balanced diet that includes a wide variety of different foods. The menu will be planned weekly to ensure that children eat a wide variety of food. This should include seasonal produce.

The planned menu should consider:

- Nutrition
- A varied and balanced diet across the week that includes different foods, tastes, textures and colours.

## **6. Food Allergies and Special Dietary Requirements**

We are aware of food allergies, intolerances and other dietary requirements of children and have procedures in place to identify and manage these, including:

- Religious and ethnic groups
- Vegetarians and vegans
- People with food allergies and intolerances
- People with medical conditions where dietary needs are impacted

Staff will obtain information about food allergies prior to a child starting at Nursery. Where children have allergies, additional medical information will be requested and an allergy plan will be drawn up. This information should be recorded, updated regularly and communicated to all staff involved in the preparation and handling of food. The child's photograph, as well as information about their allergy will be displayed clearly in areas where food is consumed.

Staff have completed training in first aid and in adrenaline/anaphylactic shock, to enable them to manage food allergies, intolerances and dietary requirements.

If a child has an epipen, the keyworker will be responsible for ensuring that the epipen is accessible while the child is at Nursery and also for ensuring that the expiry date is regularly checked.

## **8. The Dining Experience**

It is acknowledged that for some children snack times and meal times can be a stressful time. Staff will endeavour to ensure that food times are a positive experience. For children with sensory needs this may include limiting noise and other distractions, having a cloth to wipe hands if required and not pressuring a child to eat.

## **9. Communicating with Parents and Carers**

Working with parents and carers is essential to ensuring that children are provided with healthy, balanced and nutritious food in the setting and at home.

Snack menus should be shared with parents and carers, including appropriate food allergen information. This can help parents to balance the food they provide at home with the snacks served in the setting.

Seeking feedback from parents on menus can help ensure the snacks provided meet the individual needs of each child.

Sharing the timings of snack time and lunch time with parents can prevent children from overeating by ensuring they are not mistakenly fed twice.

Keyworkers will communicate with parents about children's eating and where appropriate the Keyworker and or Family Worker will work with families to ensure that each child has access to nutritious food with appropriate portion sizes.

### **10. Food Safety and Hygiene**

All foods brought from home are checked for potential allergens, so the risk of cross contamination is reduced.

All food is prepared in a way to prevent choking.

Packed lunch guidance is available for parents and includes tips on keeping food safe and fresh.

For food prepared on site we ensure food safety at all stages of food preparation and storage, including:

- We provide safe and hygienic facilities to prepare and store all our food
- We complete regular staff training and ensure that risk assessments and hazards are identified.
- Staff who prepare snack food have completed food safety certification

### **11. Planning Food Activities**

Teaching children where food comes from by growing vegetables and picking fruit will encourage children to try a range of foods.

Teaching children how to cook is an important part of our whole school approach to health and wellbeing. It captivates and stimulates pupil's interest and enjoyment of food as well as building self-confidence. Cooking helps children to create a positive relationship with food.

### **12. Meeting the needs of all children, including children with additional support needs.**

The cultural and dietary requirements of all children should be catered for. This includes children with:

- Food allergies and intolerances.
- Vegetarianism
- Veganism
- Pescetarianism
- Religious preferences
- Specific food needs due to physical or developmental issues, which may affect their ability to eat or drink independently. These children may need their food prepared in a particular way.

At Rothesay Nursery School, we provide a safe and inclusive environment for children to eat and children with special dietary requirements are included in mealtimes with other children as far as possible. Only where a risk assessment concludes that a significant risk remains despite adequate staff training and supervision at snack/meal times, would a child need to eat their meal separately to other children.

Some children may experience sensory needs in relation to foods, for example, sensitivity to textures, tastes or smells which can lead to limited preferences or aversions towards specific foods. These should be considered in menu planning.

### **13. Monitoring and Evaluation**

SLT and School Governors monitor and review this policy every two years. Effectiveness of the policy will be assessed through:

- Feedback from staff, children and parents
- Review of the policy by SLT and governors to determine if objectives have been met and to identify barriers and enablers to ongoing policy implementation.

### **Appendix 1- Packed Lunch Guidance**