

12. PACKED LUNCH POLICY



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(+44) 07375 137303

PACKED LUNCH POLICY

Food brought in from home

Families that wish to provide food from home and children that may need to bring their own meals and snacks for medical or cultural reasons are welcome to have a packed lunch each day. Our setting is plant-based (no meat, eggs, dairy products, honey, etc). To support our healthy eating approach, we ask that all packed meals follow the structure of our daily menu, available on our website. This helps ensure that every child receives a balanced and nutritious diet.

Parents may choose to include:

- One or more items from our Breakfast menu
- One or more items from our Snack of the Day options
- A hot meal for lunch and/or dinner, prepared as similarly as possible to our daily menu

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of parents and carers to ensure that food provided comply with this policy and follow the menu on our website. We will work with parents to support healthy choices and can provide advice or examples if needed.

- We reserve the right to return unsuitable food items and request that parents follow the agreed guidance for future meals. If a child does not have a suitable meal provided, a alternative will be prepared, and parents will be charged.
- Foods high in sugar, salt, additives, or artificial coloring should not be included (e.g. crisps, sweets, chocolate bars, fizzy drinks, etc).
- Allergies and dietary requirements must always be considered. Please check with us before sending any items that may contain allergens (e.g. nuts, sesame).

Food Storage and Safety Policy

All packed meals must be sent in a clearly labelled lunch box or bag with your child's name. To keep food safe and fresh:

- We recommend using ice packs to keep snacks cool throughout the day. (yogurt and fruits)
- Lunch and dinner should be provided in an insulated thermal container to ensure they remain warm until mealtime.
- Please note that Mama Bear Childcare does not provide refrigeration for children's packed meals, and we are unable to reheat any food brought from home.

This helps us maintain safe food practices and ensures that all children enjoy their meals in good condition.



Food and the Equality Act

The Equality Act 2010 requires that early years settings make reasonable adjustments to ensure children with protected characteristics are not discriminated against or disadvantaged, for example:

- Healthy food / snacks policy must allow a child with diabetes, who needs a carefully timed intake of calories through the day, to eat high calorie snacks between meals. This will ensure that you do not put the child at a disadvantage or risk a health crisis.
- A child with an allergy, we need to implement an allergy action plan, inform anyone providing food for the child, ask other parents not to send that food for their child, ensure the child with the allergy has support from a named staff member who checks their food before serving, sit with the child to ensure they are not having a reaction or food sharing etc.

You might find the guidance 'Disabled Children and the Equality Act 2010: What Early Years providers need to know and do' from the Council for Disabled Children useful.

Parents must read references about safe food preparation:

- Minimising choking on the Foundation Years website to share with parents:
<https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/2021/09/food-safety-advice-on-choking-hazards-in-settings/>
- EYFS 2025 update:
<https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2024/10/Summary-of-EYFS-changes-for-publication-PDF.pdf>
- BSACI Allergy Action Plan - <https://www.bsaci.org/patients/food-allergy-and-food-intolerance/>
- EU food allergen legislation from Anaphylaxis UK:
<https://www.anaphylaxis.org.uk/business/guidance-on-food-regulation/>
- FSA allergen record keeping:
<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/allergen-guidance-for-food-businesses>
- DfE Help for early years providers 'Food safety' page:
<https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/food-safety>

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- DfE Help for early years providers 'Healthy plate' page:
<https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/nutrition/a-healthy-plate>
- Disabled children and the equality act 2010:
<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/about-cdc/media-centre/news-opinion/disabled-children-and-equality-act-2010-what-early-years>
- Ofsted early years inspection handbook:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-inspection-handbook-eif>

This policy was adopted by

MAMA BEAR CHILDCARE

On

01/08/2025

Date to be reviewed

01/09/2026

Signed on behalf of the provider

Name of signatory

MARIANA ARAUJO

Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)

OWNER