

03 Food safety and nutrition policy



Alongside associated procedures in 03.1-03.6 Food safety and nutrition, this policy was adopted by Datchworth Pre-school on 1st November 2025.

Aim

Datchworth 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 corporate responsibility and duty of care for those who work in and receive a service from Datchworth 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 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.

- **Datchworth 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 Food safety and nutrition procedures



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.
- 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 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.
- The setting manager maintains a Food Allergy and Dietary Needs record 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 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 report to Ofsted 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- All vegetables and fruit are washed before preparing.
- Food left out is covered, for example when cooling down.

- Food prepared for children with dietary needs and preferences is clearly labelled and every effort is made to prevent cross-contamination.

Serving Food

- 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.
- 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 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#.U7FCVGIOWdl

Further guidance

[Safer Food Better Business www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/safer-food-better-business-sfbb](http://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](#)

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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 when raw or may choke.
- 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; 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 it should not be used for play, or for uncooked playdough recipes.

- Only playdough that has been cooked or made with precooked flour should be used.
- Only cornflour that has been cooked or made with precooked flour should be used.

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.

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03.3 Milk and baby food preparation and storage

Datchworth Pre-school does not have a milk kitchen.

Purchasing and storing food

Milk that has been purchased for use at snack time is stored in the Pre-school refrigerator, at 3 degrees centigrade.

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03.4 Menu planning and nutrition

Datchworth Pre-school does not provide cooked meals for children.

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. 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.

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03.5 Meeting dietary requirements

Snack and mealtimes are an important part of the day at Datchworth 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 allergies 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 Datchworth Pre-school.
- If a child has a known food allergy, procedure 04.4 Allergies and food intolerance is followed.
- 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.
- The daily provision of snacks is displayed on the notice board for parents/carers to view. Foods that contain any food allergens are identified.
- 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.
- 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/>

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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/