

Oyster Bay Nursery

Breast and Bottle Feeding Policy

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Date of last update: October 2026

Date agreed and ratified by October 2026

Date of next full review: September 2027

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and/or following any lessons learnt and/or updates to national or local guidance and procedures.

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Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	Grace Sidders Rachel Finch
Nominated Individual	Debra Hines
Nursery Manager	Grace Sidders

1. Policy Statement

At Oyster Bay Nursery, we recognise that feeding is an important part of every baby's care, comfort, health and development. We aim to support parents' feeding choices and ensure that all babies are fed safely, hygienically and in a calm, nurturing environment.

We work in partnership with parents and carers to understand each baby's individual feeding routine, preferences, needs and any relevant medical or dietary requirements. Staff follow current NHS guidance and appropriate food safety recommendations when handling, storing, preparing and serving expressed breast milk and infant formula.

2. Supporting Parents and Babies

Before a baby starts nursery, parents and carers will be asked to provide information about their child's feeding arrangements, including:

- Whether the baby receives expressed breast milk, infant formula or a combination of both.
- The baby's usual feeding times, approximate quantities and feeding cues.
- Any allergies, intolerances, medical conditions or special feeding instructions.
- The type of formula used, where applicable.
- Any relevant advice from a health professional.

Staff will follow the agreed feeding plan and communicate with parents about the baby's feeding, intake and any concerns. Babies will be fed responsively, with staff observing their hunger and fullness cues and never forcing a baby to finish a bottle.

3. Expressed Breast Milk: Storage and Handling

Oyster Bay Nursery supports parents who wish to provide expressed breast milk for their baby.

Parents should provide breast milk in a sterilised, suitable container or a purpose-made breast milk storage bag. Each container must be clearly labelled with the child's full name and the date the milk was expressed.

Staff will:

- Check that breast milk is clearly labelled and stored appropriately.
- Place breast milk in the back of the refrigerator, rather than the door, at a temperature of 4°C or below.
- Follow NHS guidance on storage times. Freshly expressed breast milk may generally be stored in a fridge at 4°C or below for up to five days.

- Check the condition and labelling of milk before use and raise any concerns with the Nursery Manager.
- Handle and warm breast milk hygienically, where warming is required.
- Never heat breast milk in a microwave or directly on a stove.
- Gently swirl the milk to mix separated layers and check its temperature before feeding.
- Discard any breast milk left in a bottle after a feed, following current NHS guidance. Milk remaining after a baby has started drinking should be used within one hour; any remainder must then be discarded.

If the storage temperature or history of the milk is uncertain, staff will not feed it to the baby until the matter has been resolved with the Nursery Manager and parents.

4. Parent Responsibilities for Bottle Feeding

Parents and carers are asked to:

- Provide clean, sterilised bottles and teats, with bottles assembled and covered where appropriate to prevent contamination.
- Clearly label bottles and any milk containers with the child's full name.
- Provide the infant formula in its original packaging when powdered formula is used, so staff can check the manufacturer's instructions.
- Ensure formula packaging is within its use-by date and that opened containers are labelled with the date opened, where appropriate.
- Inform staff of any change in formula, feeding routine, allergy or medical advice.
- Provide any additional information needed to support their baby's safe feeding.

The Nursery Manager will discuss arrangements with parents before the child starts, to ensure that the nursery can safely meet the baby's feeding needs.

5. Preparing Powdered Infant Formula

Oyster Bay Nursery follows current NHS guidance for preparing powdered infant formula. Powdered formula is not sterile and may contain harmful bacteria, so careful preparation and hygiene are essential.

Staff will prepare feeds freshly, one at a time, as required by the baby. The following procedure will be followed:

1. Clean and disinfect the preparation surface thoroughly.
2. Wash hands carefully with soap and water and dry them using a clean method.

3. Use fresh cold tap water and boil it in a kettle. Do not use water that has previously been boiled.
4. Allow the boiled water to cool for no more than 30 minutes, so that it remains at a temperature of at least 70°C.
5. Pour the required amount of water into the sterilised bottle first.
6. Add the exact amount of powdered formula specified by the manufacturer. Do not add extra powder or water.
7. Assemble the bottle securely according to the manufacturer's instructions and mix the feed thoroughly.
8. Cool the bottle quickly under cold running water, keeping the water away from the teat and bottle opening.
9. Check the temperature by shaking a few drops onto the inside of the wrist. The milk should feel lukewarm, not hot.
10. Feed the baby promptly once the milk has reached a safe temperature.

Staff must follow the formula manufacturer's instructions and current NHS recommendations. Any formula that has not been used within two hours of preparation must be discarded, unless it has been refrigerated promptly in accordance with current guidance. Once a baby has started feeding, any leftover formula must be discarded at the end of the feed and must not be saved for later.

6. Ready-to-Feed Liquid Formula

Where agreed with the nursery, parents may provide commercially prepared, ready-to-feed liquid infant formula in its original, sealed packaging.

Ready-to-feed formula is sterile until opened. Staff will:

- Check the product, packaging, expiry date and storage instructions before use.
- Wash their hands and use clean, sterilised feeding equipment.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for opening, pouring, storing and using the product.
- Transfer the required amount into a sterilised bottle, where necessary.
- Store any opened remainder in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and current NHS guidance, clearly identifying when it was opened.
- Discard any unused feed remaining in the baby's bottle after feeding.

Oyster Bay Nursery will not accept or serve formula that has been prepared at home in advance unless a specific arrangement has been assessed and approved in accordance with current safe-feeding guidance. Parents should speak to the Nursery Manager about suitable feeding arrangements before their child attends.

7. Warming Milk Safely

Breast milk and formula do not have to be warmed before feeding if the baby is happy to drink them at the supplied temperature.

Where warming is required, staff will use a bottle warmer or place the bottle in a container of warm water, following the equipment manufacturer's instructions.

Staff must:

- Never use a microwave to warm breast milk or infant formula.
- Ensure the bottle is warmed safely and evenly.
- Gently mix the contents where appropriate.
- Check the temperature on the inside of the wrist before feeding.
- Never leave a bottle warming unattended or for longer than the equipment manufacturer's recommended time.
- Discard a feed if safe preparation, storage or warming cannot be confirmed.

8. Safe and Responsive Bottle Feeding

Staff will ensure that babies are safe, comfortable and appropriately supervised throughout feeding.

During bottle feeds, staff will:

- Hold and support the baby in an appropriate, semi-upright position.
- Hold the bottle for the baby and maintain close supervision.
- Allow the baby to feed at their own pace and take breaks when needed.
- Observe signs that the baby is full, uncomfortable or needs to burp.
- Never prop a bottle up or leave a baby feeding unattended.
- Never force a baby to finish a bottle.
- Keep feeding equipment clean and ensure that bottles and teats are not shared between children.

Staff will record feeds as required by the nursery's usual care-recording procedures and share relevant information with parents at collection.

9. Hygiene and Infection Prevention

All staff involved in feeding must follow nursery hygiene and infection prevention procedures.

This includes:

- Washing hands before handling milk, bottles or feeding equipment.
- Cleaning and disinfecting preparation surfaces.
- Using appropriately sterilised bottles, teats and other feeding equipment.
- Preventing contact between clean equipment and contaminated surfaces.
- Checking labels and storage conditions before using milk.
- Disposing of unused milk safely.
- Reporting any equipment, storage or preparation concerns to the Nursery Manager immediately.

10. Allergies, Medical Needs and Individual Feeding Plans

Parents must inform the nursery of any diagnosed allergy, suspected intolerance, medical condition or professional advice that may affect feeding.

Where required, the nursery will agree an individual care plan with parents and relevant health professionals. Staff will follow the plan and ensure that any necessary training, precautions and emergency arrangements are in place.

Any change to a baby's formula or feeding instructions must be communicated to the nursery before staff implement the change.

11. Partnership with Parents and Carers

We value open communication with parents and carers and understand that feeding routines can change as babies grow.

Staff will share relevant information about feeds, quantities taken, difficulties encountered and any concerns observed. Parents are encouraged to discuss their baby's feeding needs with the Nursery Manager or key person at any time.

If the nursery cannot safely prepare, store or serve a particular feed, the Nursery Manager will discuss suitable alternatives with the family before the arrangement is put in place.

12. Staff Responsibilities

The Nursery Manager is responsible for ensuring that:

- Staff understand and follow this policy.
- Staff receive appropriate instruction on safe infant feeding and hygiene.
- Suitable facilities and equipment are available for storing and preparing feeds.
- Refrigerator temperatures and relevant food safety procedures are monitored.
- Feeding arrangements and individual care plans are kept up to date.
- Any concerns or incidents involving feeding are recorded and addressed.

All staff are responsible for following the policy, maintaining safe practices and seeking guidance whenever they are unsure about the suitability or safety of a feed.

13. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually, or sooner if NHS guidance, food safety recommendations, legislation or nursery arrangements change.

The Nursery Manager will ensure that the policy remains consistent with current NHS guidance, relevant Food Standards Agency advice and applicable early years requirements.