

Oyster Bay Nursery

Food Safety and Hygiene Policy

Date written: October 2026

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.

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

1. Policy Statement

Oyster Bay Nursery is committed to providing safe, healthy and nutritious food and drinks for all children. We recognise that babies and young children are more vulnerable to choking, foodborne illness and allergic reactions.

Staff will follow relevant Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements, Department for Education guidance and Food Standards Agency guidance to ensure food is stored, prepared, served and handled safely.

Children will be adequately supervised while eating, and individual dietary requirements, allergies, intolerances, developmental needs and parental preferences will be taken into account.

2. Dietary Requirements and Information from Parents

Before a child starts at the nursery, parents or carers will be asked to provide information about:

- Food allergies and intolerances.
- Special dietary requirements and preferences.
- Medical conditions that may affect eating or drinking.
- Cultural or religious dietary requirements.
- Infant feeding arrangements and the introduction of solid foods.

This information will be recorded, kept up to date and shared with relevant staff on a need-to-know basis.

Where a child has a food allergy, the nursery will ensure that an individual allergy plan is in place where appropriate. Staff must understand the child's symptoms, avoidance requirements and emergency response arrangements.

3. Safe Food Preparation and Choking Prevention

Food will be prepared in a way that reduces choking risks and is appropriate to each child's age, abilities and developmental stage.

Staff must ensure that:

- Stones and pips are removed from fruit before serving.
- Small, round foods, including grapes, strawberries and cherry tomatoes, are cut lengthways and into quarters.
- Large fruits and hard fruit or vegetables, such as melon, raw apple and carrot, are cut into suitable thin slices or prepared and softened appropriately.

- Hard fruit and vegetables are softened and skins removed when appropriate for babies beginning solid foods.
- Bones are removed from meat and fish.
- Cheese is cut into strips rather than chunks.
- Sausages, if served, have their skins removed and are cut lengthways into thin strips.
- Whole nuts and whole seeds are never given to children under five.
- Popcorn, hard sweets, marshmallows and raw jelly cubes are not offered to children.
- Raisins are not offered as a snack to children under 12 months, although suitably chopped raisins may be used as part of a meal where safe.

Staff must remain alert to choking hazards in meals, snacks, cooking activities and messy play. Food must be prepared according to the child's developmental readiness, not age alone.

4. Supervision During Meals and Snacks

Children must be supervised appropriately whenever they eat or drink.

Staff will ensure that:

- Babies and young children are seated safely in a suitable highchair or appropriately sized chair.
- Children are encouraged to sit calmly while eating.
- Children are not left alone while eating.
- Staff remain attentive and avoid distractions during mealtimes.
- Food is offered in safe sizes and textures suitable for each child.
- Children are supported to develop safe, positive eating habits.

Staff must know the nursery's choking response procedures and ensure that appropriate paediatric first-aid arrangements are in place. Any choking incident must be managed promptly, with emergency assistance sought where necessary and parents informed in accordance with nursery procedures.

5. Healthy Eating and Drinks

Oyster Bay Nursery aims to provide a balanced range of foods that support children's growth and development.

Fresh tap water and plain milk will be offered as appropriate to children's ages and individual dietary needs. Fruit juice, smoothies, squash, fizzy drinks and flavoured milk will not routinely be provided.

Staff will avoid adding unnecessary sugar or salt to children's food and will limit foods high in saturated fat and salt.

When offering plant-based alternatives to cow's milk, staff will consider the child's age and nutritional requirements. Unsweetened, calcium-fortified alternatives may be used from 12 months as part of a balanced diet where appropriate. Rice drinks must not be given to children under five.

Individual feeding plans and medical advice will be followed where a child requires a specific diet.

6. Foods Requiring Particular Care

Staff must follow current food-safety guidance when selecting and preparing food for young children.

Particular care will be taken with:

- **Honey:** Not given to children under 12 months.
- **Raw or partially cooked eggs:** Avoided unless they meet the relevant recognised safety standard for vulnerable groups.
- **Unpasteurised milk and dairy products:** Not provided to young children.
- **Fresh pâté:** Not provided to children under five.
- **Raw shellfish:** Not provided; shellfish served must be thoroughly cooked.
- **High-salt and high-sugar foods:** Limited or avoided.
- **Foods high in saturated fat:** Limited.
- **Shark, swordfish and marlin:** Not provided to young children because of mercury concerns.
- **Nuts and peanuts:** Managed carefully because of allergy risks; whole nuts are not given to children under five, and whole nuts, peanuts and seeds are not offered in a form that presents a choking hazard.

Staff must also follow age-appropriate guidance when introducing solid foods and must not offer foods unsuitable for a baby's age or stage of development.

7. Infant Feeding and Weaning

The nursery will work closely with parents and carers to support each baby's feeding arrangements.

Babies should ideally begin solid foods at around six months, in line with current NHS guidance. Where parents have chosen to introduce solids earlier, staff will discuss the arrangements with them and ensure that the nursery's approach is safe and consistent with relevant guidance.

Staff will consider each infant's developmental readiness and progress gradually from smooth or mashed foods to more varied textures.

For babies under six months, staff must follow the agreed feeding plan and relevant health guidance. Foods unsuitable for this age must not be offered.

8. Formula Milk and Feeding Equipment

Formula feeds will be prepared in accordance with current NHS guidance and the nursery's infant-feeding procedures.

Staff must ensure that:

- Hands are washed before preparing feeds.
- Bottles, teats and feeding equipment are thoroughly cleaned and sterilised before use.
- Formula is prepared safely and hygienically.
- Feeds are handled, stored and used according to current guidance.
- Each baby's feeding instructions are followed.
- Feeding equipment is clearly identified to avoid mix-ups.

Staff must never make changes to a baby's feeding arrangements without appropriate discussion with the parent or carer, except where urgent action is required to protect the child's safety.

9. Food Allergies and Intolerances

The nursery takes food allergies and intolerances seriously. Staff must be aware of each child's recorded dietary requirements before preparing or serving food.

The nursery will:

- Maintain accurate records of allergies and dietary needs.
- Ensure staff can access relevant allergy information.
- Identify allergens in meals and snacks.
- Check food labels and ingredient information.
- Prevent cross-contamination during storage, preparation and serving.
- Ensure children receive the correct meal.
- Follow individual allergy and emergency plans.
- Communicate with parents and food providers about changes to ingredients or dietary needs.

Food allergen information must be available in accordance with applicable food information requirements. Staff must never assume that a food is safe for a child without checking the relevant information.

Where a child shows signs of a serious allergic reaction, staff must follow the child's emergency plan, administer prescribed emergency medication where trained and authorised, and call 999 when required.

10. Food Hygiene and Cleaning

Food must be stored, prepared and served in a clean and hygienic environment.

Staff must:

- Wash their hands with soap and warm water before preparing, handling or serving food and before eating.
- Wash their hands after using the toilet, changing nappies, handling animals or undertaking tasks that may contaminate their hands.
- Clean food preparation and eating surfaces before and after use.
- Clean chopping boards, bowls, utensils and equipment thoroughly.
- Store food appropriately and follow safe temperature controls.

- Cook food thoroughly until steaming hot, then cool it sufficiently before serving to babies and young children.
- Keep pets away from food preparation areas.
- Wash tea towels and kitchen cloths regularly and replace them when necessary.
- Dispose of food safely and prevent cross-contamination between raw and ready-to-eat foods.

Staff involved in food preparation and handling must receive appropriate food hygiene training.

11. Mealtimes and Children's Wellbeing

Mealtimes should be positive, calm and inclusive experiences. Staff will encourage children to explore a range of healthy foods and develop independence in eating, while respecting individual needs and preferences.

Children must not be forced to eat. Staff will work with parents and carers where a child has ongoing feeding difficulties, restricted food choices or concerns relating to eating and drinking.

12. Staff Responsibilities

All staff must follow this policy and the nursery's related health and safety, medication, allergy and safeguarding procedures.

The Nursery Manager is responsible for ensuring that:

- Dietary and allergy records are maintained.
- Staff receive suitable food hygiene and relevant emergency training.
- Food preparation facilities are appropriate and hygienic.
- Allergy information is accessible to relevant staff.
- Safe food handling and supervision arrangements are followed.
- Any food-related incident is recorded and reviewed.

Any concerns about food safety, choking hazards, allergic reactions or hygiene must be reported to the Nursery Manager immediately.

13. Incidents and Record Keeping

Any choking incident, suspected allergic reaction, food contamination or other food-related safety concern must be dealt with promptly.

Staff must seek medical assistance where necessary, inform parents or carers as appropriate, complete the nursery's incident records and review whether changes to procedures are needed.

Records of allergies, dietary requirements, training and relevant incidents will be maintained securely.

Appendix:

