

Oyster Bay Nursery

Nutrition 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

At Oyster Bay Nursery, we are committed to promoting healthy eating habits and ensuring that children are offered nutritious, balanced and age-appropriate food while in our care.

We recognise that good nutrition supports children's growth, development, wellbeing, concentration and learning. We aim to create positive experiences around food and help children develop a healthy relationship with eating from an early age.

Our approach follows the current Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements and relevant early years nutrition and food safety guidance in England.

We work in partnership with parents and carers to meet children's individual dietary needs, including allergies, intolerances, cultural preferences, religious requirements and vegetarian or vegan diets.

We provide a calm, welcoming mealtime environment. Children will never be forced or pressured to eat. Staff will encourage children to explore different foods at their own pace and respect their hunger, fullness and individual needs.

2. Healthy Eating and Nutrition

Oyster Bay Nursery aims to provide and promote a varied and balanced diet that includes:

- **Starchy foods:** Such as bread, potatoes, rice, pasta and wraps.
- **Fruit and vegetables:** A variety of colours, tastes and textures.
- **Protein-rich foods:** Such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans, lentils and suitable alternatives.
- **Dairy foods or suitable alternatives:** Such as milk, yoghurt, cheese and appropriately fortified alternatives.
- **Water:** Available to children throughout the day.

We aim to limit foods high in added sugar, salt and saturated fat and to offer suitable portions for children's ages and appetites.

Food will be prepared, presented and served in ways that are appropriate to children's developmental stages, including safe textures and sizes to reduce choking risks.

3. Snacks and Drinks Provided by the Nursery

Oyster Bay Nursery provides healthy snacks during the day. These may include:

- Fresh fruit and vegetables.

- Breadsticks and other suitable starchy snacks.
- Milk, where appropriate for the child's age and dietary needs.
- Drinking water.

Water will be available throughout the day, and staff will encourage children to drink regularly.

Snacks will be selected to complement children's overall nutritional needs and will take account of allergies, intolerances and other dietary requirements.

4. Packed Lunch Policy

Parents and carers are asked to provide a healthy, balanced packed lunch for their child.

Staff will check packed lunches at the start of lunchtime to identify any obvious concerns relating to food safety, dietary requirements or choking hazards. If a lunch does not meet the nursery's expectations, staff will discuss this sensitively with the parent or carer.

4.1 What to Include

We encourage parents and carers to include:

- **A starchy food:** For example, bread, pasta, rice, potatoes or wraps.
- **Fruit or vegetables:** At least one suitable portion.
- **A source of protein:** For example, meat, fish, eggs, beans or lentils.
- **A dairy food or suitable alternative:** For example, cheese, yoghurt or an appropriate alternative.

Parents are encouraged to provide variety throughout the week and select foods that are suitable for their child's age and developmental stage.

4.2 Foods to Avoid or Limit

To support healthy eating and reduce risks, parents and carers are asked not to include:

- Sweets, chocolate bars and other confectionery.
- Cakes and other sweet treats as routine packed-lunch items.
- Sugary fizzy drinks or high-sugar squash.
- Foods high in salt or saturated fat, such as crisps and sausage rolls, except as occasional items where appropriate.

- Marshmallows, popcorn, boiled sweets and jelly cubes because of their choking risks.
- Nuts and nut-containing products, as Oyster Bay Nursery operates a nut-free policy.

Staff may ask parents or carers to remove or replace food that presents a significant safety risk or conflicts with the nursery's allergy procedures.

Water is the preferred drink with meals. Any drink provided must be suitable for the child's age and individual needs.

5. Packed Lunch Storage and Food Safety

Oyster Bay Nursery does not have facilities to refrigerate or reheat packed lunches. Parents and carers must therefore ensure that food is transported and stored safely until lunchtime.

Parents and carers should:

- Use an insulated lunch bag or lunch box clearly labelled with the child's name.
- Include suitable ice packs to keep perishable foods at a safe temperature.
- Use a child-friendly insulated food flask designed to keep hot food at a safe temperature if providing a warm meal.
- Follow food safety guidance when preparing and packing lunches.
- Avoid sending food that requires refrigeration or reheating unless it can be kept safely at the required temperature until eaten.

Staff will not reheat packed lunches or store them in a refrigerator. If staff have concerns that food may be unsafe, they will not serve it and will contact the parent or carer to discuss an appropriate alternative.

Children will be supervised while eating, and staff will follow the nursery's food hygiene and choking-prevention procedures.

6. Hot Meals and Menu Planning

Where Oyster Bay Nursery provides hot meals, menus will be planned using a four-week rolling cycle to offer variety in taste, texture, colour and nutritional content.

Menus will aim to include:

- **Starchy carbohydrates:** Such as wholegrain bread, potatoes, rice and pasta.
- **Fruit and vegetables:** A variety of vegetables and fruit across meals and snacks.

- **Protein sources:** Such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans, lentils and suitable meat alternatives.
- **Dairy foods or fortified alternatives:** Suitable for the child's age and dietary needs.

Menus will offer a variety of protein sources, including plant-based options such as beans and lentils. Suitable alternatives will be planned for children with allergies, intolerances, cultural or religious dietary requirements, and vegetarian or vegan diets.

Menu planning will take account of children's ages, developmental stages, portion needs and safe food textures. Advice on appropriate milk and dairy products will be followed in accordance with current age-specific guidance.

Menus will be reviewed at least twice a year and adjusted for seasonal changes, availability of ingredients, nutritional balance and feedback from families.

Menus will be shared with parents and carers in advance where practicable, for example through the nursery's communication app, newsletter or display board. Families are encouraged to provide feedback.

7. Allergies, Intolerances and Special Dietary Requirements

The safety and wellbeing of children with allergies and special dietary needs are a priority.

Parents and carers must provide accurate information about their child's allergies, intolerances, dietary needs and cultural or religious food preferences during registration. They must inform the nursery promptly of any changes.

Where necessary, the nursery will work with parents and carers to develop an individual dietary or allergy care plan. This will identify:

- Foods or ingredients that must be avoided.
- The symptoms and potential seriousness of an allergic reaction.
- Measures to prevent exposure and cross-contamination.
- Safe food alternatives.
- Emergency action and any prescribed medication required.

Staff involved in preparing, serving or supervising food will be made aware of relevant dietary requirements on a need-to-know basis.

Oyster Bay Nursery operates a nut-free policy. Parents and carers must not send nuts or nut-containing products into the setting, including in packed lunches or food brought for celebrations.

The nursery will take reasonable steps to prevent cross-contamination, including appropriate handwashing, cleaning surfaces and utensils, checking ingredient labels and ensuring food is correctly identified.

If a child has a suspected severe allergic reaction, staff will follow the child's emergency care plan, administer prescribed emergency medication as appropriate and call 999 without delay.

8. Mealtime Environment and Staff Responsibilities

We aim to make mealtimes calm, sociable and enjoyable experiences.

Staff will:

- Encourage children to sit safely and comfortably while eating.
- Supervise children throughout meals and snacks.
- Encourage independence, appropriate table manners and positive social interaction.
- Offer age-appropriate portions and allow children to respond to their hunger and fullness.
- Encourage children to explore unfamiliar foods without pressure.
- Respect children's individual preferences and developmental needs.
- Avoid using food as a reward or punishment.
- Never force-feed or shame children for refusing food.
- Monitor children for signs of choking, allergic reactions or difficulty eating.
- Follow individual dietary and medical plans.

Where a child regularly refuses food, has difficulty eating or there are concerns about their nutritional intake, staff will discuss this sensitively with parents or carers and consider whether further advice or support is appropriate.

9. Celebrations and Special Occasions

Families are welcome to celebrate birthdays and other special occasions with the nursery.

Parents and carers may choose to provide a birthday cake or sweet treat, but they must check with the nursery beforehand to ensure that the food is suitable for all children who may be offered it.

Any food brought into the nursery must comply with allergy, dietary, food safety and choking-prevention requirements. The nursery may decline food that cannot be safely served.

Families may instead provide a non-food celebration item, such as bubbles or stickers, subject to the nursery's safety procedures.

Where a sweet treat is provided for a birthday celebration, the nursery will avoid planning an additional sweet baking activity during the same week where practicable.

10. Cooking and Food Education

Cooking and learning about food are important parts of the Oyster Bay Nursery curriculum.

Through age-appropriate activities, children will have opportunities to:

- Learn about different foods and where they come from.
- Explore a range of colours, smells, tastes and textures.
- Develop an understanding of balanced eating and everyday food choices.
- Learn about fruit, vegetables, grains and other food groups.
- Develop practical skills and independence.
- Practise handwashing and safe food hygiene.
- Take part in simple food preparation activities with suitable supervision.

Staff will explain healthy eating in a positive, age-appropriate way. Foods will not be labelled in a way that shames children or encourages negative attitudes towards eating.

Cooking activities will use suitable ingredients and equipment. Staff will check allergies and dietary requirements before activities begin and ensure that children are supervised throughout.

Where a birthday sweet treat is provided during a particular week, staff will avoid planning an additional sweet baking activity during that week where practicable.

11. Food Hygiene and Choking Prevention

Staff will follow the nursery's food safety procedures and relevant food hygiene requirements.

This includes:

- Washing hands before preparing or serving food and before eating.
- Cleaning food preparation surfaces and utensils.

- Preventing cross-contamination between foods.
- Checking food is stored, transported and served safely.
- Checking ingredients and use-by dates where relevant.
- Following safe procedures for handling and disposing of food waste.
- Ensuring children are seated safely while eating.
- Cutting and preparing food in accordance with children's ages and abilities.
- Avoiding foods that pose significant choking risks.
- Maintaining close supervision during meals and snacks.

Children must not be encouraged to eat while running, playing or lying down. Staff will know how to respond to choking incidents and follow the nursery's first aid and emergency procedures.

12. Partnership with Parents and Carers

We recognise that families play an important role in developing children's eating habits.

Oyster Bay Nursery will work in partnership with parents and carers by:

- Sharing menus and healthy eating information.
- Providing guidance on packed-lunch expectations.
- Discussing allergies, dietary requirements and concerns about eating.
- Encouraging families to offer a varied diet at home.
- Sharing relevant feedback about children's eating at nursery.
- Listening to family feedback and reviewing our approach where appropriate.

Discussions about food or packed lunches will be handled respectfully and sensitively, recognising that families have different circumstances and cultural practices.

13. Monitoring and Review

The Nursery Manager will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy and ensuring that staff understand their responsibilities.

The policy will be reviewed at least annually, or sooner if there are changes to legislation, EYFS requirements, nutrition guidance, food safety advice or nursery practice.

Feedback from staff and families will be considered as part of the review.

Oyster Bay Nursery is committed to helping every child develop positive eating habits in a safe, inclusive and supportive environment.