



Healthy Eating and Food Hygiene for 0-5 year olds Policy

'We aspire for all at Parsonage Farm to feel valued and cared for, to have a continued excitement for learning, ensuring success as they journey onwards.'

Any meals, snacks and drinks provided to children at PFNIS will be healthy and nutritious, contributing to a balanced diet. This is a requirement of settings with children aged 0-5 as stated in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework. PFNIS also follow safety guidelines in the Help for Early Years Providers guidance. We also have to follow the School Food Standards (pg18).

Ideas for healthy meals and snacks may be taken from places like the NHS Eat Well and Healthier Families schemes and the Government's Example Menus for Early Years Settings in England. Fresh drinking water will be available at all times for all children; parents can also choose to order milk for their child to drink at school.

Why is a healthy diet important?

To help ensure children...

- *"Get the right amount of nutrients and energy they need while they are growing rapidly, which is especially important for children who might not have access to healthy food at home. This can help prevent children from becoming overweight or obese.*
- *Develop positive eating habits early on. Children's early experiences with food can shape future eating habits. This can impact children's long-term health including maintaining a healthy weight, and good oral health."*

[Early years foundation stage nutrition guidance.pdf](#)

Will my child's food preferences and specific dietary requirements be catered for?

We will obtain, record and act upon information from parents/carers about their child's dietary requirements, food allergies/ intolerances and particular preferences.

PFNIS will do their best to provide food for vegetarians, vegans, pescetarians, Halal, etc. Often this will be the vegetarian option on the menu.

If a child struggles to eat a balanced diet, we will work with parents/carers to support them in gradually adapting this to incorporate healthier foods and drinks. If a child's diet could cause health issues, we may recommend that the family seek advice from a medical professional, such as a paediatrician or nutritionist.

Can my child bring a packed lunch?

Parents/carers can provide meals for their children to eat at PFNIS. In the interest of safety and children's health, there are a few items that should not be included in lunchboxes/recommended

guidance:

- > glass bottles and jars
- > fizzy drinks and pre-mixed drinks with high sugar content
- > foods with a very high salt content
- > chocolate, sweets and foods with a high sugar content
- > foods that may present a choking risk (such as whole nuts, uncut grapes, popcorn, etc)*
- > nuts

*Further information about choking hazards and food preparation can be found on this Food Standards Agency web page. [Homepage | Food Standards](#)

For perishable items that should be kept cool, pack food in insulated sealed bags. If ice packs are unavailable, the '4-hour rule' can be applied. This rule allows food to be stored outside of chilled conditions for up to 4 hours, but this should only be done once during the entire storage.

Further information about lunchboxes at PFNIS can be found here (page 2): [Helpful-hints-for-the-new-school-year.246270443.pdf](#)

Guidance below on how to safely prepare your child's packed lunch, taken from page 27 of the [Early years foundation stage nutrition guidance.pdf](#)

Parents and/or carers should be encouraged to:

- *Ensure the food is suitable for their child's individual developmental needs and prepared in a way to prevent choking. See here for guidance: [Early-Years-Choking-Hazards-Table FINAL 21-Sept-2021.pdf](#)*
- *For perishable items that should be kept cool, pack food in insulated sealed bags. If ice packs are unavailable, the '4-hour rule' can be applied. This rule allows food to be stored outside of chilled conditions for up to 4 hours, but this should only be done once during the entire storage.*
- *Clearly label their child's name on the lunch bag and detail the contents.*
- *Pack foods that can safely be kept at room temperature if there is no refrigerated area for storing food brought from home. The Food Standards Agency provides advice on Listeria which has examples of ready-to-eat foods that should be eaten within 4 hours of removing them from the fridge.*

Providers do not have to provide refrigeration for packed lunches of children. Likewise, providers are not required to reheat food brought in by children.

Any foods or drinks not eaten will be sent home with the child. If a child regularly brings meals from home that are high in fat/sugar/salt and do not have enough nutritional value, this will be discussed with parents/carers. If parents are struggling to provide a balanced diet due to selective eating or for medical reasons, then we will recommend they access support via their health visitor or GP.

Can I send in food from home for my child's birthday or other celebrations?

We do not allow food to be sent in for any celebration. This is to ensure we are able to safely control the food children are given during the school day. At certain events, the school may provide

'treats' e.g. party food at Christmas. The food provided is carefully considered to ensure every child can eat it and that it continues to form part of a child's balanced diet.

What food will my child be eating if they order a school dinner?

As required by the EYFS Statutory Framework, sample menus will be shared with parents/carers, via the school website, and specific details about meals will be provided upon request. Education catering keep a detailed record of all allergens in the foods PFNIS offer and this information will be available to parents/carers if required.

Link to menus: [Parsonage Farm Nursery and Infant School - School Lunch Menu](#)

What if my child does not like the food provided?

During mealtimes, if a child says they do not want to eat something, we will suggest they try a bit of everything they have been given but there will be no pressure if they choose not to. We will praise them for tasting something new and never pressure them if they say they don't want to eat something.

Children will usually have additional items such as bread or pasta available during mealtimes so there will likely be something they wish to eat.

If a child decides not to eat anything provided, parents/carers will be informed of this. If a child refuses all foods and/or is overly upset about the meals provided, parents/carers may wish to provide a packed lunch instead on certain days or for a short period of time as needed.

What precautions are in place to prevent children from choking at PFNIS?

We follow the guidance set out by the government in Help for Early Years Providers to minimise the risk of a child choking.

This includes ensuring all food that children eat on site is an appropriate size and shape. Children will be within sight and hearing during snack and mealtimes, and where possible with an adult facing them. All children will sit on age-appropriate chairs at lunchtime.

If a child were to start choking, we have 12 pediatric first aiders who are trained to perform the necessary emergency first aid. We would also contact parents/carers immediately, suggesting that they seek follow-up medical advice.

Will food be prepared hygienically?

As a provider of hot meals, Education Catering are aware of their responsibilities under food hygiene legislation. This includes, if necessary, registration with the relevant Local Authority Environmental Health Department.

All work surfaces/cooking utensils that come into contact with food will be thoroughly cleaned and

disinfected before food preparation occurs.

Potentially dangerous substances, such as bleach and laundry detergents, will not come into contact with food preparation areas. Food preparation areas will be located in a suitable place.

What systems are in place for supporting children with food allergies and intolerances at PFNIS?

Information about known allergies and food intolerances is collected from parents/carers before a child starts with us. We also contact parents/carers regularly to review and update our records. If a child develops a new allergy or intolerance, parents/carers should immediately discuss this with us.

Reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate children with allergies and/or intolerances, wherever possible.

For more information about allergens, please see our policy on supporting children with medical needs: [EF96CA3D3D86B327187D534762E74CDF.pdf](#)

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