

Food provided from home and Consumables policy



(This only applies for children three years plus)

Policy Statement

At Sandcastle Nursery and Preschool Ltd, we are committed to providing a safe, healthy, and inclusive environment for all children. As a setting, we strongly promote the provision of meals prepared on-site, as this supports allergy management, healthy eating, food safety, and equality among children.

However, in line with updated guidance regarding additional service charges, parents/carers may choose to provide food from home. This policy outlines the expectations and requirements to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children.

Rationale for Nursery-Provided Meals

Our preference for nursery-provided meals is based on the following principles:

- **Allergy Prevention**
Many children in our care have severe allergies (e.g. nuts, dairy, eggs, wheat). Preparing food on-site allows us to carefully manage ingredients and reduce the risk of cross-contamination.
- **Healthy Eating**
We follow national guidance to provide balanced, nutritious, and age-appropriate meals and snacks that support children's growth and development.
- **Fairness and Inclusion**
Shared meals promote a sense of belonging and reduce the risk of children feeling excluded or upset by differences in food.
- **Food Safety**
We ensure all food prepared within the nursery meets required hygiene and safety standards.

Parent Choice

Parents/carers may choose to provide food from home if they opt not to access the nursery's meal provision (which includes breakfast, two healthy snacks, and two hot meals with pudding).

Requirements for Food Brought from Home

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children, the following requirements must be strictly adhered to:

1. **Full Day Provision**
Parents must provide all meals for the day, including:
 - Breakfast
 - Two healthy snacks (must be labelled AM and PM snack)
 - Two healthy meals (must be labelled Lunch and Tea ideally in two separate lunch boxes)
2. **Daily Fresh Food**
 - All food must be brought into the nursery daily.
 - The nursery is unable to refrigerate or reheat food.
3. **Healthy Food Guidelines**
 - Food must be nutritious and in line with healthy eating guidance.

- Items such as crisps, chocolate, sweets, and other unhealthy foods are not permitted.
- 4. **Allergen Safety**
 - Strictly **no nuts or nut-containing products** are permitted.
 - All food items must be clearly labelled with a **full list of ingredients**.
- 5. **Food Preparation and Safety**
 - Food must be prepared appropriately to reduce choking risks (e.g. grapes cut lengthways, appropriate portion sizes).
 - The nursery cannot take responsibility for the safety of food prepared outside of the setting.
- 6. **Packaging and Independence**
 - Children must be able to independently open their containers where possible.
 - Appropriate cutlery must be provided.
- 7. **Seating Arrangements**
 - To minimise allergy risks, children eating food from home may be seated separately from those eating nursery-provided meals.

Nursery Responsibilities

- To maintain a safe environment for all children, particularly those with allergies.
- To communicate clearly with parents regarding expectations.
- To monitor food brought into the setting and take appropriate action if guidelines are not followed.

Parent/Carer Responsibilities

- To comply fully with this policy when providing food from home.
- To ensure all food is safe, appropriately prepared, and clearly labelled.
- To support the nursery in maintaining a safe and inclusive environment for all children.

Consumables

Instead of paying for consumable charges, parents are allowed to provide their own, nappies, wipes and suncream.

- **if you are unable or unwilling to pay the Additional Services/Consumables charges, you can:**
 - Arrange **weekly payments** or a **payment plan** to help with budgeting.
 - Use additional funding you may receive (e.g., **Deprivation Supplement** or **EYPP**) to cover the fee, where eligible.
 - Consider attending **free/fully funded sessions** with minimal extras (subject to availability). Currently, this is **1pm–4pm**, however session times may change each term and cannot be guaranteed in a specific pattern.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly and updated in line with changes to legislation, guidance, or nursery practice.