Nutrition Policy

Academic year 2026/27 | Reviewed at least annually

Statement of Intent

At The Wendy House, we recognise that good nutrition and positive experiences around food contribute to children's health, wellbeing and development.

Snack and mealtimes are also valuable opportunities for children to socialise, develop independence, experience different foods and learn about making healthy choices.

We aim to provide a safe, relaxed and positive eating environment and have regard to the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Nutrition Guidance**.

Our Aims

We aim to:

- promote healthy, balanced and nutritious food choices;
- provide safe and positive eating experiences;
- support children's independence during snack and mealtimes;
- meet children's individual dietary, medical, cultural and religious needs;
- manage food allergies and intolerances safely;
- minimise the risk of choking;
- promote good oral health;
- work in partnership with parents/carers; and
- help children develop positive relationships with food.

Dietary Information

Before a child starts at The Wendy House, parents/carers are asked to provide information about their child's:

- food allergies;
- intolerances;
- dietary requirements and preferences;
- cultural or religious dietary requirements; and
- relevant medical or health needs.

Parents/carers must inform us promptly if this information changes.

We will maintain ongoing communication with families to ensure children's dietary information remains accurate and up to date.

Relevant information will be made available to staff who need to know in order to keep children safe.

Allergies and Intolerances

We take food allergies and intolerances seriously.

Where a child has a diagnosed allergy or significant dietary requirement, appropriate arrangements will be agreed with parents/carers and, where necessary, relevant healthcare professionals.

This may include an individual healthcare plan and/or risk assessment.

Staff will be aware of children's allergies and dietary requirements and how to recognise and respond to allergic reactions and anaphylaxis.

At each snack or mealtime, a member of staff will be responsible for ensuring that food provided to individual children is suitable for their dietary requirements.

Children will not be permitted to share or swap food.

Snacks

The Wendy House provides snacks for children.

Snacks will be healthy, balanced and nutritious and will take account of current EYFS nutrition guidance.

We aim to provide children with a variety of appropriate foods and encourage them to experience different tastes and textures.

Children will never be forced to eat food they do not want.

Packed Lunches

Parents/carers are responsible for providing a packed lunch for children who remain at the setting over lunchtime.

Families are encouraged to provide a healthy and balanced lunch suitable for their child's age and needs.

We will provide families with information and guidance where appropriate.

Parents/carers are encouraged to use an appropriate insulated lunch bag and ice pack where required.

Food provided from home must take account of any allergy arrangements communicated by the setting.

Drinking Water

Fresh drinking water will be available and accessible to children throughout the session.

Children may access their own named water bottle and/or the setting's drinking-water provision.

Staff will encourage children to drink regularly, particularly during warm weather and physical activity.

Milk and Alternatives

Whole pasteurised milk may be provided for children who drink milk.

Where appropriate, parents/carers may provide an alternative milk product for their child.

Any product brought into the setting must be:

- clearly labelled with the child's name;
- within its use-by date; and
- stored appropriately.

Where necessary, staff will record when a product has been opened.

Individual Dietary Requirements

We respect and accommodate individual dietary requirements wherever reasonably possible.

These may include:

- food allergies and intolerances;
- medical dietary requirements;
- religious or cultural requirements;
- vegetarian diets;
- vegan/plant-based diets;
- pescatarian diets; and
- requirements associated with SEND or other individual needs.

We will work with parents/carers to understand individual requirements and ensure children are included safely.

As part of our inclusive approach, meat products are not provided by The Wendy House during our normal snack provision or cooking activities.

Safer Eating and Choking Prevention

Food will be prepared and presented appropriately for the age and development of the children to minimise the risk of choking.

Staff responsible for preparing or serving food will understand how different foods should be prepared safely for young children.

Children will:

- wash their hands before eating;
- be appropriately seated while eating;

- be supervised throughout snack and mealtimes;
- remain within sight and hearing of staff while eating; and
- be encouraged to eat at an appropriate pace.

Children will not walk around the setting while eating.

Staff will remain alert to signs of choking or allergic reaction.

There will always be a member of staff in the room while children are eating who holds a valid full Paediatric First Aid certificate.

All staff working directly with children at The Wendy House currently hold a full Paediatric First Aid qualification.

Where a choking incident requires staff intervention, the incident will be recorded and the child's parent/carer informed.

Food Preparation and Hygiene

Staff involved in food preparation and handling will follow appropriate food-hygiene procedures.

This includes:

- washing hands before preparing or handling food;
- maintaining clean food-preparation areas;
- preventing cross-contamination;
- washing fruit and vegetables where appropriate;
- storing food safely;
- checking use-by dates; and
- maintaining appropriate refrigeration.

Food will be obtained from reputable suppliers and transported and stored appropriately.

Independence

We encourage children to develop independence and confidence around food.

Depending on their age and abilities, children may be supported to:

- make choices;
- pour their own drinks;
- feed themselves;
- help with appropriate snack routines;
- clear away after eating; and
- talk about foods, tastes and healthy choices.

Children will receive assistance where required.

Positive Relationships With Food

Food will not be used as a punishment or withheld as a means of managing behaviour.

Children will not be pressured or forced to finish food.

Staff will model positive attitudes towards food and avoid negative comments about children's food choices, body size or appetite.

We recognise that children's appetites and eating preferences can vary.

Celebrations and Special Events

We recognise that food can be an enjoyable part of celebrations and special occasions.

For birthdays, children may be celebrated with our reusable celebration cake, birthday song, certificate, sticker and other appropriate non-food items.

We encourage families wishing to bring something for the group to consider alternatives such as fruit or non-food treats.

At occasional preschool celebrations, such as our Christmas and summer parties, children may be offered small amounts of foods such as cake or biscuits alongside healthier options.

Food provided at events will take account of children's allergies and dietary requirements.

Parents/carers will be informed about relevant arrangements where appropriate.

Cooking Activities

Cooking and food-preparation activities provide valuable learning opportunities.

Activities will be planned with children's age, development, dietary needs and safety in mind.

Food allergies and dietary requirements will be checked before children participate.

Food will be prepared appropriately to minimise choking and food-safety risks.

Oral Health

We promote good oral health through:

- healthy food and drink choices;
- limiting foods high in added sugar within our normal provision;
- providing water and milk as appropriate; and
- age-appropriate conversations and activities about caring for teeth.

Sustainability

We encourage children to develop an age-appropriate understanding of sustainability.

During food-related activities and routines, children may be encouraged to:

- reduce avoidable food waste;
- recycle appropriate packaging;
- consider where food comes from; and
- care for the environment.

Staff Knowledge and Training

Staff will have appropriate knowledge and training to keep children safe during food preparation and eating.

This includes, where relevant:

- Paediatric First Aid;
- allergy and anaphylaxis awareness;
- choking prevention and response;
- food hygiene; and
- safe preparation of food for young children.

Knowledge will be refreshed through training, supervision, staff meetings and relevant guidance.

Working With Parents and Carers

We recognise that parents/carers know their children best.

We will work in partnership with families regarding children's dietary needs, eating habits and any concerns relating to nutrition.

Where a child experiences difficulties with eating or there are concerns regarding their nutrition, we will discuss these sensitively with parents/carers.

Where appropriate, families may be signposted to NHS or other professional advice and support.

Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where legislation, statutory guidance or the needs of the setting change.

Policy Approval & Review

Policy year	2026/2027
Approval status	Awaiting Management Committee approval
Next scheduled review	March 2027