



Food and Drink Policy

Thornton Heath Nursery School recognises a healthy diet as an essential part of the school day.

We understand that a healthy diet plays a vital role in developing the whole person, ensuring that children have healthy bodies and minds.

This policy supports children's health, cultural needs, and dietary requirements.

Our aims are:

- to ensure that all aspects of food and nutrition in school promote the health and wellbeing of pupils, staff and visitors to the school
- to help our pupils understand the consequences of, and to develop the skills to take responsibility for the choices they make

1. Food and Drink Provision

Snacks, drinks and meals (extended services) provided are healthy, balanced, and nutritious, reflecting EYFS nutrition guidance 2025 [Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/early-years-foundation-stage-nutrition). At Thornton Heath Nursery School, we believe in a balanced approach to nutrition that supports children's health and well-being. While our primary focus is on providing healthy, nutritious food, we recognise the importance of occasional treats in fostering positive experiences. For instance, on particularly cold days, children may enjoy a warm hot chocolate as a special treat. This practice not only enhances their enjoyment of food but also contributes to building positive associations with healthy eating habits. We respect diverse cultural and dietary needs, including those related to EAL and SEND children. All staff are Paediatric First Aid trained and whilst eating, all children are in sight of a Paediatric First Aid trained member of staff.

1a) Snack time

- Milk (or a non-dairy alternative) is provided daily to all nursery children
- A piece of fruit / vegetable and a healthy carbohydrate is offered as a snack during nursery sessions
- Access to drinking water is provided throughout the day

1b) Breakfast and after school provision

- Children are offered a healthy breakfast and a healthy light meal after school
- Food is served at tables with due regard to health and safety and to promote a 'family' atmosphere
- Menus for after school club are reviewed on a six monthly basis, children's preferences and cultural food practises are taken into account in menu planning. Regular opportunities are provided for children and parents to give feedback on food options to ensure menus remain appealing and appropriate.
- Fresh drinking water is provided

1c) Lunch time

The nursery is able to provide practical advice and resources to support parents/carers in preparing nutritious packed lunches that are affordable and culturally appropriate, recognising the diverse economic backgrounds of our families. This includes recipe ideas, portion guidance, and access to local support services where needed.

- Children are required to bring packed lunches as we do not provide a lunch.
- Parents/carers are encouraged to provide a packed lunch that meets the healthy eating standards outlined (Appendix 1).
- Where children have SEND or specific dietary requirements, the school works closely with parents/carers to support appropriate packed lunch choices.
- Children are supported to eat independently and safely during lunch
- When eating all children are in sight of a Paediatric First Aid trained member of staff
- Lunchtime supervisors have L1 Food Hygiene training
- Lunchtime supervisors give written feedback to parents/carers (when necessary) regarding contents of the packed lunch and also food safety ie cutting grapes lengthways
- Fresh drinking water is always available and accessible

2. Food Safety and Hygiene

At Thornton Heath Nursery School, we prioritise the safety and well-being of all children during mealtimes. To prevent choking hazards, all food provided will be prepared in a manner appropriate for each child's age and developmental stage in line with the Food Standards Agency guidance [Early years food choking hazards | Food Standards Agency](#). Staff will ensure that children are seated whilst eating, and they will remain within sight and hearing of a staff member at all times. Staff are trained to recognise the signs of choking and are equipped to respond promptly and effectively. Regular reviews of food preparation practises will be conducted to minimise choking risks.

- a) Food preparation areas are adequately equipped and maintained hygienically
- b) All staff hold at least a L1 Food Hygiene certificate and those responsible for food preparation and handling are competent and receive regular food hygiene training
- c) Procedures to prevent cross-contamination and ensure safe storage and handling of food are strictly followed
- d) A staff member with a valid Paediatric First Aid certificate is present during all mealtimes and snack times
- e) Fridge and freezer temperatures are monitored and recorded daily
- f) All food temperatures are monitored using a digital probe

3. Allergy and Medical Needs Management

Thornton Heath Nursery School is a nut free school and we operate a 'no nuts' policy. Notices are displayed and in addition, parents and carers are reminded via the school newsletters. There are children with life threatening allergies to nuts and this is essential to keep them safe.

- a) Detailed dietary information, allergies, intolerances, and preferences are collected before admission and regularly updated in partnership with parents / carers

- b) Information about special dietary requirements, allergies, intolerances, and health needs is shared with all staff involved in food preparation and care
- c) Staff are trained to recognise symptoms and treatments of allergies and anaphylaxis, supported by BSACI and NHS guidance
- d) Allergy action plans are developed with parents and health professionals, shared with all relevant staff, and regularly reviewed
- e) All staff receive annual refresher training on allergy recognition, anaphylaxis management, and EpiPen administration to maintain up-to-date knowledge and skills.

4. Breastfeeding Support

In the UK, exclusive breastfeeding is recommended for around the first 6 months of a baby's life, with continued breastfeeding throughout the first year and beyond for as long as the parent or carer and child wish to continue.

- a) At Thornton Heath Nursery School, we recognise that the majority of our children are aged 2 years and older and are very rarely still being breastfed. However, we fully support families who choose to continue breastfeeding beyond this age
- b) Mothers are welcome to breastfeed on-site, and we ensure a private, comfortable space is available to support this
- c) If requested, expressed breast milk will be stored hygienically and safely, following best practice guidelines
- d) Staff receive training on breastfeeding support and cultural sensitivity to ensure respectful and informed care for all families

5. Curriculum

Our approach to food, nutrition, and healthy eating is designed to develop children's understanding, enjoyment, and lifelong positive habits around food.

- a) Food-related activities are used as opportunities to develop children's vocabulary, communication, and verbal reasoning skills, supporting the school's focus on language development and preparing children for future learning stages.
- b) We encourage children to develop independence in eating and drinking, including managing their utensils and hygiene routines. Children learn about the benefits of eating a balanced diet rich in fruits and vegetables, supported by adults who model healthy eating behaviours
- c) Children participate in growing simple fruits and vegetables, such as tomatoes and raspberries, and engage in age-appropriate food preparation activities
- d) Our curriculum celebrates diverse food cultures, introducing children to foods from different regions and traditions
- e) We promote good oral health by reducing sugar consumption and encouraging tooth-brushing routines. Children are supported to eat safely, with staff trained in paediatric first aid present during mealtimes

6. Celebrations and special occasions

Many families like to celebrate their child's birthday and other special events by bringing in food to the nursery to share.

To ensure any food brought in from home is balanced and meets the nursery's food guidelines we recommend fruit platters as an alternative to cakes, biscuits etc.

Any food brought in for celebrations is checked by staff for allergens and suitability. Where possible, non-food alternatives such as bubbles or stickers are encouraged to ensure inclusivity and reduce allergy risks.

6. Communication and Record-Keeping

- a) Written parental consent is obtained for administering any medicines related to dietary or medical needs
- b) Records are kept for all meals provided, medicine administration, allergy incidents, and first aid treatments
- c) Parents/carers are informed on the same day, as soon as reasonably practicable of any food-related incidents or treatments

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

- a) The effectiveness of the Food and Drink Policy is monitored through regular audits of food provision, mealtime observations, and feedback from parents and staff. Outcomes inform the annual review and development of the policy."

7. Responsibilities and dissemination of policy

- a) The Head of Nursery ensures policy implementation, staff training, and annual review
- b) Parents/carers provide up-to-date information on their child's dietary and health needs
- c) Regular training sessions on the Food and Drink Policy are provided for all staff, including updates on allergy management, cultural dietary needs, and food safety to ensure consistent implementation.
- d) This policy can be found on the nursery website and at the point of admission

Appendix 1 : Food and drink in packed lunches

At the point of admission parents / carers are provided with the nursery's "Healthy Packed Lunch Leaflet" which is a summary of the information below. This can also be found on the school website.

The nursery ensures that fresh drinking water is readily available at all time.

Parents/carers of children bringing packed lunches are encouraged to provide children with packed lunches which conform to the Food and Drink policy however we do recognise that some children, particularly those with SEND have restrictive diets and that parents will choose to provide food in their packed lunch that they prefer to eat.

The school works with parents/carers with the aim that the packed lunches that they provide abide by the standards listed below which are informed by the NHS Eatwell Guide [The Eatwell Guide - NHS](#)

Daily

- At least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables
- Meat, fish or other sources of non-dairy protein
- A starchy food such as bread, pasta, rice noodles
- Dairy food such as cheese, yoghurt, fromage frais

- Drink – water is recommended for children however a low sugar squash is acceptable. Fizzy drinks are not allowed

Occasionally

- Snacks such as crisps
- Cakes, biscuits, meat products with a high fat content such as sausage rolls can be included but please encourage your child to eat these only as a balanced meal

Packed lunches **must not** include:

- Nut products
- Confectionary / sweets such as sweets/chocolate bars

Any item containing nuts such as Nutella, peanut butter etc. will be sensitively removed from packed lunches and replaced with an alternative so that the child does not go hungry.

Special diets and allergies

The nursery recognises that some children may require special diets. In this case parents/carers are urged to be responsible in ensuring that packed lunches are as healthy as possible.

Children are not allowed to swap food items or share food with each other. Uneaten packed lunch is returned home in its container where appropriate, to enable parents/carers to monitor food consumption.

If a child regularly brings a packed lunch that does not follow the policy a member of staff will meet with the parent/carers to discuss this.