



Leigh Academy
Bearsted



Healthy Eating & Nutrition Policy

Written/reviewed: August 2025
To be reviewed by: August 2026

The aim of this policy is:

- To ensure all children have safe access to a healthy, nutritious and balanced diet.
- This policy has been developed in partnership with staff, parents, and carers. It outlines the approach to food and drink provision, ensuring it meets children's nutritional needs.

Any meals, snacks and drinks provided to children in our setting will be healthy and nutritious, contributing to a balanced diet and covering the four key food groups: fruit and vegetables, carbohydrates, dairy or alternatives, and protein. This is a requirement of childcare settings as stated in the early years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework. We will also follow safety guidelines in the Help for Early Years Providers guidance.

Fresh drinking water will be available at all times for all children.

Children should only bring water as the appropriate drink into the setting.

Children may also be offered plain cow's milk for those who would like it. Once a child reaches 5 years of age milk provision must be paid for by parents via the milk scheme (please request details of this from the school office). Alternative unsweetened milks (such as Oat milk) can be offered to those with cow's milk allergy or dietary requirements upon parental request, but this milk must be provided by the parent.

Water and milk are the only drinks that will be provided, and that should be consumed by the children whilst at Nursery or school.

Why is a healthy diet important?

“Children's food preferences and eating habits are formed early in life with consequences for a range of health and development outcomes in later life. It is therefore important that the food offered in early years settings provides appropriate amounts of energy and nutrients and encourages the development of healthy eating habits in young children, both to support appropriate growth and development, and a part of national priorities to reduce childhood obesity and ensure every child has the best start in life”

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.

Information about known allergies and food intolerances is collected from parents/carers before a child starts in the setting. This vital information is then shared with all staff involved in the preparation and handling of food, as well as those supervising children during mealtimes. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform us of any changes so that our records can be updated immediately. If a child develops a new allergy or intolerance, parents/carers should immediately discuss this with a member of staff. Reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate children with allergies and/or intolerances, wherever possible, and all relevant staff will be informed.

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 is causing suspected health issues, we will recommend that the family seek advice from a medical profession, such as a paediatrician or nutritionist.

Individual Healthcare Plans (IHPs) for Allergies

For each child with a known allergy, an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP) will be written in partnership with the child's healthcare professional and their parent/carer.

The IHP will clearly outline:

- The child's specific allergies.
- Any symptoms of a reaction.
- Their individual emergency response plan (e.g., prescribed adrenaline auto-injector, antihistamines).
- Emergency contact details for parents/carers.

The IHP also provides medical and parental consent for staff to administer medicines in the event of an allergic reaction.

Staff members will undergo specific training to recognise the signs and symptoms of allergic reactions and anaphylaxis. This training will cover emergency responses and the administration of adrenaline auto-injectors (AAIs), such as EpiPens or Jext.

Packed Lunches

Parents/carers can provide a packed lunch for their child should they wish to.

In the interest of safety and children's health, there are some items that should **not** be included in lunchboxes:

- Glass bottles
- Fizzy drinks
- Foods with very high salt content
- Chocolate
- Sweets
- Foods with high sugar content
- Pre-cooked foods that when not cooled and/or stored correctly may pose a potential food poisoning risk (e.g. rice, cooked meat)
- Foods that may present a choking risk* (such as uncut grapes)
- Foods that contain nuts of any kind
- Foods that may trigger a known allergy (e.g nuts, fish)

*Further information about choking hazards and food preparation can be found on the [Food Standards Agency Website](#).

Any food or drinks left will be sent home with the child. If a child does not have enough food in their lunchbox to constitute a full meal, they will be provided with a suitable school dinner substitute and parents/carers may be charged for this. 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 the parents/carers. If they are struggling to provide a balanced diet due to selective eating or for medical reasons, then we will recommend they access further support via their health visitor or GP.

School Meals & Snacks

All food provided by the setting will be prepared in a suitably hygienic area and any staff handling food will be familiar with the food hygiene and storage practices set out by the Food Standards Agency for Safer Food.

As required by the EYFS Statutory Framework, sample menus will be shared with parents/carers and specific details about daily meals will be provided upon request. Details of all allergens in the foods offered will be available to parents/carers if required.

Weekly menus will include a variety of foods that ensure children get all necessary nutrients. Menus will reflect dietary requirements, including allergies, intolerances, and religious or cultural needs. Alternatives for children with special dietary requirements will be offered.

A daily fruit snack will be offered to every child.

If a parent/carer wishes to provide an additional snack from home it must align with the nutritional guidelines, which include a variety of fruit, vegetables and health grains. Snacks that are high in sugar, salt or fat will not be permitted in the setting, and a fruit snack will be offered as an alternative.

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. Children will be encouraged and praised for tasting something new but never pressured if they don't want to eat something.

Children will have multiple food options available each day 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 packed lunch instead.

What precautions are in place to prevent children from choking at Leigh Academy Bearsted and Little Bears Nursery?

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 preparing foods to be an appropriate size and shape, taking into account the individual child's age and stage of development. Your child's eating abilities will not be assumed based on their age alone, but rather on their stage of development. This includes guidance on textures

and portion sizes. Children will be within sight and hearing during snack and mealtimes, with an adult facing them. All children will sit on age-appropriate chairs.

If a child were to start choking, our staff are trained to perform the necessary first aid. At all times when children are eating, there will be at least one member of staff present with a valid paediatric first aid certificate. This ensures immediate response capabilities in case of choking or an allergic reaction. In the event of a choking incident, the incident will be recorded and parents/carers would also be contacted immediately. It may be suggested that they seek follow-up medical advice.

Staff members will be required to undergo specific training to recognise the signs and symptoms of allergic reactions and anaphylaxis.

This training must cover emergency responses and the administration of adrenaline auto-injectors (AAIs), such as EpiPens or Jext.

Providers are responsible for selecting competent training providers for this, with the key being that the training meets established standards and can competently deliver the necessary knowledge and skills.

Special Events & Celebrations

If parents/carers wish to mark a special event or celebration (such as a birthday) by bringing something into school or Nursery, we politely request that instead of sweets or cake, that non-edible options to celebrate are brought in instead (e.g. stickers, bubbles, a new class story to share, a new class game to play etc.). Thank you for your understanding and support with this.