

Nutrition Policy - Childminder Provided Meals

Rationale

Little Home Learners understands that it is important to help children develop patterns of healthy eating and drinking from an early age. Children need to eat a variety of foods including fruits, vegetables and fluids to make sure they get all the dietary components they need to grow and develop healthily.

Limiting or avoiding completely the intake of salt and sugars (including that found in processed foods) is recommended, therefore we will take this into consideration when planning meals, snacks and drinks.

Procedure

Parents/carers will be asked to provide written information about any dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and intolerances, culture or lifestyle choice and any special health requirements and these will be acted upon. Information about the child's stage of weaning will also be requested.

This information will be shared with any childminding assistants or other childminders who work at Little Home Learners. Where appropriate we will develop an allergy action plan and may use the British Society for Allergy & Clinical Immunology action plan.

If a child is on a special diet, the parents/carers may be asked to provide their child's food if it is not possible for the food to be provided or prepared by Little Home Learners. All food and drink are prepared to provide a healthy balanced diet in accordance with the recommendations by the Food Standards Agency.

Food is prepared, stored and cooked in line with my Health and Safety Policy and Safer Eating Policy, guidance from the Food Standards Agency about food safety and the [EYFS Nutritional Guidance](#).

Little Home Learners provides clean and age-appropriate crockery, eating utensils and seating, however we respect the parent/carer's diverse needs culturally or lifestyle choices about eating practices e.g. eating with fingers.

We carry out effective hand-washing procedures when handling food and ensure the children are aware of how and when to wash their hands.

Lunch and dinner will be provided by Lune & Wild, further information on nutritional composition is available upon request. Parents will be informed about the foods their child has been offered and eaten. Children will never be made to eat foods they dislike or do not want but children do not always welcome new food the first time it is offered.

New additions to the menu will be offered a few times to give children a chance to try them and increase the variety of foods they will eat. If children decline to eat their main course, dessert will still be offered as the dessert will be a nutritious part of the meal.

Children are offered a choice of water or milk with meals and snacks, and fresh drinking water is available at all times. Squash or diluted fruit juices may be offered occasionally. Treats may be offered occasionally if parents/carers agree but only after meals in order to not affect a child's appetite.

If parents wish to provide treats on their child's birthday these should be nut-free and gluten free due to existing allergies within the setting.

If there is an outbreak of food poisoning affecting two or more children looked after on my premises, Little Home Learners must report this to Unique Support Early Years as soon as is reasonably practicable, but in any event within 14 days of the incident.

Little Home Learners will also inform the local Environment Health Department. Little Home Learners will follow any advice given and will keep all food receipts in case they are needed to trace the outlet where the food was purchased.

Infant Feeding and Responsive Care

We are committed to supporting the health and well-being of the youngest children in our care by providing a safe, hygienic, and emotionally supportive feeding environment.

1. Safety and Hygiene Standards

To ensure the highest level of safety and to prevent infection, we strictly adhere to **NHS guidelines** regarding the preparation and storage of milk:

- **Formula Preparation:** All formula feeds are prepared fresh for each feeding session. We use water that has been boiled and cooled for no more than 30 minutes to ensure it remains at a temperature of at least **70°C** to kill any harmful bacteria.
- **Sterilisation:** All bottles, teats, and feeding equipment are thoroughly cleaned and sterilised before every use using [insert your method, e.g., electric steam sterilisation / cold water Milton tank].
- **Breastmilk Storage:** We welcome and support breastfeeding mothers. Expressed breastmilk (EBM) is stored in the back of the refrigerator (the coldest part) at **4°C** or lower and is clearly labelled with the child's name and the date it was expressed.

2. Responsive Feeding

We practice **responsive feeding**, which treats feeding as an interactive process between the caregiver and the infant. This means:

- **Recognising Cues:** We do not feed on a rigid clock-based schedule. Instead, we respond to the baby's early hunger cues (such as rooting, sucking on fists, or restlessness).
- **Pace and Connection:** During bottle feeding, infants are held closely. We follow a "paced feeding" method, allowing the baby to take breaks and

ensuring they are not forced to finish a bottle if they show signs of fullness (such as turning away or closing their mouth).

- **Emotional Security:** Feeding time is used as an opportunity for bonding, eye contact, and quiet communication, ensuring the baby feels secure and valued.

Date of next review: February 2027.