

Crescent Nurseries SAFER EATING POLICY

Document Control:

Location: Dropbox/Nursery Senior Management/Policies/4.Policies 2025-2026

Version	Last Amended/Changes	Author
1.0	June26 Amended policy "SAFER EATING POLICY"	Hannah MacGuire

Persons responsible

- Director – Faheem Chishti
- Fozia Shah – Senior Nursery Manager

Statement of Intent

At Crescent Nurseries, we are committed to ensuring the safety, well-being, and consistent development of every child. Our setting will work with children, parents/carers, and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that children in our care are provided with a safe eating environment that supports healthy eating, minimises food-related risks, and ensures compliance with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework.

Key Principles

We will:

- Ensure all meals and snacks are nutritious, well-balanced, and cater to the individual dietary needs of children.
- Promote healthy eating habits from an early age.
- Safeguard children from food-related risks, including choking hazards and food allergies.

Food Allergies and Special Dietary Requirements

At Crescent Nurseries, we recognise the importance of catering to children's dietary needs, including food allergies and intolerances. All food allergies or special dietary requirements must be disclosed to the nursery by parents and carers on the setting 'Registration Form' when a child starts at the nursery.

Our Responsibilities

- **Record Keeping:** We will maintain up-to-date records of children's allergies, intolerances, and dietary preferences. This information is shared with all relevant staff members and stored securely. We will prompt parents to update the information we hold regarding special dietary needs every 6 months.
- **Risk Assessment:** A thorough risk assessment is carried out for children with food allergies, ensuring appropriate precautions are taken, including avoiding allergens in meals and snacks.
- **Responsibility:** At each mealtime and snack time, nursery staff will have a clear understanding of who is responsible for checking that the food being provided meets the requirements for each child.
- **Communication:** We will ensure that all staff are aware of the allergy needs of the children in their care. Parents are encouraged to provide emergency medication where applicable.
- **Prohibited Foods:** Nuts, nut products, crisps, sweets, chocolate bars and chocolate spreads are not permitted at Crescent Nurseries in line with EYFS guidance.

Safer Eating Practices

To minimise the risk of choking and ensuring safer eating environments for young children, the following practices are implemented:

- **Supervision:** All children are supervised during mealtimes and snack time. Children will be within sight and hearing of a member of staff whilst eating. Where possible, staff will sit facing children whilst they

eat so they can be sure children are eating in a way to prevent choking, and so they can prevent food sharing and be aware of any unexpected allergic reactions.

- Choking Hazards: Staff will prepare food in a way to prevent choking and be vigilant to ensure foods sent in packed lunches have also been prepared safely. **Firm, spherical foods like grapes and cherry tomatoes must be sliced into quarters or segments. Cylindrical foods such as cucumber, carrots and cocktail sausages must be cut lengthways into thin batons.** This guidance on food safety for young children – https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/safeguarding-and-welfare/food_safety includes advice on food and drink to avoid, how to reduce the risk of choking and links to other useful resources for early years settings. If a child experiences a choking incident that requires intervention, staff will record details of where and how the child choked, and parents/carers will be made aware. The records will be reviewed and risk assessed alongside other accidents/incidents at nursery on a half-termly basis. Appropriate action will be taken to address any identified concerns.
- Age-Appropriate Food Types: Foods will be served in a manner suitable for the child's developmental stage (e.g., food will be cut into small, manageable pieces for younger children). Popcorn, marshmallows, jelly cubes, and hard sweets are never permitted for children under 5.
- Mealtime Environment: Children will sit down and remain seated while eating and be given time to chew and swallow their food properly. Children will be discouraged from talking loudly at mealtimes/snack time. Other distractions such as toys at the meal table are, wherever possible, discouraged. Food sharing is not allowed.

Healthy Eating and Nutrition

We aim to support the health and wellbeing of all children by promoting healthy eating habits:

- Snack Time: We offer the children a mid-morning snack during their session. This consists of fresh milk or water, a selection of fresh fruits and vegetables and toast or crackers. We will always encourage the children to eat healthily.
- Cultural Differences: We will respect children's eating habits at home and recognise that families and cultures may have different ways of eating, such as eating with hands or avoiding the use of the left hand when eating. Opportunities will be provided for children to enjoy food from different cultures and to investigate unfamiliar foods.
- Packed Lunches: Parents are advised about safe storage of packed lunches and given information about providing healthy packed lunches during each child's induction to Crescent Nurseries.
- Educational Opportunities: We will engage children in learning about food, nutrition, and healthy eating through age-appropriate activities and discussions. Explanations are given to children about where food comes from, how it changes when it is cooked, and different tastes and textures.
- Support: Staff will monitor children's food intake and work with parents/carers to provide healthy food options.

Mealtime Hygiene and Safety

To ensure the safety and hygiene of food, the following procedures will be followed:

- Food Storage and Preparation: All food will be stored at the correct temperature, in compliance with food safety regulations. Food preparation areas will be kept clean, and staff will adhere to strict handwashing procedures before handling food.
- Safe Utensils and Equipment: All kitchen utensils and eating equipment will be safe and age-appropriate for the children. Any broken or damaged items will be immediately replaced.
- Hand Hygiene: Children will wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. Staff will ensure that all children have clean hands before meals and snacks are served.
- Independence: Children are encouraged to pour their own drinks, make choices about and serve their own snack, and to have opportunities to be responsible for setting up and clearing away afterwards.
- Withholding food will NEVER be used as a form of behaviour correction.

Training and Awareness

Staff will receive regular training in paediatric first aid, food safety, allergy management, and safe eating practices. This includes:

- First Aid and Emergency Procedures: All staff will be trained in first aid procedures specific to food-related incidents, including how to handle allergic reactions (including EpiPen administration) and choking. Whilst children are eating, there must be at least one member of staff with a valid full paediatric first aid certificate present in the room. Paediatric First Aid qualifications will be updated at least every three years as a minimum.
- All staff are required to complete training as part of their induction covering food hygiene and allergy awareness (Level 2 Food and Hygiene Certification). All staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis, the differences between allergies and intolerances and that children can develop allergies at any time.
- Ongoing Training: Staff will undergo refresher courses on food hygiene and allergy awareness every two years as a minimum.

Parent and Carer Involvement

We believe that parents and carers play a key role in the nutritional care of their children. We encourage parents to share any concerns or preferences related to their child's diet, and we will maintain open lines of communication regarding food and meal times.

- Special Occasions: For special occasions or celebrations (e.g., Eid, birthdays), we will work with parents to ensure that any treats brought in align with our safer eating and allergy policies.