



Healthy Eating, Snacks and Lunchbox Procedure

Legislative Framework

This policy has been developed in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers (effective from 1 September 2026), the Department for Education's Early Years Nutrition Guidance, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) guidance and current NHS healthy eating recommendations.

The EYFS requires that where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, these must be healthy, balanced and nutritious. Early years providers must have regard to the Department for Education's nutrition guidance and follow its recommendations unless there is a clear and justifiable reason not to do so.

At Clare House Nursery, these principles underpin our approach to healthy eating, snacks, packed lunches, safer weaning, food safety and positive mealtime experiences.

Aim

Our aim is to promote healthy eating habits from the earliest stages of life by providing children with safe, nutritious and balanced food within a positive, inclusive and nurturing environment.

Practitioners play a key role in promoting healthy lifestyles through positive role modelling, responsive feeding practices and well-planned mealtime experiences. We work in partnership with parents, carers and healthcare professionals to ensure every child's individual nutritional, medical, cultural, religious and developmental needs are understood, respected and safely met.

Through this policy we aim to:

- Promote healthy eating habits and positive relationships with food.
- Support children's growth, health, wellbeing and development.
- Provide safe, balanced and nutritionally appropriate food and drinks.
- Reduce the risks associated with choking, allergies and unsafe feeding practices.
- Support children to develop independence, confidence and lifelong healthy habits.
- Meet children's individual dietary, medical, cultural and religious needs.
- Work in partnership with parents, carers and relevant healthcare professionals.
- Create calm, inclusive and enjoyable mealtime experiences for every child.

Healthy Eating

Good nutrition during the early years is essential for children's healthy growth, physical development, brain development and emotional wellbeing. Healthy eating in early childhood can help establish lifelong eating habits and reduce the risk of obesity, tooth decay, heart disease, stroke and Type 2 diabetes later in life.

As an early years provider, Clare House Nursery recognises the important role practitioners play in supporting children's understanding of healthy lifestyles. Through everyday experiences, positive

role modelling and consistent routines, we encourage children to enjoy a varied and balanced diet while developing confidence and independence during mealtimes.

We recognise that practitioners and parents are partners in supporting children's health and wellbeing. By working together, we can help children develop healthy eating habits, explore new foods safely and build positive relationships with food from an early age.

Packed Lunches

Where children bring a packed lunch from home, we work closely with families to encourage healthy, balanced lunchboxes that reflect current Department for Education nutrition guidance.

We ask parents and carers to provide a variety of nutritious foods from the main food groups while limiting foods that are high in fat, salt and free sugars. This supports children's growth and development while helping to protect their oral health and overall wellbeing.

Our Lunchbox Guidance has been developed in line with current Department for Education, Food Standards Agency and NHS recommendations and includes advice on healthy food choices, safer food preparation and choking prevention.

