



Our Mealtime Promise

At Clare House Nursery, we believe that every mealtime should be a calm, enjoyable and positive experience where children feel safe, confident and supported to develop lifelong healthy eating habits.

Our staff follow one simple principle:

"Sit Safe • Eat Safe • Enjoy Together."

This simple motto underpins every mealtime and reminds us to:

- Support children to sit safely and comfortably while eating.
- Promote safe eating practices that reduce the risk of choking.
- Encourage independence, confidence and positive relationships with food.
- Create calm, social mealtimes where children can enjoy eating together.
- Work in partnership with families to provide consistent, safe weaning experiences.

Safer Weaning Statement

At Clare House Nursery, we recognise that introducing solid foods is an important stage in a child's development. We are committed to working in partnership with parents and carers to ensure every child experiences weaning in a safe, positive and developmentally appropriate way.

Our aim is to provide a calm, nurturing and enjoyable mealtime environment that supports children to develop healthy eating habits, independence and confidence with food, whilst minimising the risk of choking and promoting their overall health and wellbeing.

We follow current guidance from the NHS, Start for Life, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and recognised best practice to ensure all children receive the highest standards of care during mealtimes.

We recognise that every child develops at their own pace and will work closely with families to understand each child's individual stage of weaning, dietary needs, allergies, cultural preferences and medical requirements.

The safety and wellbeing of every child remains our highest priority at all times.

Aim of the Policy

This policy aims to ensure that all children at Clare House Nursery are supported through the weaning process safely, confidently and in partnership with their families.

We aim to:

- Promote safe, enjoyable and positive mealtime experiences for every child.
- Reduce the risk of choking by following recognised safer weaning guidance and safe feeding practices.

- Work closely with parents and carers to ensure consistency between home and nursery.
- Support children to become confident, independent eaters at their own pace.
- Respect children's individual developmental stage, cultural background, dietary requirements and family preferences.
- Ensure all staff understand their responsibilities in relation to safer weaning, choking prevention, food hygiene and paediatric first aid.
- Maintain the highest standards of food safety, hygiene and infection prevention throughout all mealtimes.
- Ensure individual risk assessments are completed where children have additional medical needs, allergies, swallowing difficulties or specialist feeding requirements.
- Create a calm, relaxed and supportive mealtime environment where children feel safe and encouraged to explore food without pressure.
- Ensure all staff receive appropriate training and follow current guidance to provide safe, consistent practice.

Clare House Nursery is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for babies and young children who are beginning or progressing through the weaning process.

Children will only be offered foods that are appropriate to their age, stage of development and individual abilities, following discussions with parents and carers.

We recognise that introducing new foods should always be led by the family. Nursery staff will only introduce foods that have already been safely introduced at home unless this has been specifically agreed with parents.

Parents are asked to complete a Safer Weaning Information Form before their child begins weaning meals at nursery and to notify us immediately of any changes to their child's feeding, allergies, medical needs or dietary requirements.

Safe Seating During Mealtimes

At Clare House Nursery, we do not use highchairs for feeding children.

All children are supported to eat whilst seated safely on low-level child-sized chairs with both feet supported on the floor or on a suitable footrest where required.

We believe this promotes:

- Good posture during eating.
- Greater independence.
- Safe swallowing.
- Reduced risk of choking.
- Comfortable mealtimes.
- Inclusion alongside their peers.

Children are never fed whilst:

- Walking around.
- Playing.
- Lying down.
- Reclining.

- Sitting in bouncy chairs, pushchairs or other restrictive equipment.

Children remain seated throughout mealtimes until they have finished eating.

Where a child has additional physical or medical needs requiring specialist seating, an individual risk assessment will be completed in partnership with parents and relevant healthcare professionals.

Paediatric First Aid

At Clare House Nursery, all practitioners hold a current Paediatric First Aid qualification, ensuring that every member of staff is trained to respond promptly and appropriately in the event of a choking incident or medical emergency during mealtimes.

A suitably qualified Paediatric First Aider is therefore present at all times when children are attending the nursery, in accordance with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

