Food and Nutrition Policy

Setting	Woodlands Extra
Purpose	To provide healthy, balanced and nutritious food and drink and to ensure that eating, food preparation, allergies and dietary needs are managed safely and inclusively.
Policy leads	Tracy Fewtrell – Nursery Manager Leanne Maguire – Club Manager Hannah Edensor – Administration Manager
Related policies	Allergy and Anaphylaxis; Health and Safety; Safeguarding;
Approved	1st September 2026
Next review	By 1 September 2027, and sooner after a choking/allergy/food-safety incident, inspection finding or relevant change in law or guidance.

1. Purpose and scope

Woodlands Extra promotes children's health, safety, development and positive relationship with food. This policy applies to nursery, before- and after-school and holiday provision. EYFS statutory requirements apply to children within the early years age range; the setting applies the same core safer-eating principles to older children where appropriate to their age and needs.

Meals and snacks will be social, inclusive and unhurried. Children will be encouraged, never forced, to try food. Food will not be used as a reward, punishment or condition of participation. Practitioners will help children recognise hunger, thirst, fullness, likes and dislikes and develop increasing independence safely.

2. Legal and regulatory framework

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework for group and school-based providers, effective 1 September 2026, especially paragraphs 3.63 to 3.73 on food, drink and safer eating.
- Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance, to which early years providers must have regard when meeting the requirement for healthy, balanced and nutritious food and drink.
- Childcare Act 2006 and the Early Years Foundation Stage (Welfare Requirements) Regulations 2012, as amended.
- Food Safety Act 1990, applicable food-hygiene legislation and HACCP-based food-safety management requirements.
- Food Information Regulations 2014 and applicable allergen and food-information requirements, including prepacked-for-direct-sale requirements where relevant.
- Equality Act 2010, including reasonable adjustments and protection from unlawful discrimination.
- School Food Standards and School Food Regulations where they apply to food provided on school premises or through Barnfields Primary School.

3. EYFS food and drink requirements

- Meals, snacks and drinks provided by the setting must be healthy, balanced and nutritious.
- Fresh drinking water must always be available and accessible to children.
- Before admission, the setting must obtain information about dietary requirements, preferences, allergies, intolerances and special health requirements.

- Relevant information must be shared with staff preparing or handling food, and at every meal/snack there must be a clearly identified person responsible for checking that each child receives suitable food and drink.
- Food must be prepared for the child's individual developmental stage and in a way that reduces choking risk.
- Children must always remain within sight and hearing of staff while eating.
- While children are eating, there must always be a member of staff in the room who holds a valid full paediatric first-aid certificate meeting the EYFS criteria.

4. Nutrition principles

- Foods and drinks high in free sugar, salt and saturated fat will be limited or avoided in line with the nutrition guidance.
- Portions will be appropriate to the child's age, appetite and development. Children will be allowed to stop when full and may be offered more suitable food when still hungry.
- Children will not be required to clear their plate or eat a particular food before receiving another part of the meal.
- Staff will model positive, neutral language about food and body size and will not shame a child or family for food choices.
- Cultural, religious, ethical and medical dietary needs will be supported safely and respectfully.

5. Safer eating and choking prevention

- Food texture and size will reflect the individual child's development, not age assumptions alone.
- Small round foods such as grapes and cherry tomatoes will be cut lengthways and then quartered. Other foods will be prepared in accordance with current DfE/FSA choking-prevention guidance.
- Whole nuts, popcorn and other foods identified by current guidance as unsafe choking hazards for young children will not be served to early years children.
- Children will not walk, run, play or lie down while eating, and staff will intervene calmly where food is being shared or eaten unsafely.
- Staff will know the difference between choking and gagging and follow current paediatric first-aid procedures.

Any choking incident requiring staff intervention will be recorded, including what the child was eating and how the incident occurred. Parents/carers will be informed. Records will be reviewed periodically for patterns and corrective action. Serious injury or illness will also be considered against Ofsted and other reporting requirements.

6. Allergies, intolerances and special diets

- Known allergies and intolerances will have an appropriate action plan developed with parents/carers and health professionals where required; plans will be used where appropriate.
- All staff will know the symptoms and treatment of allergy/anaphylaxis, the difference between allergy and intolerance, and that allergies can first develop while a child attends the setting.
- Individual information will be accessible to staff who need it but displayed or shared in a way that respects confidentiality and data-protection requirements.
- A named checker will confirm the child, meal/snack and dietary requirements before food is served.
- Cross-contact will be controlled through procurement, storage, preparation, utensils, cleaning, hand hygiene and supervision.
- Emergency medication will be readily accessible in accordance with the child's action plan and the Administering Medicines Policy.

7. Food hygiene and food-safety management

Food will be purchased, stored, prepared, cooked, cooled, reheated and served in accordance with food-safety law and the setting/caterer's documented food-safety management system. Controls will

include cleaning, separation of raw and ready-to-eat foods, temperature control, pest management, allergen controls, traceability and safe disposal.

All staff who prepare or handle food must receive food-hygiene training appropriate to their role and be competent to perform it safely. The EYFS does not require every food handler to hold a particular 'Level 2' certificate; Woodlands Extra set Level 2 certification as an internal standard where proportionate. Staff must report gastrointestinal illness and other conditions relevant to food handling and follow exclusion/advice from current public-health guidance.

Where Barnfields Primary School or another caterer is the responsible food business operator, roles and information-sharing will be agreed in writing.

8. Breakfast and snacks

Breakfast and snacks will contribute to a balanced daily intake. Breakfast cereals, breads and other items will be selected with regard to the DfE nutrition guidance, favouring lower-sugar/lower-salt options and appropriate wholegrain choices. Snacks will commonly include fruit or vegetables with an appropriate starchy food, dairy food or alternative, or other suitable component.

Only drinking water will be freely available. Milk may be offered as appropriate. Food preparation activities will be supervised and included in allergen and hygiene risk controls.

9. Lunches and school meals

Hot meals supplied by Barnfields Primary School will be coordinated so that the correct meal reaches the correct child and allergy/diet information is checked at handover and service. Where School Food Standards apply, the provider/caterer will comply with them. Staff will support appropriate portions and will not pressure children to finish meals or desserts.

Packed lunches form part of the setting's consistent nutrition approach. Parents/carers will be encouraged to include fruit and/or vegetables, a starchy food, a protein food and dairy or a suitable alternative, while limiting foods high in sugar, salt or saturated fat.

10. Food brought from home

- Lunch bags and containers should be clearly named. Parents remain responsible for preparing food safely and for providing accurate ingredient/allergen information.
- Staff will check food for obvious choking hazards and known allergen risks before it is served. Unsafe items may be withheld and returned to the parent/carer without criticising the child.
- Parents will be asked to prepare small round foods, hard foods and other choking-risk foods in line with the setting's current safer-eating guidance.
- Perishable food must be kept safely chilled. Parents will receive guidance on insulated bags/ice packs as the setting does not provide refrigeration.
- The setting will not routinely reheat food brought from home.

11. Birthdays, celebrations and shared food

Celebrations will focus on inclusive activities such as singing, dancing, stories or non-food treats. Where food is brought in to share, it must be agreed in advance and capable of being checked safely for ingredients and allergens. The setting may refuse homemade or unlabelled shared food where ingredients, preparation or cross-contact cannot be verified.

Occasional celebration food will be managed proportionately within the overall healthy-eating approach. Sweets will not be used as rewards or routinely distributed. Cultural and religious food traditions will be included where safe and appropriate.

12. Equality, SEND and inclusion

Children will not be excluded from ordinary activities because of allergy, disability, medical condition, religion, culture or another protected characteristic where safe participation can be achieved through reasonable adjustments. The setting will work with parents/carers and relevant health professionals on texture modification, feeding support, specialist diets or other individual arrangements.

Food refusal, sensory sensitivities or restricted eating may be linked to SEND, medical or developmental needs. Staff will respond supportively, avoid coercion and seek advice with parental involvement where there is a concern about nutrition, growth, swallowing or wellbeing.

13. Food education and positive mealtimes

Children will learn about food through gardening, cooking, tasting, stories and everyday conversation. Home-grown produce may be used only where it can be washed, prepared and served safely. Food-growing and cooking activities will be risk assessed for allergens, choking, hygiene, tools and heat.

Staff will encourage curiosity and independence while maintaining safe supervision. Mealtimes will support communication, social skills and belonging and will respect children's cues and preferences.

14. Incident and emergency response

Incident	Immediate action and follow-up
Choking	Follow paediatric first aid; call 999 where required; record what/where/how; inform parents/carers; review for patterns and control improvements.
Suspected anaphylaxis	Follow the child's allergy action plan; administer prescribed emergency medication as trained; call 999; inform parents/carers; preserve food/ingredient information and complete required records.
Food allergy/intolerance error without symptoms	Stop service, assess the child, follow the action plan/medical advice, inform parents, record the near miss and review controls.
Suspected food poisoning	Seek medical/public-health advice as appropriate, preserve relevant food/traceability information, strengthen infection controls and make required notifications.

15. Ofsted and other notifications

Woodlands Extra must notify Ofsted of food poisoning affecting two or more children cared for on the premises. Under the EYFS framework effective 1 September 2026, notification must be made as soon as reasonably practicable and in any event within 14 days.

The provider will also assess serious choking, anaphylaxis, other serious injury or illness, death, significant events and safeguarding concerns against the current EYFS/Ofsted notification requirements. Ofsted notification does not replace calling 999, seeking medical care, contacting the local authority/Food Standards Agency or making a safeguarding referral where separately required.

16. Training, records, monitoring and review

- Maintain current dietary/allergy information and action plans and confirm changes with parents/carers.
- Keep records of food-hygiene training, paediatric first aid, food-safety checks, menus, incidents, near misses and corrective actions as required.
- Audit mealtime supervision, choking controls, allergy checking and the implementation of the nutrition guidance.

- Seek feedback from children and families in a developmentally appropriate way and adjust menus and routines where safe and suitable.