Food and Drink Policy

1. Policy Statement

At St Augustine's Nursery, we recognise that healthy food and drink are an important part of children's health, wellbeing, development and learning.

This policy applies to**:** all children, staff, volunteers, students, parents/carers and anyone involved in providing or handling food and drink at the nursery.

We provide and/or support the provision of:

- snacks;
- drinking water;
- milk where appropriate;
- packed lunches brought from home; and
- food as part of celebrations and cooking or food-related activities.

Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, these must be healthy, balanced and nutritious.

We will have regard to the Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance (May 2025) and will follow it unless there is a good reason not to.

We will work in partnership with parents and carers to support children's individual dietary, cultural, religious, medical and developmental needs.

We maintain appropriate food hygiene and safety standards in the purchase, storage, preparation, serving and disposal of food.

2. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy is based on the requirements and guidance applicable to early years providers in England, including:

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework for group and school-based providers – September 2026;
- Early Years Foundation Stage (Welfare Requirements) Regulations 2012;
- Childcare Act 2006;
- Food Safety Act 1990;
- Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013;

- Food Information Regulations 2014, including applicable allergen-information and prepacked-for-direct-sale requirements;
- current Food Standards Agency (FSA) food safety and allergen guidance;
- Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance (May 2025); and

3. Healthy Eating

We aim to:

- provide food and drink that is healthy, balanced, nutritious and appropriate for children's ages and stages of development;
- offer a variety of foods, flavours, textures and food groups;
- encourage children to develop positive relationships with food;
- avoid excessive amounts of foods high in sugar, salt and saturated fat;
- support good oral health;
- encourage children to make healthy choices;
- respect children's individual appetites and hunger/fullness cues;
- avoid pressuring children to eat;
- support independence by allowing children to make appropriate choices and develop self-help skills;
- provide appropriate utensils and equipment; and
- use mealtimes as positive social and learning experiences.

Menus and snacks will be planned to provide variety and nutritional balance and will take account of children's individual dietary requirements.

4. Drinking Water and Other Drinks

Fresh drinking water will be available to children throughout the day and offered as appropriate.

We will normally provide:

- fresh drinking water;
- plain milk where appropriate.

6. Safe Eating and Choking Prevention

Food will always be prepared and served in a manner appropriate to each child's age and developmental stage.

Particular care will be taken with foods that present a choking risk.

For example:

- grapes, cherry tomatoes and similar small round foods will be cut lengthways and into appropriate pieces;
- hard fruit and vegetables will be prepared appropriately;
- bones and stones/pips will be removed;

- sausages will be prepared appropriately whole nuts and whole seeds will not be given to children under 5;
- popcorn will not be provided;
- bread will be prepared appropriately for younger children; and
- food will be adapted to children's developmental stage.

Children must be seated safely while eating.

A member of staff with a valid full-course paediatric first aid certificate must be present in the room whenever children are eating, as required by the EYFS.

Any choking incident requiring intervention will be recorded and parents/carers informed. Incidents will be reviewed to identify any patterns or additional safety measures required.

7. Dietary Requirements, Allergies and Intolerances

Before a child starts at the nursery, we will obtain information about their:

- dietary requirements;
- food allergies;
- food intolerances;
- medical dietary requirements;
- cultural and religious dietary requirements;
- vegetarian or vegan diet where applicable; and
- any other relevant dietary needs.

This information will be recorded, kept up to date and shared appropriately with staff who need it to keep the child safe.

Parents/carers must inform the nursery immediately of any change to their child's dietary requirements or allergies.

Where a child has a diagnosed allergy, the nursery will obtain relevant medical information and, where appropriate, an allergy action plan or other healthcare information.

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that prescribed medication, including adrenaline auto-injectors where required, is supplied, in date and replaced when necessary.

The nursery will complete an individual risk assessment where required.

8. Allergy Management

A clear allergy-management system will be maintained and accessible to relevant staff.

At every meal and snack:

1. a designated member of staff will check the food being provided;
2. the child's dietary and allergy information will be checked;

3. ingredients and allergen information will be checked;
4. appropriate measures will be taken to prevent cross-contamination; and
5. food will be prepared and served in a way that prevents choking.

The nursery will maintain up-to-date information about allergens contained in foods served.

The **14 allergens required to be declared under food law** are:

- celery;
- cereals containing gluten;
- crustaceans;
- eggs;
- fish;
- lupin;
- milk;
- molluscs;
- mustard;
- peanuts;
- sesame;
- soya;
- sulphur dioxide and sulphites above the relevant legal threshold; and
- tree nuts.

Current FSA guidance requires food businesses to provide allergen information and manage allergens effectively.

We will not rely on a general statement such as "the food contains no nuts" as a substitute for checking ingredients and allergen information.

Where food is prepared on the premises, recipes and ingredient information will be kept sufficiently up to date to allow allergens to be identified.

9. Food Brought From Home and Packed Lunches

Children bringing packed lunches must bring them in a clearly labelled lunch bag/container.

Parents/carers will be provided with information about healthy, balanced and safe packed lunches.

Parents/carers should:

- provide food appropriate to their child's age and developmental stage;
- prepare food to minimise choking risks;
- clearly label the child's lunch bag;
- provide information about the contents where requested;
- use an insulated bag and ice pack for food that needs to remain chilled;
- avoid foods that present unnecessary choking risks;

- avoid foods that conflict with the nursery's allergy-management arrangements; and
- ensure food is safe to eat when brought to the nursery.

The nursery will check food brought from home for potential allergens and will take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of cross-contamination.

The nursery is not required to provide refrigeration for packed lunches and is not required to reheat food brought from home.

Where there is no suitable refrigeration available, parents/carers should provide foods that can safely be stored at room temperature or use appropriate insulated storage.

10. Food Sharing

Children will be discouraged from sharing or swapping food.

This is particularly important because staff may not know the ingredients or allergen content of another child's food.

Food provided for one child will not normally be given to another child unless staff have checked that it is suitable and safe for that child.

11. Birthday Celebrations and Special Occasions

We recognise that birthdays and special occasions can be important to children and families.

Parents/carers should discuss with the nursery before bringing food to share.

Any food brought into the nursery will be checked for:

- suitability for the children;
- choking risks;
- allergens;
- dietary requirements; and
- food safety.

We encourage healthier alternatives, including fruit or non-food celebrations such as bubbles, stickers or other activities. The EYFS Nutrition Guidance specifically recommends considering healthier or non-edible alternatives for celebrations.

The nursery may decline food where we cannot establish that it is safe or suitable for the children.

12. Food Hygiene

All food will be stored, prepared and served in a safe and hygienic environment.

Staff involved in food preparation and handling must be competent to do so and must follow the nursery's food safety procedures.

Food will be:

- stored at appropriate temperatures;
- protected from contamination;
- checked for use-by dates;
- stored appropriately;
- prepared using clean equipment and surfaces;
- protected from pests;
- disposed of appropriately when unsafe or no longer required; and
- handled in accordance with the nursery's food safety management procedures.

Food preparation areas will be cleaned before and after use.

Handwashing facilities will be available and staff and children will wash their hands appropriately before eating and food preparation.

Cleaning products and other hazardous substances will be stored safely and away from children.

Children will not have unsupervised access to kitchens or food preparation areas.

13. Food Safety Management

The nursery will maintain appropriate food safety procedures based on the principles of the Food Standards Agency's Safer Food, Better Business approach where applicable.

We will maintain appropriate records for:

- food safety checks;
- fridge/freezer temperatures where applicable;
- cleaning;
- food preparation;
- allergen information;
- supplier information where appropriate; and
- staff training.

Current government guidance confirms that those preparing and handling food in early years settings must be competent to do so.

A food hygiene certificate is not automatically a legal requirement for every member of staff; however, the nursery will ensure that staff handling food have appropriate and verifiable food safety and allergen-management competence.

14. Cooking and Food Activities With Children

Children may participate in cooking and food-related activities as part of their learning and development.

Children will:

- wash their hands before handling food;
- be supervised throughout;
- be taught appropriate hygiene practices;
- be protected from hot surfaces, hot liquids and sharp equipment;
- not have unsupervised access to electrical equipment;
- be protected from choking hazards; and
- be protected from known allergens.

Where food is consumed as part of an activity, staff will check individual dietary and allergy requirements beforehand.

15. Food Labelling and Allergens

Where the nursery prepares food that falls within the legal definition of prepacked for direct sale (PPDS), the relevant legal labelling requirements will be followed, including providing a full ingredients list with the relevant allergens emphasised.

The Food Information Regulations 2014 and subsequent amendments apply to allergen information and PPDS food.

Where food is non-prepacked, appropriate allergen information will nevertheless be available for the food provided.

Allergen information will be kept accurate and updated when ingredients or recipes change.

16. Food Poisoning and Suspected Outbreaks

Not every case of sickness or diarrhoea is food poisoning.

Where food poisoning is suspected, the nursery manager will:

- take appropriate immediate steps to protect children and staff;
- seek appropriate medical advice where required;
- contact the relevant local authority Environmental Health/Public Health service where reporting or investigation is required;
- cooperate fully with any investigation;
- review food preparation, storage and hygiene arrangements; and
- take any action required by the relevant authorities.

Where an incident meets the relevant EYFS/Ofsted notification requirements, the nursery will notify Ofsted within the required timescale.

A food-poisoning incident will **not** automatically be treated as an Ofsted-notifiable event solely because it involves sickness or diarrhoea; the applicable statutory notification criteria will be considered.

17. Food Recalls and Unsafe Food

If the nursery becomes aware that food supplied or served may be unsafe, contaminated or subject to a recall, the food will be removed from use immediately.

The nursery will:

- isolate affected food;
- prevent it from being consumed;
- identify affected children where appropriate;
- follow FSA/local authority advice;
- notify parents/carers where appropriate; and
- cooperate with any official investigation or recall procedure.

18. Communication With Parents and Carers

Parents/carers will be informed about:

- the nursery's food and drink arrangements;
- healthy eating expectations;
- packed-lunch requirements;
- allergy and dietary arrangements;
- food-related incidents affecting their child; and
- any significant changes to their child's eating or drinking.

Parents/carers are encouraged to discuss any concerns about their child's eating, drinking, allergies, intolerances or dietary requirements with their child's key person or the nursery manager.

19. Monitoring and Review

The Nursery Manager is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented.

The policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where there is:

- a change in legislation;
- a change to the EYFS;
- updated DfE, FSA or NHS guidance;
- a significant food safety or allergy incident;
- advice from the local authority Environmental Health service; or
- a change in the nursery's food provision.

20. Related Policies and Procedures

This policy should be read alongside:

- Health and Safety Policy;
- First Aid Policy;
- Medication Policy;
- Allergies/Medical Conditions Policy;
- Infection Control Policy;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Risk Assessment Policy;
- Accident and Incident Policy;

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy; and
- Data Protection and Privacy Policy.

21. Key Guidance

- Department for Education – Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers, September 2026.
- Department for Education – Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance, May 2025.
- Department for Education – Help for early years providers: Food safety.
- Food Standards Agency – Allergen guidance for food businesses.
- Food Standards Agency – Safer Food, Better Business.

22. Adoption

Policy effective from: September 2026

Review date: September 2027
Policy owner: Nursery Manager, Veronique Morceau
Approved by: Management Committee

Date adopted: 22.09.26

Signed on behalf of Management Committee:



Name: ABIGAIL WHITE

Role: CHAIR

Date: 22.09.26