Longden CE Primary School and Nursery
Nursery Healthy Eating and Food Hygiene Policy

Any meals, snacks and drinks provided to children at our Nursery will be healthy and nutritious, contributing to a balanced diet. This is a requirement of childcare settings as stated in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework. We will also follow safety guidelines in the Help for Early Years Providers guidance. We also have regard to the national EYFS nutrition guidance, ensuring our provision meets the latest statutory standards for food groups, portion sizes and the reduction of processed sugars.

Ideas for healthy meals and snacks may be taken from places like the NHS Eat Well and Healthier Families schemes and the Government's Example Menus for Early Years Settings in England. Fresh drinking water will be available at all times for all children; they may also be offered plain milk.

Why is a healthy diet important?

'Children's food preferences and eating habits are formed early in life with consequences for a range of health and development outcomes in later life. It is therefore important that the food offered in early years settings provides appropriate amounts of energy and nutrients and encourages the development of healthy eating habits in young children, both to support appropriate growth and development, and as part of national priorities to reduce childhood obesity and ensure every child has the best start in life.'

(Page 4, Example Menus for Early Years Settings in England)

Will our child's food preferences and specific dietary requirements be catered for?

We will obtain, record and act upon information from parents/caregivers about their child's dietary requirements, food allergies/intolerances and particular preferences.

We will do our best to provide food for vegetarians, vegans, pescetarians, Halal, etc. Please be aware that the cost of meals is representative of the food purchased and prices may vary for different dietary needs.

If a child struggles to eat a balanced diet, we will work with parents/ caregivers to support them in gradually adapting this to incorporate healthier foods and drinks. If a child's diet can cause health issues, we recommend that the family seek advice from a medical professional, such as a paediatrician or nutritionist.

Can our child bring a packed lunch?

Parents/caregivers can provide meals for their children to eat in our setting. We will provide chilled storage for refrigerated items, where necessary.

In the interest of safety and children's health, there are a few items that should not be included in lunchboxes:

- glass bottles and jars
- fizzy drinks and pre-mixed drinks with high sugar content
- foods with a very high salt content
- chocolate, sweets and foods with a high sugar content
- pre-cooked foods that when not cooled and/or stored correctly may pose a potential food poisoning risk (e.g. rice, cooked meat)
- foods that may present a choking risk (such as whole nuts, uncut grapes, popcorn, etc)*
- foods containing any form of nut due to allergies in our school community
- foods that may trigger a known allergy, if informed about such as issue

**Further information about choking hazards and food preparation can be found on the Food Standards Agency web page.*

Any foods or drinks left will be sent home with the child. If a child does not have enough food left in their lunchbox to constitute a full meal, we will provide a suitable substitute and parents/caregivers may be charged for this.

If a child regularly brings meals from home that are high in fat/sugar/salt and do not have enough nutritional value, this will be discussed with parents/caregivers. If they are struggling to provide a balanced diet due to selective eating or for medical reasons, then we will recommend they access support via their health visitor or GP.

Can food be provided by the school?

All meals and snacks can be provided by the school. All food will be prepared in a suitably hygienic area and any staff handling food will be familiar with the food hygiene and storage practices set out by the Food Standards Agency for Safer Food, Better Business.

As required by the EYFS Statutory Framework, sample menus will be shared with parents/caregivers and specific details about daily meals will be provided upon request. We will keep a detailed record of all allergens in the foods we offer and this information will be available to parents/caregivers if required.

What if our child is ill while they are at home?

During mealtimes, if a child says they do not want to eat something, we will suggest they try a bit of everything they have been given but there will be no pressure if they choose not to. We will praise them for tasting something new and never pressure them if they say they don't want to eat something.

Children will usually have some food options available during mealtimes so there will likely be something they wish to eat.

If a child decides not to eat anything provided, parents/caregivers will be informed of this. If a child refuses all foods and/or is overly upset about the meals provided, parents/caregivers may wish to provide a packed lunch instead for future weeks.

What precautions are in place to prevent children from choking at Nursery and in school?

We follow the guidance set out by the government in Help for Early Years Providers to minimise the risk of a child choking.

This includes preparing foods to be an appropriate size and shape. Children will be within sight and hearing during snack and mealtimes, with an adult facing them. All children will sit on age-appropriate chairs.

If a child were to start choking, we are trained to perform the necessary emergency first aid. We would also contact parents/caregivers immediately, suggesting that they seek follow-up medical advice.

Will food be prepared hygienically?

As a provider of meals and snacks, we are aware of our responsibilities under food hygiene legislation. This includes registration with the relevant Local Authority Environmental Health Department.

We are happy to have our premises inspected by a food safety officer. By following Safer Food, Better Business guidelines, we will ensure that we meet hygiene standards about food storage and preparation.

All work surfaces/cooking utensils that come into contact with food will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before food preparation occurs.

Potentially dangerous substances, such as bleach and detergents, will not come into contact with food preparation areas.

Food preparation areas will be located in a suitable place, away from baby changing facilities and activity stations.

What systems are in place for supporting children with food allergies and intolerances at Longden?

Information about known allergies and food intolerances is collected from parents/caregivers before a child starts in the setting. We also contact parents/caregivers regularly to review and update our records. If a child develops a new allergy or intolerance, parents/caregivers should immediately discuss this with us. Reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate children with allergies and/or intolerances, wherever possible.

Every child with a known allergen has an Individual Healthcare Plan so that all staff are aware of the allergen, signs and symptoms of a reaction and what medication is to be administered. For more information about allergens, please see our Allergen Policy.

What if a child becomes ill after eating at our school?

If there is an outbreak of food poisoning affecting two or more children looked after on our premises, we will notify Ofsted as soon as possible, within 14 days of the incident, to comply with regulations.

GENERAL GUIDELINES WHICH WE ADHERE TO AT OUR SCHOOL:

Choking Prevention & Food Preparation

We prepare food in a manner that minimises choking risk for children under five. Under local and national guidelines, specific high-risk foods must be reshaped:

- **Grapes, Cherry Tomatoes, and Strawberries:** Must always be cut lengthways into quarters. They should never be served whole or sliced into round discs.
- **Sausages and Hot Dogs:** Must be split lengthways into thin strips rather than chunks.
- **Hard Fruits and Vegetables (Apples, Carrots, Cucumber):** Must be grated, cooked, or sliced into very thin batons.
- **Sandwiches and Wraps:** Must be cut into manageable bite-sized pieces. Soft fillings should be spread thinly, as thick doughy bread can clump together in a young child's throat.

2. Allergy and Intolerance Management

Before a child ever starts their first day at our nursery, we ask parents to let us know about **dietary requirements, preferences, allergies, and intolerances**.

- **Individual Allergy Action Plans:** Staff work alongside parents/carers and healthcare professionals to create robust individual healthcare plans for children with known allergies.
- **Mealtime Accountability:** At every snack and mealtime, our school cook and early years practitioners are responsible for checking that the food served matches each child's dietary profile.
- **No Food Sharing:** Children are actively discouraged from sharing or swapping snacks or packed lunch items to avoid accidental allergen exposure.

3. Supervision and Mealtime Environment

Eating requires active, highly focused supervision:

- **First Aid Proximity:** A staff member with a valid **Paediatric First Aid (PFA)** certificate must is present in the room at all times while food is being consumed.
- **Constant Oversight:** Children must remain fully within sight and hearing of a staff member. Practitioners are advised to sit facing the children to catch early, quiet signs of choking or unexpected allergic reactions.
- **Safe Seating:** Low chairs must be used so that children eat while sitting upright safely, reducing reflux and swallowing difficulties.
- **Incident Recording:** Any choking incident requiring physical intervention is officially logged, noting exactly how and where it happened, and parents are informed immediately.

4. Nutrition and Menu Balancing

Shropshire Council promotes a varied, balanced diet covering the **four main food groups**.

- **Drinks:** Milk and water are the *only* drinks that should be routinely offered to children. Sugary juices, squashes, and carbonated beverages are restricted.
- **Sugar, Salt, and Fats:** Menus must limit foods high in salt, sugar, and saturated fats.