

Furnace Barn Day Nursery Nutritional Guidance Policy.

At Furnace Barn Day Nursery we are committed to promoting healthy eating habits and ensuring that all children receive nutritious and balanced meals while in our care and whilst also ensuring that healthy eating is part of our curriculum.

In accordance with the updated **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) nutrition guidance** released in April 2025, we ask parents and carers to provide healthy, balanced meals for their child/ren's Lunch and Tea. We have developed our policy with the new framework in mind. We ensure mealtimes are a calm and positive part of our day and while we never pressure children to eat, we gently encourage them to try a range of foods and celebrate healthy choices.

What We Provide.

We provide healthy snacks during the day, such as fruit, vegetables, and a drink of milk or water. Parents are responsible for providing their child's packed meals depending on their session times (tea is not served for children leaving at 3pm and 4pm).

Packed Lunch Expectations

We will check all food provided during mealtimes; we kindly ask that packed lunches include:

- A portion of starchy food (e.g. bread, pasta, rice, or wraps).
- At least one portion of fruit or vegetables.
- A source of protein (e.g. meat, eggs, beans, lentils, or fish).
- A dairy item (e.g. cheese, yoghurt or a suitable dairy free alternative).

We ask that the following items are avoided:

- Confectionery such as sweets, chocolate bars or cakes.
- Sugary fizzy drinks or high-sugar squash – water is the best drink for children with food.
- Foods high in salt or saturated fat (e.g. crisps, sausage rolls) should be limited.
- Marshmallows, popcorn, boiled sweets and jelly cubes (all of which are choking hazards).

We strongly encourage all parents to become familiar with <https://help-for-early-yearsproviders.education.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/nutrition/children-aged-one-to-fiveguidance> where guidance is given on how to put together a healthy balanced diet for their child's meals.

If parents are struggling financially to access a healthy and balanced diet, then please do ask to speak to Kerry who can help with access to the NHS Healthy Start scheme.

Food Safety and Storage

Please note we can only reheat food, we cannot cook meals and all packed meals are stored in the refrigerator when not being served. To keep packed meals safe and fresh please:

- Use an insulated lunch bag or box, clearly labelled with your child's name, and large enough to fit all items inside.

Allergies and Dietary Needs

To ensure the safety of all children parents must:

- Inform us of any dietary needs or allergies your child has (this information is requested on a child's registration form and a separate form must be completed) We must also be notified of any changes to your child's dietary needs or allergies. This also includes cultural preferences.
- Inform us if your child has a severe allergy (requiring an epi-pen or extra precautions as a risk assessment would be completed before your child started Nursery).

Mealtimes are a calm and social part of our day. As we are a packed meals setting, this in itself can introduce children to a new range of foods as they see other children enjoying a variety of foods during mealtimes. Staff sit with children during mealtimes to model behaviour and to support with opening containers etc. We provide gentle encouragement for children to try new foods in a pressure-free way. ALL Staff supervising mealtimes have completed 12 hours paediatric first aid training.

Weaning.

At Furnace Barn, we understand the challenges around weaning and how this “fits” into nursery life. We follow the government guidelines around weaning and recommend this is started around six months of age. We focus on an individual child's stage and recommend providing a wide variety of textures, flavours, and nutritious homemade foods, all within a safe eating environment that includes appropriate supervision, seating, and food preparation to prevent choking hazards and ensure children's well-being.

At Furnace Barn we follow these Key Principles

- **Individual Approach:** Weaning should be tailored to each child's age and stage of development, not based solely on their age. Such cues as sitting unaided, being able to coordinate their hand to mouth so they can pick food up and being able to swallow food rather than spit it out are all indicators that your child may be ready to wean. During the settling in stage, we ask all parents to complete a getting to know you guide about your child's stage of weaning and parents must update their child's keyworker as their child progresses through these stages.

- **Gradual Introduction:** Start with pureed textures, then move to lumpier mashed foods, soft chunks, and eventually finger foods. Please see the weaning road map displayed in the Quiet Room or ask for a copy to be emailed.
- **Nutrition and Variety:** Introduce a range of foods, flavours, and textures to promote healthy eating habits and nutrient intake.
- **Safety First:** Create a safe eating environment by providing appropriate food types and textures, ensuring safe eating setups, offering proper supervision, and teaching children to chew and swallow safely.
- **Homemade Food:** Prioritize preparing food from scratch rather than relying on premade food pouches to introduce suitable flavours and textures.

We encourage parents to visit <https://www.nhs.uk/start-for-life/baby/weaning/> for a comprehensive guide to weaning.

Celebrations

As a setting we value children's birthdays and often hold birthday parties to celebrate these special occasions. Families are welcome to bring in a birthday cake or to celebrate by bringing in a nonedible option such as bubbles or stickers.

If you do choose to bring in a cake or sweet treat – we ask that you double check dietary requirements with us before providing any cakes or sweet treats. If we are celebrating a child's birthday with a sweet treat, we will ensure that we do not plan any sweet baking activities during the same week.

Cooking and learning about Food

Cooking and learning about foods are a key part of our curriculum. We teach children about the importance of a balanced diet encouraging them to make balanced choices. We grow healthy fruit and vegetables at a patch next to preschool and our apple trees produce the most amazing apples. We also make our own compost from fruit peelings teaching children about sustainability. When cooking with children we make sure we are cooking with a range of different foods and will not cook sweet treats during the same week that a sweet treat has been brought in by a parent.

Food safety and Hygiene

We ensure that all staff handling food have completed a food hygiene and allergy training course. All staff are made aware of children's individual dietary needs which are also recorded on both the registers (in Family App) and is displayed in the classrooms and kitchen areas. All epi pens are clearly labelled and stored in the medication cabinet – we take them with us during outdoor play. All staff are aware of any care plan as per our allergy and medication policy.