



Healthy Eating Policy

1. Statement of Purpose

The promotion of children's healthy eating is an important aspect of high-quality childcare and children should have a positive experience which helps to develop lifelong healthy eating habits. Healthy eating should be promoted in all early learning and childcare (ELC) settings by providing a well-balanced and nutritious diet. All children in ELC settings need regular healthy meals, snacks, and drinks to help develop their health and wellbeing.

This policy is in place to inform parents and staff about how we at Old Rayne Preschool are committed to ensuring a well-balanced, healthy, and nutritious diet is provided for all children in our care, and that development of healthy eating practices is supported.

We believe mealtimes should be a happy, social occasion for children and staff members an opportunity to share positive interactions and promote learning across the curriculum. Through sharing a positive food experience with others, children's language and social skills can be developed. It is important for staff to consider the individual and cultural needs of any children in their care.

We follow 'Setting the Table' and 'Food Matters' when planning meals and snacks. 'Setting the Table' is the nutritional guidance for early years settings in Scotland. 'Food Matters' provides examples of good practice around food provision. The 'Health and Social Care Standards: My support, my life' set out what we should all expect when using health, social care, or social work services in Scotland. These are human rights-based standards that we use when considering food provision.

The Care Inspectorates [Food Matters Guidance](#) states: 'Food Matters shares UNICEF's core message and vision: If a child receives the right nutrition and care at the start of their lives, they'll grow up healthy and strong – and there's no limit to what they can become. This aligns with Health and Social Care Standard 1.6: I get the most out of life because the people and organisation who support and care for me have an enabling attitude and believe in my potential.' The resource also focuses on making the link to the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) wellbeing indicators. This demonstrates how eating well and enjoying positive eating experiences contribute to children being safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included.

Throughout this guidance the term '*parents*' is used to include all main caregivers.

2. Wellbeing

No matter the age of the child, from babyhood onwards, health and wellbeing are the principal driving force behind children growing up and learning. The wellbeing indicators of [GIRFEC](#), for children to be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible, and included, are implicit. It is also well known that a healthy diet and regular physical exercise are fundamental for a healthy childhood. Babies and young children need a healthy balanced diet to support brain development and physical development. (As per [Realising the Ambition: Being Me \(Scottish Government 2020\)](#) and the [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#).)

3. Menu Planning

At Old Rayne Preschool we have a responsibility to be mindful of individual food and nutritional needs of the children in our care. We will ensure that a well-balanced, healthy, and nutritious diet is provided for all children. When planning a menu, staff will consider the individual nutritional needs of the children, the children's stage of development, any allergies they may have and their cultural background. The planned menu will ensure children experience a wide variety of food options from the different food groups. We will gather information from parents regarding children's dietary needs to ensure these are appropriately met and will carry out a risk assessment where required.

Menus will be planned in advance, and you are welcome to review these. According to seasons, rotated regularly and will reflect cultural diversity and variation. These will be displayed for children and parents to view in the noticeboard and copies will be available to take away. Children are supported to make healthy choices and understand the need for healthy eating. We will liaise with parents, staff and children over individual needs and menu ideas.

Further information on menu planning, [sample menus and recipes](#) can be found within [Setting the Table. Nutritional Guidance and Food Standards for early years childcare providers in Scotland](#)

If you would prefer to provide your own meals and snacks, we are happy to support you around the types of foods that would be most suitable. Please see section 9 for our packed lunch and bringing food from home policy.

Please note that in local authority settings, menus will be provided.

4. Environment

At Old Rayne Preschool, we will provide a nurturing meal environment where children will be supported to make appropriate choices, enjoy food, and have social interactions and learning experiences associated with eating and drinking together.

The environment should be calm and welcoming and encourage positive social interaction amongst children and staff. Meal and snack times should be used to develop good table manners, establish healthy eating patterns, and develop regular eating routines in children. Independence skills should be developed by offering children food and drink choices and encouraging children to serve and feed themselves. Children should always be supervised when eating and given time to eat at their own pace and not be rushed. Children will be offered choices where possible and have the opportunity to taste new foods and are praised and encouraged when they do so - this will help them widen their food choices and help them develop good eating habits.

Consideration should be given to the space and managing of meal/snack times as well as the type of food provided. Children will be encouraged to help prepare, serve, and feed themselves to increase their independence. Suitable equipment will be provided for all children taking into account their individual needs and stage of development to ensure a positive experience.

5. Space to Eat

Provision of food is an integral part of a care and learning environment. When children have a positive experience of eating and drinking in an early learning and childcare service, it will help them to develop an appreciation that eating can be an enjoyable activity and understand the role of food within social and cultural contexts on long term health benefits. (As per [Space to Grow](#) Scottish Government 2017).

6. Good Eating Habits

Positive eating habits should be encouraged., Staff should provide an enjoyable, flexible eating experience within the setting, enabling children to develop good eating patterns. Children should experience a variety of different foods and regularly be introduced to new foods. They should be encouraged to try small quantities of all types of foods unless on a special diet or for cultural reasons. Milk or water is offered to drink at meal and snack times in keeping with 'Setting the Table'. Fresh drinking water is available at all times. Quantities of food/drink offered will be determined by the ages of the children and their individual needs. If a child does not want to eat a meal or shows signs of distress the food should be removed, without fuss, after a reasonable time. A healthy snack should be offered later in the day to the child. Any child who has not eaten or finished their main course will still be offered a second course/dessert. Relevant information regarding the child's eating habits should be recorded and parents should be informed if their child is not eating well. Staff should ensure a consistent approach in relation to children's eating habits and offer praise and encouragement whenever possible, cultural differences in eating habits are respected. Through play and food based activities children are given the opportunity to taste new foods and encouraged when they do so, positive attitudes to healthy eating should be developed.

7. Food Policy

Specific information, relating to the individual ELC setting, should be provided within the Healthy Eating policy. Information regarding frameworks for food policy

development can be found in [Setting the Table, Nutritional Guidance and Food Standards for early years childcare providers in Scotland](#) (NHS Scotland 2015 updates 2018 p86-91)

[The National Standard](#) requires that settings providing funded ELC have a clear and comprehensive policy on the provision of nutritious healthy meals and snacks for children. This should be consistent with the national guidance [Setting the Table](#) and [The Eatwell Guide](#)

8. Partnership with Families

The setting will work in partnership with parents and any other relevant agencies in their community to promote healthy eating. The weekly menu will be displayed in advance and available for parents and children to view. Parents should be made aware of what their child has eaten and how well they have eaten through regular informal contact.

9. Packed Lunch and bringing Food from home.

Our packed lunch policy fits within a wider context of promoting a whole setting approach to food and healthy eating and is again based on the guidance in 'Setting the Table' for early years settings and the Eatwell Guide <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-guidelines-and-food-labels/the-eatwell-guide/>

To ensure consistency and to keep packed lunches in line with this guidance, packed lunches brought into our setting should not contain the following:

- Fizzy / sugary drinks in cartons, bottles, or cans
- Confectionery such as chocolate bars and especially sweets
- Cakes and biscuits
- Sugared / toffee and salted popcorn.
- Crisps or any packet savoury snacks high in salt and fat
- Meat products such as sausage rolls, individual pies, corned meat sausages/chipolatas

Please be aware that we may have children and team members with severe allergies to nuts, so ask that these are not included in your child's packed lunches.

- Nuts

For more guidance and advice on what to include in a healthy packed lunch for your child, please see "Setting the table". If you have worries or concerns around what your child will eat, please speak to (Sophie Startin).

As fridge space is limited, we ask parents to bring packed lunches in insulated bags with freezer blocks where possible to stop the food spoiling. We will also follow the advice provided by Food Standards Scotland on cooking and reheating food safely.

10. Staff Development

The preparation and handling of food should be carried out by competent staff who will have sufficient knowledge to ensure food is safe to eat. Staff should receive training in food hygiene. Food safety and hygiene is the responsibility of each individual setting. The local authority environmental health department will have up to date information regarding food safety legislation and procedures.

- We are registered with the local authority as a food provider and adhere to the Food (Scotland) Act 2015.
- We are required to follow proper food safety and hygiene practices when providing meals and snacks and carrying out food-based activities.
- We will ensure that staff are up to date with food safety and hygiene training and that they have sufficient knowledge to store, prepare and supply food that is safe to eat.

Staff will be encouraged to keep abreast of good practice documentation around healthy eating for the children and young people in their care. Management will ensure that messages relating to healthy eating are disseminated to their staff team through regular communication and professional learning opportunities.

11. Food Safety

As an organisation prioritising food safety, we will follow advice and use appropriate resources which are available through Food Standards Scotland. We will register as a [Food Business Establishment](#), follow [CookSafe](#) guidance and pay heed to Infection Control measure around food safety.

Food Standards Scotland (FSS) is a non-ministerial government department of the Scottish Government. It is responsible for food safety, food standards, nutrition, food labelling and meat inspection in Scotland. Everyone involved in the food industry is aware of the importance of good food hygiene practices and of the need to handle food in a safe, clean environment.

FSS monitors all the practical measures involved in keeping food safe and wholesome through all the stages of production to point of sale or consumption. The site has all the information you will require to start a new food business. It contains information on the registration process, a checklist for start-up and links to useful resources required. Food safety is very important for childcare because children are a vulnerable group.

This means children can be more seriously affected by food poisoning and food allergy than some other groups of people. The advice received is that all ELC must be registered as a Food Business Establishment.

To find out more visit: [Food Standards Scotland Website](#)

Monitoring of this Policy

It will be the responsibility of Sophie Startin to ensure that new or temporary staff are familiar with this policy and that the policy is being implemented by all staff.

See also:

Infection Control Policy

Links to national policy

When reviewing your policy, please reflect on the 'Health & Social Care Standards My support, My life' <https://www.gov.scot/publications/health-social-care-standards-support-life/>

1.33 I can choose suitably presented and healthy meals and snacks, including fresh fruit and vegetables, and participate in menu planning.

1.34 If I need help with eating and drinking, this is carried out in a dignified way and my personal preferences are respected.

1.35 I can enjoy unhurried snack and mealtimes in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible.

1.36 If I wish, I can share snacks and meals alongside other people using and working in the service if appropriate.

1.37 My meals and snacks meet my cultural and dietary needs, beliefs and preferences.

1.38 If appropriate, I can choose to make my own meals, snacks and drinks, with support if I need it, and can choose to grow, cook and eat my own food where possible.

1.39 I can drink fresh water at all times.

Space to Grow - Section 02 Environment

<https://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/549001/space-to-grow.pdf>

Food Matters [food-matters-nurturing-happy-healthy-children.pdf](https://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/549001/food-matters-nurturing-happy-healthy-children.pdf)
([careinspectorate.com](https://hub.careinspectorate.com))

The National Standard

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/funding-follows-child-national-standard-early-learning-childcare-providers-principles-practice/pages/4/>

Care Inspectorate Practice Note-Keeping children safe: supporting positive mealtime experiences in early learning and childcare (ELC)

<https://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/5018/elc-practice-note-4-mealtimes.pdf>

Care Inspectorate -Good practice guidance: prevention and management of choking episodes in babies and children

<https://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/3913/good-practice-guidance-prevention-and-management-of-choking-episodes-in-babies-and-children.pdf>

[Food Standards Scotland](https://www.gov.scot/publications/food-standards-scotland/)