



# 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/team members and 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 I/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](#)).

We are aware that children's early experiences with food, including the eating patterns they are offered and the eating patterns they are exposed to both at home and out with the home can shape future eating habits. At Old Rayne Preschool we strive to ensure there is a varied diet and a regular eating pattern in line with guidance from 'setting the table' which will not only aid in a positive impact on mood, attention, behaviour and learning but can also influence the risk of chronic health issues later in life.

## 3. Food Provisions

### [Funding Follows the Child and The National Standard for ELC](#)

[Providers](#) Aberdeenshire Council provides guidance to ensure that every child attending a funded ELC session – which is any session that includes funded hours, regardless of whether they are mixed with 'paid for' hours – will be provided with a free meal.

Meals can be provided as a breakfast, lunch or dinner. The meal does not need to be hot, but all meals and snacks must meet the most up to-date nutritional guidance provided for ELC and should be consistent with "Setting the Table" the nutritional guidance and food standards for early years childcare providers in Scotland.

Where the child's ELC entitlement is being delivered using a blended model, involving more than one provider across the day, it will be for the individual funded providers to agree with the family and the local authority who will provide the meal.

We at Old Rayne Preschool also have the option to register with our Local Authority to provide a drink of milk or non-dairy alternative and a healthy snack through the [Scottish Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme](#). The Scheme offers a serving of milk or specified non-dairy alternatives and a portion of fruit or vegetables to all preschool children, each day they attend a registered setting for 2 hours or more per day. Whilst it is not a requirement of the National Standard for settings to register for the scheme, in doing so, settings can access funding to help cover the costs of providing milk, specified non-dairy alternatives and a healthy snack.

## 4. Menu Planning

At Old Rayne Preschool we have a responsibility to be mindful of individual food and nutritional needs of the children in my/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 at the hall entrance 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 Standards and Practical Guidance for Early Learning and 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 **10** for our packed lunch and bringing food from home policy.

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

## **5. 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. All foods prepared and served will follow correct procedures to minimise and reduce the risk of [choking](#) and [scalding](#) in line with Care Inspectorates best guidance.

The Care Inspectorates Practice Notes on [Supporting Positive Mealtime Experiences in ELC](#) highlights that 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.

## **6. 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 and Thrive](#) )

## **7. 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.

## **8. 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](#) (Appendix 4 P96-98)

[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

## **9. 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 online on Aberdeenshire

Council's website. Parents should be made aware of what their child has eaten and how well they have eaten through regular informal contact.

## **10. 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 (insert staff members name here).

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.

## **11. 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 the 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.

## **12. 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.

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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.

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**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**

Please refer to the EYS Early Years External guidance glossary which can be found within MyEYS for the most up to date links.

The purpose of this Early Years External Guidance Glossary is to offer a comprehensive collection of links and documents from external organisations. These

resources form the foundation of the policies and procedures used within your ELC setting.

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.

## Appendix 1 - Sample Menus



## Around 6 months-1 year sample menu

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Breakfast</b>	Toast fingers with spread, plain yoghurt and pineapple slices	Malted wheat cereal with milk and chopped plum (skin removed)	Toast fingers with spread, scrambled egg and tomatoes (mashed or cherry tomatoes quartered)	Wheat biscuits with milk and banana (sliced)	Porridge and blueberries (mashed or quartered)
<b>Lunch</b>	Roast chicken (chopped) with gravy, mashed potatoes and a vegetable medley	Tofu and vegetable noodles (chopped)	Beef casserole (chopped)	Salmon fish cake with peas and sweetcorn (mashed)	Pasta (well-cooked smaller shapes) with tomato and lentil sauce
	Baked apple with custard	Plain fromage frais with pear slices	Cheese batons with sliced grapes	Plain yoghurt with mixed berries (mashed or quartered)	Fruit selection
<b>Tea</b>	Carrot and butter bean (mashed) soup with a wholemeal roll (strips)	Tuna and cucumber wrap (deconstructed where required- cucumber sticks and wrap strips)	Cous cous with chickpeas (mashed) and tomatoes (mashed or cherry tomatoes quartered)	Vegetable sticks (hard vegetables cooked until soft or grated)	Baked potato (skin removed) with baked beans (mashed)
	Peaches in juice (drained)	Fruit platter	Fruit selection	Muffin pizza faces (sliced into strips)	Fruit salad with plain yoghurt or fruit selection

## Sample Menu 1 – 5 Year Olds

### Sample menu week 1

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Breakfast</b>	Toast with spread, plain yoghurt and pineapple slices Milk	Malted wheat cereal with milk, toast with spread and sliced plum	Toast with spread, scrambled egg, and tomatoes Milk	Wheat biscuits with milk, toast with spread and banana	Porridge, toast with spread and blueberries
<b>Mid-Morning Snack</b>	Crackers with sliced banana	Carrot sticks with cheese dip  Milk	Rice cakes and mandarin segments Milk	Hard-boiled egg quarters and tomatoes Milk	Plain fromage frais with sliced peaches
<b>Lunch</b>	Roast chicken with gravy, mashed potatoes and a vegetable medley	Pork and vegetable noodles	Beef casserole	Salmon fish cake with potato wedges, peas & sweetcorn	Pasta with tomato and lentil sauce and wholemeal garlic bread
	Baked apple with custard or fruit selection	Plain fromage frais with pear slices or fruit selection	Cheese & crackers with sliced grapes or fruit selection	Plain yoghurt with mixed berries or fruit selection	Lemon shortbread with strawberries or fruit selection
<b>Mid-Afternoon Snack</b>	Pepper sticks with houmous dip Milk	Pesto pasta and blueberries	Cucumber sticks with mint yoghurt dip	Rice salad and strawberries	Wholemeal pitta strips with spread and melon slices Milk
<b>Tea</b>	Carrot and butter bean soup with a wholemeal roll	Tuna and cucumber wrap	Cous cous with chickpeas and tomatoes	Vegetable sticks with houmous dip	Baked potato with baked beans
	Peaches in juice or fruit selection	Fruit platter	Apricot and raisin flapjack with banana slices or fruit selection	Muffin pizza faces with pasta twists	Fruit salad with plain yoghurt or fruit selection



## Sample menu week 2

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Breakfast</b>	Wheat biscuits with milk, toast with spread and blueberries	Toast with spread, plain yoghurt and peach slices Milk	Porridge, toast with spread and mixed berries	Malted wheat cereal with milk, toast with spread and melon slices	Toast with spread, scrambled egg and tomatoes Milk
<b>Mid-Morning Snack</b>	Hard boiled egg quarters with cucumber sticks	Rice cakes and strawberries	Fruity rice and melon slices	Plain fromage frais with sliced plums Milk	Pepper sticks with cream cheese dip Milk
<b>Lunch</b>	Mixed beans and tomato sauce with cous cous  Plain fromage frais with pineapple in juice or fruit selection	Creamy chicken and vegetable pasta  Apple and pear oat crumble with custard or fruit selection	Vegetable sticks with houmous dip  Pork sausage with mashed potatoes and baked beans	Beef mince and vegetables with boiled potatoes and broccoli  Rice pudding with raisins or fruit selection	Fish curry with rice  Plain yoghurt with sliced plum or fruit selection
<b>Mid-Afternoon Snack</b>	Wholemeal pitta strips with spread and sliced grapes Milk	Carrot sticks with houmous dip Milk	Plain yoghurt with pear slices Milk	Crackers with sliced banana	Pasta salad and apple slices
<b>Tea</b>	Macaroni cheese with spinach  Fruit platter	Baked potato with tuna and sweetcorn  Sliced mandarins in juice or fruit selection	Vegetable frittata with pasta twists  Fruit platter	Mackerel pâté and pepper wrap  Fruit salad with plain yoghurt or fruit selection	Vegetable and lentil soup with a wholemeal roll  Chocolate orange cupcake with sliced apple or fruit selection

## Vegetarian sample menu

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Breakfast</b>	Wheat biscuits with milk, toast with spread and blueberries	Toast with spread, plain yoghurt and peach slices Milk	Porridge, toast with spread and mixed berries	Malted wheat cereal with milk, toast with spread and melon slices	Toast with spread, scrambled egg and tomatoes Milk
<b>Mid-Morning Snack</b>	Hard boiled egg quarters with cucumber sticks	Rice cakes and strawberries	Fruity rice and melon slices	Plain fromage frais with sliced plums Milk	Pepper sticks with cream cheese dip Milk
<b>Lunch</b>	Mixed beans and tomato sauce with cous cous  Plain fromage frais with pineapple in juice or fruit selection	Chicken style pieces and vegetable pasta  Apple and pear oat crumble with custard or fruit selection	Vegetable sticks with houmous dip  Vegetarian sausage with mashed potatoes and baked beans	Vegetarian mince and vegetables with boiled potatoes and broccoli  Rice pudding with raisins or fruit selection	Tofu curry with rice  Plain yoghurt with sliced plum or fruit selection
<b>Mid-Afternoon Snack</b>	Wholemeal pitta strips with spread and sliced grapes Milk	Carrot sticks with houmous dip Milk	Plain yoghurt with pear slices Milk	Crackers with sliced banana	Pasta salad and apple slices
<b>Tea</b>	Macaroni cheese with spinach  Fruit platter	Baked potato with baked beans  Sliced mandarins in juice or fruit selection	Vegetable frittata with pasta twists  Fruit platter	Cream cheese & pepper wrap  Fruit salad with plain yoghurt or fruit selection	Vegetable and lentil soup with a wholemeal roll  Chocolate orange cupcake with sliced apple or fruit selection