



Highland Council Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Food and Nutrition Policy

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Food and Nutrition Policy for Early Learning and Childcare Settings

Policy Statement

- We are committed to promoting the health and wellbeing of all children in our care by providing nutritious, balanced meals, snacks, and drinks in line with the Scottish Government's Setting the Table guidance (2024).
- This policy ensures that food provision supports children's growth, development, and learning, while respecting individual dietary needs and cultural preferences.

Scope

- This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and external food providers involved in food preparation, planning, and service within our ELC setting.

Objectives

- To meet the nutritional needs of children aged 2–5 years.
- To create a positive and nurturing mealtime environment.
- To support children's understanding of healthy eating.
- To comply with Care Inspectorate regulations and national guidance.

Nutritional Standards

- Follow the age-specific nutritional standards outlined in Setting the Table.
- Provide meals and snacks that include a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and protein sources.
- Avoid foods high in sugar, salt, and saturated fats.
- Ensure appropriate portion sizes and meal frequency.

Menu Planning

- Menus will be planned in advance. Lunch by catering service,
- Menus will be reviewed regularly using the Menu Checklist tool.
- Menus will be displayed for parents/carers and staff.
- Menus will be based on food ordering from Brakes.
- Back-up / alternative food choices for children with selective eating must be recorded in their Being Me! Meeting my ongoing needs document.

Special Dietary Requirements

- Accommodate allergies, intolerances, and medical conditions (e.g., coeliac disease, diabetes).
- Respect religious and cultural dietary practices.
- Maintain up-to-date records of children's dietary needs.

Infant Feeding

- Breastfeeding and safe formula feeding will be supported.
- Guidance on the introduction of solid foods will be followed.
- Suitable drinks and foods that avoid posing choking risks will be provided.

Mealtime Environment

- A calm, social, and inclusive atmosphere during meals will be created.
- Self-feeding and independence will be encouraged.
- Positive eating behaviours will be modelled.
- Best practice will be followed - using real crockery, correct sized cutlery.
- Children will always sit down to eat and drink.
- Best practice will be followed, ensuring that children's feet touch the floor.

- Drinking bottles should not be taken to dining room. If they can be managed in the playroom with no infection control concerns, they are permitted, however the use of ELC cups is encouraged.
- Medication or juice is not permitted in drinking bottles.
- Water is accessible and encouraged all day.

Food Safety and Hygiene

- Food safety regulations and hygiene practices will be followed.
- Regular kitchen and food preparation area checks will be conducted.
- Food safety is practiced including fridge temperature checks, cleaning checklists and food storage is suitable and appropriate.
- Use of Epi pen <https://www.epipen.co.uk/en-GB/patients/your-epipen/how-to-use-your-epipen>
- Any practitioner preparing snack must have completed Food Hygiene training. The training is carried out online and must be completed within the period of time stated in the email. cpd@highland.gov.uk

Staff Training and Development

- All staff should read this Highland Council Lunch and Snack Guidance.
- Staff will be aware of the children they are responsible for during lunch time period to ensure that everyone's needs are met and their safety maintained (staff will have a knowledge of Care Inspectorate's SIMOA information) Regular head counts will be undertaken.
<https://www.careinspectorate.com/index.php/news/6257-look-think-act>
- There will be sufficient staff deployed to support children over the lunch time period making it a relaxed, stress-free experience. It is recommended that all staff are working on the floor at this time wherever possible.
- Staff will ensure to keep up to date with current practice, including:
<https://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/5018/elc-practice-note-4-mealtimes.pdf>
- Staff will be familiar with the Setting the Table guidance and updates.
- Key Workers will record relevant information in the children's Being Me! Meeting my on-going needs document.

Family Engagement

- Menus and nutritional information will be shared with families.
- Feedback and collaboration on food provision will be encouraged.
- Advice and support will be provided to parents and carers around the provision of packed lunches in ELC

Monitoring and Review

- This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to updates in national guidance.
- Feedback from staff, families, and children will inform improvements.

Packed lunch information for parents/carers

The following letter can be used as a tool to communicate with parents/carers the expectations around packed lunch box contents.

"Dear parents/carers,

As part of our commitment to promoting the best possible nutrition for the children in our care, we follow the principles laid out in the [Setting the Table](#) guidance on early years healthy eating from the Scottish Government. We believe good food helps children grow, learn, and feel their best — and we want to work together with you to support this. If you would like to read the guidance you can find it here [Setting the Table guidance](#). We welcome children coming to ELC with packed lunches. We appreciate that every family has different preferences, and some children enjoy home-prepared meals or specific food choices.

To ensure that packed lunches align with our shared goal of balanced, healthy nutrition, we ask that the following are not included:

- *Sweeties, sweets, or confectionery*
- *Fizzy (carbonated) juice*

If these items are included in lunch bags, they will be removed and replaced by healthy alternatives.

Some suggestions for healthy packed lunches:

- *Wholegrain bread, wraps, or crackers*
- *Vegetables or fruit*
- *Dairy, e.g. milk, yoghurt, or cheese*

You can find other advice and information here about [eating well](#) and [packed lunch ideas](#) at these links.

By avoiding highly sugary foods and drinks, we can help all our children keep steady energy, good teeth, and healthy growth.

Thank you for your support with this — it really helps maintain consistency between home and the early years setting.

In accordance with the guidance, we do want to work in partnership with families to support healthy packed lunches. This will be done through discussion with your child's Keyworker and the sharing of relevant nutritional information."

Packed lunches

Recommendations from Environmental health for storage of packed lunches

Where a nursery has refrigerated storage then it is recommended it is used for storing packed lunches. It is not reasonable to expect nursery staff to decant the packed lunches into separate containers. Aside from placing an additional burden on staff this practice of decanting may cause confusion and result in a child being given foodstuffs that do not belong to them or are unsuitable, for example in the case of children with allergies.

The nursery should monitor and record the temperature of the refrigerator on a daily basis to ensure it is operating at the correct temperature. Correct temperatures should be specified within the nursery procedures.

Where a nursery has no facility to store packed lunches in a refrigerated condition the parents should be informed that it is their responsibility to ensure the foods are kept at a suitable temperature that will not result in a risk to health. This may be by the provision of an ice pack, insulated container etc.

Packed lunches should be decanted onto a plate. (Packed lunches not on the table due to Infection prevention)

Packed lunches and school lunches are not on separate tables so children can sit with friends/keyworker groups

The importance of a healthy balanced diet

A healthy balanced diet for 1- to 5-year-olds is important because it:

- Supports optimal growth and development.
- Supports children to eat well, and to have a healthy weight and good oral health.
- Can expose children to a variety of foods, building the foundations for future health.
- Can shape food preferences and eating habits that children take with them into later childhood and beyond.



Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS): Eating and drinking

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.

Allergy/intolerance

It is important to know the difference between allergies and food intolerance.

Food allergies are an allergic reaction occurs when the body's immune system mistakenly reacts to a food or substance that is usually harmless. The food or substance that the body reacts to is known as an allergen. The most common foods associated with food allergy are:

- Cows' milk (in cooking or mixed with food but not as a main drink).
- Eggs
- Foods that contain gluten, including wheat, barley and rye
- Peanuts and tree nuts
- Seeds (served crushed or ground)
- Soya
- Shellfish
- Fish

Most allergic reactions are mild and may cause a variety of symptoms, often involving the skin (for example, an itchy rash, hives and/or swelling of the lips, eyes or face), stomach or digestive system (such as vomiting, abdominal pain or diarrhoea). Sometimes allergic reactions can involve the airways, breathing and/or circulation (anaphylaxis), which can be potentially life threatening.

Allergy medicines

Allergy medicines should be accessible at all times to all practitioners, not locked away, and should be protected from direct sunlight and temperature extremes. The container for the medicines should be clearly labelled with the child's name, date of birth and a photograph. It is important to ensure all medicines are in date and practitioners have a system in place to check expiry dates regularly. In the case of autoinjector devices, two devices should be available as a second dose may be required.

Will add link to admin medication ASAP

Intolerance

Food intolerance is different to food allergy and usually occurs when the body has difficulty digesting certain foods or ingredients in food. Intolerances do not involve the immune system and are not life threatening. Food intolerances cause unpleasant symptoms such as abdominal pain or discomfort, diarrhoea, bloating, constipation, red rash, itching or eczema flares. It is possible for individuals with food intolerances to tolerate a small amount of the food before they develop symptoms. Some common food intolerances include:

- Lactose intolerance (lactose is the sugar found in animal milk, e.g. cows' milk, goats' milk and sheep's milk and can be found in foods or drinks containing animal milk, e.g. yoghurt).
- Gluten intolerance or sensitivity (gluten is a protein found in wheat, barley and rye). It is important to note that gluten intolerance is different to coeliac disease.
- Intolerance to some food additives or chemicals. The diagnosis of food intolerances can be challenging. If a food intolerance is suspected, you should encourage parents and carers to keep a diary of foods eaten and the symptoms experienced, which can then be discussed with a health professional.

Guidance Notes for School Meals Special Diet Requests

Catering services Oct 2020

“Free from” diets

Catering Services will aim to provide “free from” diets based on medical, religious, ethical and cultural grounds, for example, gluten free, egg free, pork free. However, some ingredients may be at risk of containing traces of the offending substance due to factory contamination. Details of these products are available from Catering Services. You will need to provide your choices from the relevant ‘free from’ menu at least a week in advance so that the cook can make sure the required ingredients are ordered.

Foods containing offending substances that can be included in the diet

Some children with food allergies or intolerances can tolerate a small amount of the offending substance in a food. Also, someone with intolerance to something in one food (e.g. protein in milk, or gluten from wheat) may tolerate it well in another (e.g. yoghurt or oats). Please provide specific information on the form, including a list of actual foods.

How often would you like the special diet to be provided?

Some special diets are not easy to provide every day. Please have a look at the weekly menus. Some days may require very little alteration to the standard meal options. You might want to ask the school to provide a meal on the “easier days” and send a packed lunch on the other days. If you take this option, please ensure that the cook knows well in advance which days a meal needs to be provided.

Medical based diets not prescribed by a medical professional

If you are requesting a diet based on medical reasons but not prescribed by a medical professional (GP, Dietitian or Consultant), we strongly recommend that parents discuss with their GP, so they are aware of the situation and can provide any necessary advice and supervision on providing a balanced diet.

Special Dietary Products

We use special dietary products where required, for example, gluten free pasta, baguettes, soya milk. Due to strict food and hygiene regulations, we only serve food prepared in our kitchens. We only accept food from home in exceptional circumstances.

Diabetes

Most children with diabetes have to control their intake of carbohydrate so that it is in proportion with their insulin dose. This means that carbohydrate based foods (like bread, rice, pasta, potatoes, fruit juice etc.) need to be weighed or measured carefully by the cook, before serving to the relevant child. Children with diabetes should follow similar healthy eating guidelines to the rest of the population. Difficulties in controlling blood sugar and increased risk of cardiovascular disease mean that there is more likely to be harmful health consequences to poor diet than for the general population.

Insulin regimes should be designed around the child's lifestyle (rather than the other way around).

Obesity

Children who are obese or overweight do not need a "special diet". The changes being implemented as a result of Hungry for Success will increase the number of appropriate choices and reduce the number of inappropriate choices for all children. This will have even greater benefit for overweight and obese children. There will be more choice of nutrient dense foods and less foods that are high in fat and added sugars.

Selective eaters

This term is used to describe children whose diets are unusually limited due to serious diagnosed psychological difficulties. For example, proportions of children on the Autistic Spectrum are exceptionally fearful of new foods and have very limited diets. In these cases, packed lunches are usually the best option. However, it may be possible for these children to enjoy a school lunch on days where the cook is able to make minor adaptations to the existing menu. For selective eaters who bring a packed lunch regularly, it may still be possible to provide a sample "taster" of something from the school menu, to try alongside the packed lunch. The term 'selective eater' is not used to describe children who are simply fussy eaters. Settings to order some school meals for those with packed lunch, try lunch first then packed lunch, this should be recorded in the child's personal care plan.

Children requiring texture modification

Many children find that certain textures are difficult to manage. This may be because they have poor oral motor skills and find chewing and/or swallowing certain foods difficult. Learning to chew and swallow a range of textures is important for normal development of speech. Therefore, children who could manage a diet with more mixed, complex and challenging textures should be given such foods. This should be recorded in the child's personal care plan.

Vegetarian choice

We now have a daily vegetarian option on our menu. A special diet is therefore not required.

Severe Food Allergies

Some food allergies can be serious or even fatal. Nut allergy is the best known but it can apply to any food in a particular case. Some parents may wish to send their child to school with a nutritious food that is a known allergen to another child.

For example, nuts are a good source of unsaturated fats, soluble fibre and vitamin E, all nutrients associated with a decreased risk of degenerative diseases. In schools where there is a child with a severe allergy to nuts, head teachers may request that nuts are not brought into the school either by staff or pupils. However, it is not practical or feasible to call the school a "Nut free zone". This would give false re-assurance that cannot be guaranteed in practice. For example, schools cannot guarantee that every cereal bar in every packed lunch is nut free and it is not practicable to request other common allergens such as milk or egg are excluded from a school setting. In the

example above it would be better to call the school a “nut aware” school. The child with a severe allergy must be taught by parents and school staff not to swap food with other children. The school should discuss with parents appropriate ways of reducing the chances of exposure to the offending substance (e.g. cleaning protocols).

Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Children with ASD are particularly likely to be highly selective in their food choices. This is often symptomatic of ASD. The child is not simply being fussy or awkward. There is a need for many ASD children to look for patterns, structure and repetition in many aspects of their lives including meal times. Also, many children with ASD are extremely susceptible to “sensory overload” from the noise, smells and visual stimulation of the dining room, and the texture, taste and smell of the food. Meal times therefore can be highly stressful. For some children with ASD, it is unrealistic to expect them to accept “healthy and nutritionally balanced” school menus immediately. Broadening the diet of such children is a difficult, painstaking task that requires persistence, patience and a measured approach. Caterers, learning support staff, parents and pupils should work together to develop a pragmatic and phased approach to dietary improvement.

Children with communication difficulties

Some children have difficulty reading but respond well to visual images. Others can read but find it difficult to establish a clear mental image of what that food will actually be like. Therefore, appropriate visual images of food choices should be available to help children decide what they want to eat.

[REQUEST A SPECIAL DIET FOR A PUPIL](#) (link)

Packed lunches should be provided until told the request has been approved and the school cook has advance notice of the pupil's meal selections. Approval should take between 5 and 10 working days but for more complex cases this can take longer. Applications made online can be actioned quicker as the information gathered this way is more comprehensive. Paper applications can lead to miscommunication within schools.

Contact the special diets team

Telephone: 01463 644102

Email: Special.Diets@highland.gov.uk

Choking Hazards

Below is a table of advice on key foods for those who are involved with preparing and serving food for babies and young children (under 5 years old) in Highland Council Nursery settings. Catering & Early Years staff can decide what fruit and vegetables they serve, for example those with smaller pupil numbers may find they have time to peel apples, plums etc however this process might not be realistic in settings with larger pupil numbers.

Vegetable and fruits	Advice	Responsibility
Small fruits	Cut small round fruits like grapes, cherries, berries, strawberries and cherry tomatoes , into small pieces (quarters) : cut lengthways and then again cut them in halves (quarters).	Snack – Early Years Lunch – Catering
Carrots	Raw carrot can only be served grated . Carrot batons can be cooked until soft and served as finger food	Snack – Early Years Lunch – Catering
Large Fruits	Fruits such as apples and pears should be peeled and cut into slices.	Snack – Early Years Lunch – Catering and/or Early Years
Salad Vegetables/Fruits	Cut items like peppers, cucumber and celery into narrow batons. These items can be served raw and do not require to be peeled.	Snack – Early Years Lunch – Catering
Meat and fish	Advice	Responsibility
Sausages and hot dogs	Cut sausages into half-moon shape pieces: cut in half and then lengthways and slice as thinly as possible. Hot Dogs should be cut in half lengthways.	Snack & Lunch – Early Years
Meat or fish	Remove bones from meat or fish. Cut meat into strips as thinly as possible. Remove skin and fat from meat and fish, it will help the food pass smoothly down the throat. (Fish and meat served at lunchtime will already have bones removed.)	Snack & Lunch – Early Years
Dairy	Advice	Responsibility
Cheese- Babybel	Cut into slices	Snack & Lunch – Early Years

Tips on helping a choking child- Guidance from NHS

If you can see the object, try to remove it. Don't poke blindly or repeatedly with your fingers. You could make things worse by pushing the object further in and making it harder to remove.

If your child's coughing loudly, encourage them to carry on coughing to bring up what they're choking on and don't leave them

If your child's coughing isn't effective (it's silent or they can't breathe in properly), shout for help immediately and decide whether they're still conscious.

If your child's still conscious, but they're either not coughing or their coughing isn't effective, use back blows or abdominal thrusts (children over 1 year).

You may need to use more than 1 method to stop choking. It doesn't matter which order you do them in. If one method doesn't work, try the other method. Keep trying each method until the object comes out.

[find out how to resuscitate a child](#)

Safe temperature to serve food

The Care Inspectorate have recently published guidance on how to prevent scalding incidents in Early Years settings ([Scalding prevention guidance](#)). Please follow the advice below:

Catering Staff

- As per Food Safety Legislation and our House Rules, hot food must be kept and served at 63°C or above.
- In Early Years settings the point of service is when food is served from the kitchen, or within the ELC playroom, with a member of Early Years staff present.
- Food cannot be plated up and allowed to cool in the kitchen.

Early Years Staff

- Hot food items that contain liquid such as soup, curries, custard etc should be allowed time to cool.
- Allow 5-10 minutes for these items to cool.
- Where possible ensure that children have other items to eat whilst waiting, for example sandwiches whilst soup is cooling.
- Ensure pupils have no access to the hot food during the cooling period.
- Avoid taste testing food for temperature, as there are food safety concerns regarding taste testing multiple plates/bowls of food.
- Ensure that there is a Risk Assessment in place for management of hot food.

Supporting healthy eating in your setting

Everyone working in early years has a responsibility to support children to eat healthily and have positive healthy eating experiences, that can help them to develop good lifelong eating habits.

Some practitioner may choose to eat their lunch with the children due to their working hours. Highland council supports this however we ask you are mindful of the foods you eat in front of children and remember the role model you are for these children.

Avoid juice and fizzy drinks, crisps and sweets.

An unpaid break of no less than 30 minutes per day must be offered within a work pattern if working more than 6 hours.

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL - RISK ASSESSMENT SHEET

Service:					Compiled by:
HC Area:					Date completed:
Name of Establishment:	Click here for Highland Council's guidance notes re risk assessments. For training call 01463 703099	All RA's should be reviewed/updated when changes are made to the excursion, e.g. to group, staff, transport, ratios etc.			Date reviewed:
STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4		STEP 5
List potential Hazards here:	List groups of people at risk from hazards. Including those most vulnerable:	List existing control measures or note where information may be found:	Calculate the residual risk taking the presence and effectiveness of existing measures into account: Severity x Likelihood = Risk Rating		List further control measures necessary to reduce risk to an acceptable level <i>and</i> date of their proposed introduction:
Infection due to spread of microbes due to incorrect procedures for hand washing, cleaning of preparation surfaces unclean cloths	All children registered and booked in with provision. Staff and visitors.	Current guidelines including <i>Health protection in children and young people settings, including education</i> are in place with visuals and signage to support. Rigorous hand washing procedures following. Food preparation surfaces are cleaned thoroughly. Different coloured cloths used for tables/food preparation and changed daily. Staff have food hygiene certificates. Infection control guidelines followed			
Contamination by blood due to poor hygiene after injury	All children registered and booked in with provision. Staff and visitors.	First Aid Policy and <i>Health protection in children and young people settings, including education</i> followed. All staff aware of procedures when dealing with and disposing of blood. Staff first aid trained.			

Ingestion of poisonous/hazardous kitchen substances not stored or labelled correctly	All children registered and booked in with provision. Staff and visitors.	All potentially hazardous materials stored in locked cupboard or at height out of the reach of the children in their original containers. Children taught about safety in kitchen and safe access to kitchen area. Guidance on storage of staff medicine issued to all staff.				
Injury caused by sharp objects e.g. knives	All children registered and booked in with provision. Staff.	Sharp objects stored out of children's reach. Children use child safe knives during food preparation and are supported until they have mastered using these independently				
Fire caused by unsupervised cooking	All children registered and booked in with provision. Staff.	Cooking is supervised on hob. Food in the oven is timed and monitored so it cannot overcook and burn. Oven switched off at the wall when not in use. Children taught about safety in kitchen and safe access to kitchen area. Oven cleaned regularly. Chubb fire blanket and fire extinguisher in kitchen				
Injury while using electrical cooking equipment e.g. mixer, shredder, food processor etc	Staff. All children registered and booked in with provision.	Staff use appropriately, on safe surface and with care. Children do not operate the equipment. Staff ensure children are not able to touch it. First Aid kit in kitchen.				
Lacerating injuries due to use of sharp utensils e.g. knives, graters etc	All children registered and booked in with provision. Staff and visitors.	Staff use sharp knives appropriately and carefully. Children only use when shown how and with supervision and support as required. Small groups only				

Burns/scalds from cooking activities	All children registered and booked in with provision. Staff and visitors	Cooking supervised and supported. Small groups only. Staff ensure care always taken. Staff use oven gloves when removing hot dishes from the oven and ensure the children are not able to touch hot dishes.				
Burns or scalds caused by the mishandling of hot liquids or food	All children registered and booked in with provision. Staff and visitors.	Oven and kettle positioned in an area not accessed by the children. Hot drinks and water from the kettle are not taken outside this area. All staff use care & attention when using hot liquids/food. Temperature of hot tap water is regulated.				
Illness or allergy caused by contact with certain foods	All children registered and booked in with provision.	All food intolerances /allergies recorded in PPRs and displayed on inside of cupboard door in kitchen area with child photograph. All staff made aware. Guidance regarding key allergens implemented and displayed for parents				
Choking on food	All children registered and booked in with provision.	Practitioners to always supervise children while they are eating. Practitioner to sit beside children and position themselves so they can visually see all children in their care.				
Burns/scalds from eating food that is too hot.	All children registered and booked in with provision.	Hot food items that contain liquid such as soup, curries, custard etc should be allowed time to cool. Allow 5-10 minutes for these items to cool.				
Slip or fall due to uncleaned spillage of food or liquids	All children registered and booked in with provision. Staff and visitors.	All spills are cleaned appropriately, effectively and promptly following approved guidelines and procedures.				

Illness due to poor hygiene / maintenance	All children registered and booked in with provision. Staff and visitors.	Daily cleaning of setting. Any issues reported and dealt with as required.				
Food poisoning as a result of poor practice e.g. raw/cooked food cross contamination, poor washing, incorrect storage/cooking temps	All children registered and booked in with provision. Staff.	Staff have Food Hygiene training. Food handling guidelines and procedures including <i>Health protection in children and young people settings</i> . Food hygiene procedures displayed in kitchen. Food requiring refrigeration is kept at the correct temperature. Fridge thermometer checked daily and recorded. The date stamp on food items is checked regularly. No out of date food is ever used.				
Contamination of food by pests e.g. mice, weevils etc.	All children registered and booked in with provision. Staff.	Packaged food is stored in high cupboards in sealed containers or packets. Food checked for any sign of contamination before use. Setting cleaned daily. Food stored appropriately.				
Injury to children not under supervision in kitchen	All children registered and booked in with provision.	Children are supervised. Children taught about safety in kitchen and safe access to kitchen area. STOP visual signs in use.				

**Respond to children - best practice taken from Care Inspectorate Practice note
"keeping children safe: supporting mealtime experiences.**

It is important to take account of children's voices in matters that affect them. Each child will experience the care and learning you provide differently. The following statements are to help you think about what experiences your children have at mealtimes.

- I am familiar with mealtime routines, such as washing my hands and sitting down to eat when the food is ready.
- I am given time to eat. I am never hurried to finish my food, even if I'm the last to leave the table.
- My meals are served in a relaxed and unhurried atmosphere, free from distractions.
- I have a special diet and all the adults know what I can eat.
- Adults know my likes and dislikes. I am given the opportunity to try new foods but it's ok if I don't.
- I have a familiar adult who is sensitive to my needs, sits with me during mealtimes to help keep me safe and chats with me about my interests.
- I am provided with opportunities to be responsible. I am included in things such as setting the table and clearing away.
- I am supported to be independent and do things for myself, for example I can pour my own drinks from a small jug.
- I can eat as much as I need and don't have to eat everything on my plate if I am full or don't like it.
- If I don't like the food, I am offered something else.
- My food is prepared for me so that I can chew and swallow safely.

Example Snack Menu

Milk and water are offered daily and fresh fruit and/or vegetables are also provided.

Week beginning:	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Veg Sticks	Oatcakes Cheese Oranges	Breadsticks Hummas Peaches	Malted Wheat Raspberries	Scrambled Egg Toast Tomatoes
	Yoghurt Pineapple	Crackers Cheese Melon	Rice Cakes Cucumber	Corn Flakes Banana	Wraps Ham Apples
	Toast Banana	Malted Wheat Apple	Bread Sticks Hummas Veg Sticks	Yoghurt Raspberries	Rice Cakes Oranges
	Rice Cakes Raspberries	Oatcakes Cheese Grapes	Weetabix Oranges	Fruit Salad	Toast Melon

Week beginning:	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	In Service	In Service	Yoghurt Apple	Crackers Cheese Melon	Toast Pineapple
	Fruit Salad	Braham Flakes Oranges	Veg Sticks Hummas	Yoghurt Pear	Rice Cakes Apples
	Crackers Cheese Grapes	Toast Raspberries	Bread Sticks Hummas Veg Sticks	Cornflakes Melon	Wraps Cheese Apple
	Weetabix Banana	Scrambled Eggs Toast Apple	Fruit Salad	Oatcakes Cheese Pineapple	Crackers Oranges

QUALITY ASSURANCE MONITORING TOOL – ELC LUNCH TIME EXPERIENCES

Completed by:

ELC Setting:

Date:

RAG (red/amber/green) points below

Transition from play to preparing for lunch is well planned ensuring smoothness for children
Staff are organised for lunches and have paper towels for spillages, jugs, cutlery, bin etc ready prepared to ensure staff can sit with children and are not task driven during lunch
Children are not sitting/waiting for periods of time before, during, and after lunch. Children are organised in small groups rather than large whole class groups
Staff are aware of the children they are responsible for during lunch time to ensure everyone's needs are met and their safety maintained (staff have a knowledge of SIMOA info) Regular head counts https://www.careinspectorate.com/index.php/news/6257-look-think-act
ELC children's lunches are started before the rest of school children arrive (if in canteen)
Children are given the appropriate length of time for lunch; not rushed or waiting too long
Good hand hygiene is practiced at all key times (before and after lunch) minimum 20 seconds supervised hand washing and carried out as close to where the children are eating as possible.
Children collect their own cutlery and plate or to help set the table
Appropriate crockery and cutlery are used, preferable not plastic. Fork and knife used to support children independence (Consideration is given to the needs of the individual child) an addition of a spoon may help some children
Packed lunches and school lunches are not on separate tables so children can sit with friends/keyworker groups
Children collect their own lunch with appropriate support
Main meal and dessert are not served at the same time
Staff sit at the table to engage with children in quality conversations using language that promotes good manners, kindness and inclusion https://highlandliteracy.com/words-up-key-messages/
Adults have a school lunch or their own lunch with the children, role modelling examples of healthy food choices
Children are helped to become more independent by pouring and self-serving part of their lunch where possible
Water and milk are available in jugs, of an appropriate size and filled to an appropriate level for the children to self-serve and learn to pour independently
Salad, vegetables are attractively presented in serving dishes in the centre of the table. Children self-serve using a variety of appropriate serving utensils e.g., serving spoons, tongs or spatulas.
Parents are given advice on our healthy eating guidance
Packed lunches are decanted onto a plate. (Packed lunches not on the table due to Infection prevention)
Practitioners are sensitive to children's likes and dislikes and encourage children to explore and try new foods
Practitioners support children to recognise when they are full and refrain from encouraging them to finish everything
Children follow a routine to put away their used plates and cutlery after lunch
Children who have finished their lunch are able to return to ELC in a small group (where staffing levels allow) Remaining children continue to be supported appropriately by ELC/school staff
If lunch is in playroom children can leave to play when they finished

There is enough staff deployed to support the children over the lunch time period making it a relaxed, stress-free experience. Recommend that all staff on the floor at this time.

Staff support individual children with any additional support they require

Staff are aware of choking guidance and how food should be prepared/served. Children a fully supervised with an adult sitting with them at all times while they are eating

Observations:

Agreed next steps:

We Are an Allergy Aware Setting

We work together to keep all children safe from allergies.

What this means:

- Staff know how to help if a child has an allergic reaction.
- We ask families not to bring food with common allergens (like nuts).
- We keep allergy information up to date.

What parents and carers can do:

- Tell us if your child has any allergies.
- Check food labels before sending snacks or lunches.

Please speak to a staff member if you have any questions.

14 Allergens



The way allergens are labelled on prepacked foods has changed. The Food Information Regulation, which came into force in December 2014, introduced a requirement that food businesses must provide information about the allergenic ingredients used in any food they sell or provide.

There are 14 major allergens which need to be mentioned (either on a label or through provided information such as menus) when they are used as ingredients in a food. Here are the allergens, and some examples of where they can be found:



1

Celery

This includes celery stalks, leaves, seeds and the root called celeriac. You can find celery in celery salt, salads, some meat products, soups and stock cubes.

Cereals containing gluten

Wheat (such as spelt and Khorasan wheat/Kamut), rye, barley and oats is often found in foods containing flour, such as some types of baking powder, batter, breadcrumbs, bread, cakes, couscous, meat products, pasta, pastry, sauces, soups and fried foods which are dusted with flour.



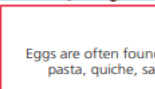
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3

Crustaceans

Crabs, lobster, prawns and scampi are crustaceans. Shrimp paste, often used in Thai and south-east Asian curries or salads, is an ingredient to look out for.



4

Eggs

Eggs are often found in cakes, some meat products, mayonnaise, mousses, pasta, quiche, sauces and pastries or foods brushed or glazed with egg.



5

Fish

You will find this in some fish sauces, pizzas, relishes, salad dressings, stock cubes and Worcestershire sauce.

Lupin

Yes, lupin is a flower, but it's also found in flour! Lupin flour and seeds can be used in some types of bread, pastries and even in pasta.



6



7

Milk

Milk is a common ingredient in butter, cheese, cream, milk powders and yoghurt. It can also be found in foods brushed or glazed with milk, and in powdered soups and sauces.

Molluscs

These include mussels, land snails, squid and whelks, but can also be commonly found in oyster sauce or as an ingredient in fish stews



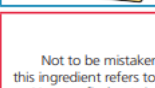
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9

Mustard

Liquid mustard, mustard powder and mustard seeds fall into this category. This ingredient can also be found in breads, curries, marinades, meat products, salad dressings, sauces and soups.



10

Nuts

Not to be mistaken with peanuts (which are actually a legume and grow underground), this ingredient refers to nuts which grow on trees, like cashew nuts, almonds and hazelnuts. You can find nuts in breads, biscuits, crackers, desserts, nut powders (often used in Asian curries), stir-fried dishes, ice cream, marzipan (almond paste), nut oils and sauces.



11

Peanuts

Peanuts are actually a legume and grow underground, which is why it's sometimes called a groundnut. Peanuts are often used as an ingredient in biscuits, cakes, curries, desserts, sauces (such as satay sauce), as well as in groundnut oil and peanut flour.

Sesame seeds

These seeds can often be found in bread (sprinkled on hamburger buns for example), breadsticks, houmous, sesame oil and tahini. They are sometimes toasted and used in salads.



12



13

Soya

Often found in bean curd, edamame beans, miso paste, textured soya protein, soya flour or tofu, soya is a staple ingredient in oriental food. It can also be found in desserts, ice cream, meat products, sauces and vegetarian products.

Sulphur dioxide (sometimes known as sulphites)

This is an ingredient often used in dried fruit such as raisins, dried apricots and prunes. You might also find it in meat products, soft drinks, vegetables as well as in wine and beer. If you have asthma, you have a higher risk of developing a reaction to sulphur dioxide.



14

For more information, visit: food.gov.uk/allergy or nhs.uk/conditions/allergies

Sign up to our allergy alerts on food.gov.uk/allergy-alerts, or follow #AllergyAlert on Twitter and

Facebook Let's keep connected at food.gov.uk/facebook

Join our conversation @foodgov

Watch us on food.gov.uk/youtube