

Chester-le-Street CE Day Care

Bottle Feeding Policy: 9 Months to 2 Years



Key Contacts

Rachel Butler – Headteacher

This policy will be reviewed when required. It will also be revised following any concerns and/or updates to national and local guidance or procedures

For Babies / Toddlers (Approx. 9 Months to 2 Years)

1. Policy Aim & Scope

This policy ensures that all bottle feeds are handled safely, hygienically, and responsively, in a way that supports the health, development and emotional wellbeing of children aged 9 months to 2 years. It aligns with EYFS expectations and national guidance on infant feeding and food safety.

This policy applies to all staff in the baby / toddler room, supply staff, volunteers, and students, and is shared with parents / carers.

2. Principles & Key Commitments

- We recognise the importance of **responsive feeding**: responding to each child's hunger cues and pace, not forcing feeds.
- We aim to foster a nurturing, calm environment during bottle feeds, promoting bonding with the child, eye contact, talking, and comfort.
- We follow **strict hygiene, preparation and storage practices** to minimise risk of contamination or illness.
- Parents / carers are partners in feeding: they provide the formula (as required), and we work together to maintain consistency.
- Any changes to a child's feeding plan must be agreed with parents / carers and recorded.
- We do not add cereal, sugar, or other solids to bottles unless specifically directed by a health professional, and only with written instructions.

3. Parental Responsibilities & Requirements

- Parents / carers must supply **unopened, commercially manufactured formula** clearly labelled with the child's **name, type/brand**, and **expiry/use-by date**.
- If the formula is powdered, parents must also supply instructions (if non-standard) and the correct measuring scoop if required.
- Parents must inform staff of any change in formula brand or strength (e.g. stage-up formula, special hypoallergenic) with written instructions.
- Parents should provide clean bottles, teats, and caps; staff will sterilise / clean as per procedure (see below).
- Any expressed breast milk must also come in appropriately labelled containers (child's name, date, volume) and follow the same storage protocols.

4. Preparation & Hygiene Procedures

1. Hand hygiene

Staff must wash hands thoroughly before preparing any feed, after handling raw foods or unclean items, and before serving the bottle.

2. Designated area

Bottle preparation must take place in a clean, designated area (separate from

nappy changing, cleaning chemicals, etc.). Surfaces must be cleaned and sanitised before and after preparation.

3. **Cleaning**

- All bottles, teats, caps, and rings must be cleaned thoroughly between uses. Bottles will be returned home on a daily basis
- After washing, items should be rinsed with hot water and allowed to air-dry in a hygienic area.

4. **Making up formula (powdered)**

- Use freshly boiled water (at least 70 °C) to mix with powdered formula (to kill harmful bacteria).
- Pour water into bottle first, then add formula powder (not vice versa).
- Stir / shake well, ensuring no lumps remain.
- Cool immediately under cold running water to a safe drinking temperature.
- Test temperature by dropping a few drops on the inside of the wrist — it should feel lukewarm or slightly cool, not hot.
- **Do not use a microwave** to heat bottles (due to uneven heating / hot spots).
- Once cooled and tested, feed promptly.

5. **Storage & time limits for prepared feeds**

- Prepared feed should be used **immediately** wherever possible.
- If not immediate, store in fridge (back, where coldest) and use within 24 hours (only for ready-to-feed formula; or per manufacturer guidance).
- Discard any leftover milk from a bottle after a feed — do not reuse or top up partly drunk bottles.
- Never reheat a feed that has been refrigerated; instead, discard and make a new one.

6. **Feeding practices**

- Feed the child in a semi-upright / supported upright position (not lying flat).
- Staff should hold the bottle — do not prop it.
- Pause for burping as needed (gently pat or rub back).
- Follow the child's pace: allow pauses, do not force finish.
- Provide comfort, verbal interaction, eye contact, and emotional support during feeding.
- Respect the child's cues (if they push the bottle away, close mouth, turn head, it may indicate fullness).

5. **Allergies, Special Diets, and Medical Guidance**

- Staff must be aware of any allergies, intolerances or medical conditions (e.g. milk protein allergy) affecting feeding.
- If a child requires a special formula (e.g. hydrolysed, hypoallergenic), parents must supply it and provide clear, up-to-date written guidance.
- Under no circumstances may staff substitute or change a child's formula without written parental consent or medical instruction.

6. **Record Keeping**

- For each feed, staff should log: **time, volume consumed**,
- Any formula brand changes or feeding plan modifications should be recorded and agreed with parents.
- Any incidents (e.g. spillage, choking, refusal, signs of discomfort) must be recorded as an incident log and communicated to parents promptly.
- Daily feeding diaries may be shared with parents to support continuity and transparency.

7. Health, Safety & Safeguarding Considerations

- Staff must never leave a baby alone with a bottle.
- Bottles must not be propped.
- Use appropriate seating (highchairs with harnesses, safe infant seats) during feeding.
- Monitor for signs of choking, aspiration or feeding distress; staff should be trained in paediatric first aid.
- If staff suspect a baby is allergic, showing illness, or not tolerating feeding, they should seek medical advice and inform the safeguarding lead.

References & Guidance Sources

- EYFS Nutrition Guidance (England) — “Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, these must be healthy, balanced and nutritious” ([GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/early-years-fundamentals-nutrition))
- Help for early years providers – Food Safety, Safe Eating, Allergen Requirements ([help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk](https://www.help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk))
- Delivering Better Oral Health – recommendations re: bottle feeding (only formula, breast milk or cooled boiled water; discourage valves; discourage use of bottles beyond age 1) ([GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/delivering-better-oral-health))