

Chester-le-Street CE Day Care

Parent-Provided Food 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

Policy Aim

To ensure that all food brought in from home for children aged 9 months to 2 years is stored, handled, and served safely, in accordance with current EYFS 2025 requirements, food safety regulations, and our setting's commitment to health, nutrition, and safeguarding.

Key Principles

- Parents/carers are responsible for providing all meals and snacks for their child during their time at the setting.
- The setting maintains responsibility for the **safe storage, supervision, and serving** of all food once it has been received.
- The safety, dietary needs, and well-being of every child remain our priority at all times.

1. Food Safety & Storage

- All food containers must be clearly **labelled** with the child's full name and the date.
- Food should be provided in **clean, insulated lunch bags** with ice packs if required.
- Perishable food items will be stored in a **refrigerator**, and fridge temperatures are monitored daily.
- Foods brought in must be within the **use-by date** and appear safe to consume (no signs of spoilage).

2. Allergen & Dietary Management

- Upon registration, parents must provide detailed information on **allergies, intolerances, and dietary requirements**.
- No food will be served to a child unless the ingredient content is clearly known and **safe**.
- All foods containing known allergens must be **clearly labelled** by parents.
- We may **refuse** unlabelled or unclear homemade food for safety reasons if a child has allergies.
- Staff follow strict procedures to prevent **cross-contamination** and maintain **allergen awareness**.

3. Unsafe / Prohibited Foods

To reduce choking and allergy risks, the following foods **must not** be included in packed meals:

- Whole grapes, cherry tomatoes, olives, or similar (unless **quartered lengthways**)
- **Whole nuts** or any nut-containing products
- Hard, raw vegetables (e.g. raw carrot sticks)
- **Honey** (for children under 1)
- Popcorn, boiled sweets, marshmallows, or other choking hazards

- High-sugar foods such as sweets, chocolate bars, and fizzy drinks

4. Supervision & Mealtimes

- Children are **always supervised** during mealtimes and snack times.
- At least one member of staff with **Paediatric First Aid training** is present during eating, in line with EYFS 2025.
- Staff will assist children in opening containers and feeding if needed, encouraging **independence and safety**.
- Uneaten food is returned in lunchboxes so parents can monitor their child's intake.

5. Communication with Parents

- Parents will receive this policy on induction and are expected to follow the guidelines.
- If a child regularly brings unsuitable food, we will discuss alternatives and support the family with ideas.
- We encourage healthy food choices and are happy to provide **examples or suggestions** for age-appropriate packed meals.

6. Emergency Situations

- In the event of an allergic reaction, choking, or suspected foodborne illness, staff will follow the setting's **first aid and emergency procedures** immediately.
- Parents will be contacted and an **incident form** will be completed.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier if there are changes in EYFS, food safety regulations, or the needs of the setting.

Parent-Friendly Handout Version

Bringing Food From Home: What Parents Need to Know

At our setting, you provide your child's food. We'll make sure it's stored, handled and served safely — and we ask that you help us by following the simple guidance below.

What to Pack

 Please include:

- Fresh, healthy meals/snacks your child enjoys
- Finger foods or soft items suitable for their age
- Water or milk in a labelled bottle
- Food in a clean lunch bag with an **ice pack** if it needs to stay cold
- **Clear labelling** with your child's name and date

Please avoid:

For safety reasons, we **cannot allow** the following:

- **Whole grapes, cherry tomatoes, or olives** (unless cut into quarters lengthways)
- **Nuts or nut products** (due to allergies)
- **Raw hard vegetables** (e.g. carrot sticks)
- **Honey** (for children under 1)
- Popcorn, boiled sweets, or chewy treats
- Chocolate bars, sweets, or fizzy drinks

Allergies & Special Diets

Let us know if your child has:

- **Allergies** (e.g. dairy, egg, gluten)
- **Religious or cultural food needs**
- **Dietary restrictions or intolerances**

We may need ingredient information or special labels to ensure safety. If food is unlabelled or unclear and your child has allergies, we may not be able to serve it.

At Mealtime

- Children are always **supervised while eating**
- A trained first aider is always present
- We'll assist your child if needed but always encourage independence
- Any uneaten food will be returned so you can see what they had

Staff Food Handling Checklist (When Parents Provide Food)

Daily Checklist: Handling Parent-Provided Food (9–24 months)

On Arrival:

- ☐ Check that food containers are **labelled with child's name and date**
- ☐ Store perishable items in fridge immediately
- ☐ Check fridge is within safe temp range (record on log)
- ☐ If required, check allergen labelling for children with dietary needs

At Mealtimes:

- ☐ Wash hands before food handling
- ☐ Ensure **first aid-trained** staff member is present
- ☐ Double-check child's food is safe (no nuts, whole grapes, etc.)
- ☐ Cut or modify any foods as needed for age and choking risk
- ☐ Keep allergy-aware foods **separate** and check again before serving
- ☐ Serve in clean area using hygienic practices
- ☐ Always **supervise** children while eating (in sight & hearing)
- ☐ Offer help with opening containers or feeding if needed
- ☐ Return uneaten food to lunchboxes and give verbal feedback to parents if relevant

If a concern arises:

- ☐ Do not serve unlabelled or unclear food if child has allergies
- ☐ If food appears unsafe (e.g. spoiled), discard and inform parent
- ☐ Log any incidents (e.g. reaction, refusal, choking) immediately