



Willow Tree Federation Food and Food Hygiene Policy



Mission Statement

The children are at the heart of everything we do at Willow Tree Federation. We take a holistic approach to child development and we are privileged to support our children, families and the wider community to change and enhance lives. We celebrate the wide diversity of the backgrounds, beliefs, talents and interests of our children and we recognise learning happens in communities and empowers them. As a federation at the heart of its community, we understand and respect the positive impact we can have. We plant the seed that grows the future!

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At Appletree Little Pips we follow all Willow Tree Federation's policies and procedures. Any wording highlighted in yellow within the policies are specific additions only applicable to this provision.

Introduction

All staff are committed to ensuring that safe and healthy practices around the storage, preparation and service of food are maintained throughout the setting.

All staff handling food are appropriately trained and we make use of guidance published by the Food Standards Agency (FSA).

Our aim is to ensure children have a nutritious, healthy and well-balanced diet whilst meeting dietary and cultural requirements. We work with families to ensure that children have the best start for life and recognize that a healthy diet is crucial part of a child's development and growth.

All children are watched by staff whilst they are eating.

Food Safety Hazards

Staff at the Willow Tree Federation are aware of potential food safety hazards and procedures are in place to ensure all potential risks are well managed. Food safety hazards include:

- Physical hazards: glass fragments, dust, pests
- Chemical: cleaning products, insecticides
- Biological: poor personal hygiene, poor storage
- Allergenic risk: cross-contamination

Good Food Hygiene

At the Willow Tree Federation, we adopt a number of practices to ensure we maintain good food hygiene. These practices can be categorised under the 'four c's':

Cross-contamination

To prevent cross-contamination of produce we:

- Always wash hands with anti-bacterial soap and hot water before and after handling food, using the toilet or changing nappies.
- Wash all surfaces and chopping boards with disinfectant
- Use clean cloths in accordance with the school hygiene policy and procedures (green)
- Store food correctly (see additional notes on food storage)
- Do not participate in food preparation if unwell
- Wear correct clothing e.g. aprons, gloves
- Make sure all fruit and vegetables are washed before being served.
- Avoid wearing jewellery, especially rings, watches and bracelets
- Cover any cuts, spots or sores on the hands and arms with a waterproof dressing
- Making regular checks to ensure there is no evidence of pests or an insect infestation

Cleaning

It is crucial for the health and safety of all children and adults that the nursery and baby rooms are cleaned regularly and to a high standard. Healthy practices are also put in place, these include:

- All hands must be washed before and after handling food
- Children are to wash their hands before and after eating
- All surfaces, chopping boards and equipment are washed before and after use to kill bacteria
- Ensuring all storage units, kitchen drawers, the fridge and freezer are cleaned regularly

Chilling

Storing food properly helps stop harmful bacteria from growing. At the Willow Tree Federation, we adopt a range of systems to ensure our food is stored safely and ready for consumption. These include:

- Putting food in the correct storage place immediately eg. fridge, freezer, cupboard
- Storing food correctly in the fridge and in cupboards
- Checking the daily temperature of the fridge in the internal kitchen area

Cooking

In order to ensure food is safe for consumption it must be cooked properly. This helps kill harmful bacteria. See appendix 1.

- Consistently check the use by dates on all products
- Consistently check the cooking instructions and ensure they are maintained
- Ensure food is cooked through properly before serving
- Food warmed by a microwave will be checked and served when at the correct temperature.
- Once food has been warmed up once, left over food must not be warmed up again.

Food Storage

Inadequate storage can result in cross-contamination, food spoilage and the build-up of potentially harmful bacteria. All food must be examined carefully to ensure that it is ready for consumption before being prepared, cooked and served. At the Willow Tree Federation, we adopt a range of practices to ensure food is stored safely. These include:

- Ensuring the storage area is well ventilated and well lit
- Ensuring food items are well rotated, so older items are eaten first
- Storing non-perishables together eg. cereals, dry pasta, bread, biscuits
- Ensuring the fridge temperature is consistently below 5 degrees
 - The fridge temperature is checked and recorded on a daily basis to ensure the correct temperature is being upheld. See appendix 2.
 - All children's food will be labelled with their full name and date
 - Fridges will be emptied on a daily basis.

Fridge Organisation

It is essential that food is stored correctly in the fridge to prevent cross-contamination. Food should be stored in the following way as much as possible:

- Top shelf: ready to eat foods (dairy)
- Middle shelf: cooked meats
- Bottom shelf: raw meat
- Drawers: fruit and salad

Dietary Requirements

At the Willow Tree Federation we will maintain strong relationships with parents and children to ensure all dietary requirements are met. These may include choices based on:

- Food preferences
- Age of child
- Stage of child
- Religion
- Culture
- Food related conditions

Allergies and Intolerances

At the Willow Tree Federation we cater for all children's specific dietary needs. These are established at registration and include allergies and/or food intolerances. Staff are made aware of children's specialist requirements and some children may require individual care plans to keep them healthy and safe. To help us manage the risks associated with food allergies or intolerances we will;

- Gather information from parents at registration. We will also ask for medical information to confirm the allergy or intolerance.
- Establish the level of risk associated with the allergy/intolerance eg. low, moderate, severe
- Ensure all allergies and intolerances are known to all staff by displaying these in the kitchen area and at the back of the registers. Each child will have a picture board documenting any allergies and/or intolerances.
- Maintain excellent food hygiene practices
- If necessary provide children with individual placemats detailing which food related conditions they have.

Safer Eating

- Whilst children are eating there will always be a member of staff in the room with a valid paediatric first aid certificate.
- Staff will ensure that food is presented in a way to prevent choking.
- At each mealtime and snack time providers will be clear about who is responsible for checking that the food and drink being provided meets all the requirements for each child.
- Babies and young children will be seated safely in an appropriately sized low chair while eating.
- Children will always be within sight and hearing of a member of staff whilst eating. A member of staff will sit facing children whilst they eat, so they can make sure children are eating in a way to prevent choking and so they can prevent food sharing and be aware of any unexpected allergic reactions.
- If a child experiences a choking incident that requires intervention, staff will record details of where and how the child choked and ensure parents and/or carers are made aware. The records will be reviewed periodically to identify if there are trends or common features of incidents that could be addressed to reduce the risk of choking. Appropriate action will be taken to address any identified concerns.
- Before starting at Appletree Nursery School, the setting will obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and intolerances that the child has, and any special health requirements. We will have ongoing discussions with parents and/or carers and, where appropriate, health professionals to develop allergy action plans for managing any known allergies and intolerances.
- Appletree will have ongoing discussions with parents and/or carers about the stage their child is at in regard to introducing solid foods, including understanding the textures the child is familiar with. Assumptions will not be made based on age. We will prepare food in a suitable way for each child's individual developmental needs, working with parents and/or carers to help children move on to the next stage at a pace right for the child.
- All staff involved in preparing and handling food will receive training in food hygiene.

Feeding Babies

Babies are weaned at approximately 6 months old. This begins the process of moving from solely milk, to the consumption of a wide range of nutritious, healthy foods. There are a range of things to consider when feeding a baby:

- Babies should always sit up while eating
- Babies should never be left unsupervised
- Babies food should be blended or mashed to their preferred consistency
- Do not hurry the child when eating—allow plenty of time for meals
- Meal times should be a happy, calm experience
- Avoid round, firm foods and large chunks
- Ensure food is cut and prepared appropriately (see food chart)
- Avoid stringy foods like string beans and celery
- Offer only a few pieces of food at a time
- Cut meat and poultry across the grain, and into tiny fingertip-sized pieces
- Food pieces should be no larger than one-half inch in any direction. If in doubt, cut food into smaller pieces
- Babies should never be forced to eat any food
- Role model chewing and swallowing – encourage babies and children to chew and swallow food properly, and not to rush eating

Weaning

Ideally, babies should be introduced to solid foods from around 6 months of age. If parents or carers have decided to introduce solid foods to their child before 6 months of age, we work closely with parents to ensure a consistent and safe approach.

What to feed your baby?

The Start for Life Website has a range of top tips for weaning your child and foods they can eat.

<https://www.nhs.uk/start-for-life/baby/weaning/what-to-feed-your-baby/from-around-6-months/>

Food and Drinks to Avoid

In line with government advice, we do not allow a range of foods and drinks. We work with families to ensure that children have a healthy diet.

Drinks

We provide only fresh tap water and plain milk (from 12 months) for children to drink.

Fruit juice, smoothies, squash, fizzy drinks and flavoured milk, even when diluted, contain lots of sugar and can cause tooth decay. Diet or reduced-sugar drinks are not recommended for babies and toddlers either. For older children, these drinks can fill children up so they're not hungry for healthier food.

When offering dairy alternatives to cow's milk we follow government advice:

- Unsweetened calcium-fortified, plant-based drinks (such as soya, oat and almond drinks) should be avoided before 12 months, however small amounts can be used in cooking. These drinks can be given from 12 months as part of a healthy balanced diet.
- Do not give children under 5 rice drinks, because of the level of arsenic they contain.

Food

We encourage a balanced diet. Staff will remove unhealthy items and send them home with the child and parents will be informed. If there are inadequate items for a child to be nourished, school will replace these items with a healthier alternative and parents may be charged.

Healthy Snacks

Children have access to fruit throughout the day across Nursery and KS1

Children are encouraged and taken to wash their hands before snack and supported to cut and share snacks in nursery.

Children in KS2 are allowed a healthy snack from their lunchbox or a snack from the snack bar, again they are encouraged to wash their hands before eating.

It is important to remember that there are some foods which should not be given before 6 months of age:

- cow's milk (this should only be used as small amounts in cooking until 12 months when a child can drink it)
- eggs
- foods containing wheat or gluten, including wheat, barley and rye (for example bread, pasta)
- nuts, peanuts and peanut products
- seeds
- fish and shellfish
- honey – avoid honey until 12 months old
- if a baby is less than 6 months old, sterilise water by boiling it first and then letting it cool right down - once a baby is 6 months old, this is no longer necessary

Foods to avoid up to 12 months

- honey for infants under 1 year, as it occasionally contains bacteria which can make them ill

Foods to avoid up to 5 years

- **Nuts**, especially peanuts, can cause severe allergic reactions in some children and all settings should have an allergy plan in place. Whole nuts, peanuts and seeds should not be given to children under 5 years old as they pose a choking risk.
- **Raw eggs**, or food containing partially cooked eggs, for example uncooked cake mixture and runny boiled eggs (unless they have the red lion stamp or you see the words "British Lion quality").
- **Foods high in salt** such as: sausages, bacon, crackers, crisps, ready meals and takeaways.
- **Sugar** – both in sugary snacks and by not adding sugar to food.
- **Foods high in saturated fat** such as biscuits, crisps and cakes.
- **Fresh pate** (meat, fish or vegetable-based) to reduce the risk of food poisoning.

- **Unpasteurised milk, milk drinks and cheese**, mould-ripened cheeses and soft blue-veined cheese, to reduce the risk of food poisoning. However, these cheeses can be used as part of a cooked recipe as listeria is killed by cooking.
- **Shark, swordfish and marlin** as the levels of mercury in these fish can affect a child's developing nervous system.
- **Raw shellfish** to reduce the risk of food poisoning, and make sure any shellfish you use is thoroughly cooked.
- **Raw jelly cubes** – these are a choking hazard.

Foods to serve occasionally from 6 months to 4 years

- Although it is recommended to provide oily fish in early years settings at least once every 3 weeks, do not provide it more than twice a week, as it can contain low levels of pollutants.

Safe weaning

Progression from the introduction of first foods (at about 6 months), to a range of blended or mashed foods, and then to a wider range of chopped or minced foods should be a gradual process, based on each infants' developmental readiness, rather than a staged process based on age alone.

Early years food choking hazards



Below is a table of advice on key foods for care givers who are involved with preparing and serving food for babies and young children (under 5 years old)

Vegetable and fruits	Advice
Pips or stones in fruit	Always check beforehand and remove hard pips or stones from fruit.
Small fruits	Cut small round fruits like grapes, cherries, berries, strawberries and cherry tomatoes, into small pieces: cut lengthways and then again cut them in halves (quarters).
Large fruits and firm fruits	Cut large fruits like melon and firm fruits like apple into slices instead of small chunks. For very young children, consider grating or mashing firm fruits, or softening them up by steaming or simmering.
Vegetables	Cut vegetables like carrots, cucumber and celery into narrow batons. For very young children consider grating or mashing firm vegetables and legumes like butter beans, chickpeas and tofu, or softening them up by steaming or simmering.
Skin on fruit and vegetables	Consider removing the skin from fruit and vegetables, especially for very young children. Peeled fruit and vegetables can be swallowed more easily.
Cooking fruit and vegetables	Consider softening firm fruit and vegetables (such as carrots, broccoli, yam and apples) by steaming or simmering until soft. Serve cut into slices or narrow batons.
Meat and fish	Advice
Sausages and hot dogs	Cut sausages and hot dogs into short strips. Cut them in half and then lengthways or as thinly as possible. Peeling the skin off the sausages helps them to be swallowed more easily.
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.
Cheese	Advice
Grate or cut cheese	Grate or cut cheese into short strips. Cut lumps of cheese as narrow as possible.
Nuts and seeds	Advice
Chop or flake whole nuts	Chop or flake whole nuts, peanuts and seeds. Whole nuts should not be given to children under five years old.
Bread	Advice
White bread and other breads	White bread can form a ball shape with a dough-like texture at the back of a child's throat, if not chewed properly. Brown bread or toasted white bread are good alternatives. Cut bread, chapatis, naan bread and other breads into narrow strips.
Snacks and other foods	Advice
Popcorn	Do not give babies and young children popcorn.
Chewing gum and marshmallows	Do not give babies and young children chewing gum or marshmallows.
Peanut butter	Do not give babies and young children peanut butter on its own, only use as a spread.
Jelly cubes	Do not give babies and young children raw jelly cubes.
Boiled sweets and ice cubes	Do not give babies and young children boiled, hard, gooey, sticky or cough sweets, or ice cubes.
Raisins and other dried fruits	Do not give babies under the age of 1 whole raisins or dried fruits. Cut them into small pieces.