

Food, Nutrition, Kitchen Hygiene and Allergies Policy

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Our Values

At Young Friends Kindergarten, food is more than nutrition — it is education, community, sustainability, and respect. Our plant-based meals are a direct reflection of our ethos. They demonstrate to children that eating can be kind to the planet, animals, and one another.

- **Sustainability** – Plant-based eating significantly reduces our carbon footprint. We reduce waste, use real materials, and model thoughtful, sustainable food practices.
 - **Respect** – Children are trusted with real kitchen tasks, are taught to value food, and are supported to eat with kindness and good manners.
 - **Authenticity** – We prepare real, wholesome food in real ways — no tokenistic “play cooking” or processed short-cuts.
 - **Supportive Leadership** – Staff model safe, calm mealtime behaviours, teaching hygiene, respect, and social skills.
 - **Community** – Food brings us together. Meals are moments of belonging, conversation, and care.
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Policy Statement

This policy sets out how we manage:

- Nutrition and mealtime practice in a **plant-based setting**.
- Kitchen hygiene and infection control.
- Portion sizes, seconds, and waste reduction.
- Allergy and intolerance procedures.
- The role of staff during mealtimes.

We uphold **high standards of safety, cleanliness, inclusion and sustainability**, while ensuring that every child experiences calm, nourishing and positive mealtimes.

Staff Roles and Training

- All staff involved in food preparation hold up-to-date Food Hygiene training.
 - Our in-house chef leads on menu design, food hygiene, storage systems and sustainability practices.
 - All staff receive allergy and infection control training.
 - Every member of staff is expected to model calm eating, good manners, and positive relationships with food.
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Personal Hygiene and Staff Conduct

- Hands must be washed thoroughly before handling food, after toileting, after outdoor play, and after contact with animals or waste.
 - Hair tied back, jewellery removed.
 - Staff with colds must not work in food preparation.
 - Staff may eat alongside children to role-model, but must only eat **child-sized portions of the same food**. Staff food is not provided by the nursery for staff.
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Children's Involvement and Hygiene

Children are trusted and encouraged to:

- Help prepare safe foods (e.g. buttering bread, peeling, grating, chopping, stirring).
- Serve, set tables, and clear away.
- Wash their hands before and after mealtimes with independence.
- Learn about sustainability and health through real food experiences.

This fosters independence, confidence, and respect for food.

Cleaning, Infection Control and Safety

We follow strict daily and weekly hygiene systems:

- Kitchen surfaces, tables, sinks and utensils sanitised daily.
 - Colour-coded cloths for kitchen, nappy areas, and general cleaning.
 - Fridge temperatures checked daily.
 - Waste disposed of in designated bins and emptied daily.
 - Pests prevented through tidiness, ventilation and safe storage.
 - **Infection Control** – In cases of illness outbreak (including COVID-19, flu, or stomach bugs):
 - We follow Brighton & Hove Public Health guidance.
 - Children and staff must stay away for the exclusion period (48 hours after last sickness/diarrhoea).
 - Staff are trained to use PPE where required.
 - Enhanced cleaning of touchpoints is carried out immediately.
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Nutrition and Portion Sizes

- Our menu is **entirely plant-based**, carefully balanced for nutrition, variety and enjoyment.
 - The chef prepares meals with age-appropriate portion sizes. At the table, staff serve “a fist-sized portion” as a guide for each child.
 - Children are encouraged to listen to their bodies — seconds are offered if they are still hungry. Thirds are considered carefully to avoid food waste and overeating.
 - Leftovers are **not wasted**: food is stored safely in the fridge or freezer and repurposed (e.g. rice into rice balls).
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Mealtime Atmosphere and Staff Expectations

- **One staff member must sit at each table** to encourage good manners, conversation and calm.
 - Staff model table etiquette: sitting nicely, eating politely, using low voices.
 - Children are encouraged to talk to each other and staff — mealtimes are for connection, not rushing.
 - Lights are dimmed where possible to create a calm environment.
 - Staff must not hover, walk unnecessarily around the room, or create noise — they must **emanate calm**.
 - Running, shouting or chaotic behaviour is not permitted at mealtimes.
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Allergies and Intolerances

We cater for all allergies and intolerances with robust, transparent procedures.

- **Homemade Alternatives** – All alternatives are homemade and process-free where possible.
- **Freezer Stock** – A dedicated freezer holds safe, labelled alternatives, so children are never excluded.
- **Cross-Contamination Prevention** –
 - Colour-coded boards and utensils.
 - Clear allergy lists displayed in all rooms and the kitchen.
 - Separate prep zones and storage for allergy-safe food.
- **Emergency Preparedness** –

- Allergy action plans signed by parents.
 - Epipens and medication accessible at all times, including on trips.
 - Staff trained annually in allergy response and tested on knowledge.
 - **Inclusion** – Children with allergies are always included with food of equal quality. They are never made to feel different or left out.
 - **Transparency** – Parents are reassured that while we do **everything possible** to minimise risk, we are an **open-plan kitchen** and therefore cannot guarantee an allergen-free environment.
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Inclusion and Cultural Needs

As a fully **plant-based setting**, many cultural dietary needs are automatically respected. We do not serve meat, fish, dairy, or animal products. Where additional needs arise, we work in partnership with families to adapt menus respectfully and appropriately.

Monitoring and Auditing

- Daily food hygiene checks are completed by the cook.
 - Leadership audits food safety termly.
 - Environmental Health inspections are fully welcomed.
 - All allergy procedures are reviewed termly and after any incident.
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Parent-Facing Summary

At Young Friends, families can be confident that:

- All meals are **plant-based, sustainable, homemade and nutritious**.
 - Portion sizes are fair, with seconds offered to hungry children.
 - No food is wasted unnecessarily — we use creativity to repurpose safely stored leftovers.
 - Children learn real life skills through preparing, sharing and respecting food.
 - Allergies are taken seriously, with homemade safe alternatives always available.
 - Medication is always on hand and staff are fully trained.
 - Our ethos is clear: **food is a lesson in sustainability, community, and respect**.
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Linked Policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
 - Managing Food Allergies and Intolerances
 - Risk Assessment
 - Staff Code of Conduct
 - Health and Safety
 - Behaviour Management
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Authorisation

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Owner and Director

Young Friends Kindergarten

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