



Where Little Lambs Learn and Play

Policies and Procedures

PP02(A) – Food Hygiene & Allergy Management Policy

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This document is reviewed annually or sooner if required by changes in law, statutory guidance, or operational needs. Any changes, amendments, alterations, or updates of this document will be reviewed and/or approved by the Nursery Manager and a company Director.

All members of staff will be required to read this document in its entirety within 2 weeks of publication and for new starters before working with children, with confirmation that it has been understood.

Inevitably, there will be some situations that arise which are not specifically covered within this document. In such situation, if practicable, the Nursery Manager or Deputy Manager should be consulted for further guidance or instruction.

Any queries arising from this document should be raised with the Nursery Manager or Deputy Manager in the first instance.

This document and its policies and procedures herein, are not intended to replace recognised, established industry or regulatory safety standards, principles, or protocols.

Suggestions for future changes, amendments, alterations, additions, or updates should be sent to the Nursery Manager or Deputy Manager.

Copies of this document are uncontrolled and may not be current. If in doubt, please consult the Nursery Manager or Deputy Manager.

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1. Introduction

At Little Lambs Nursery, we are wholly committed to ensuring that every child in our care receives food that is safe, nutritious, developmentally appropriate, and culturally respectful. This Food Hygiene & Allergy Management Policy establishes the standards, procedures, and responsibilities necessary to maintain exemplary levels of food safety, allergen control, and mealtime practice. The policy applies to all staff, volunteers, students, external contractors, and visitors involved in food handling, service, supervision, or decision-making relating to food provision within the nursery.

1.1 Ethos and Commitment

We recognise that mealtimes contribute significantly to children's health, emotional well-being, social development, and learning. We therefore promote positive eating experiences rooted in respect, diversity, equity, environmental responsibility, and partnership with families. We are committed to providing safe, balanced meals that support children's growth and development, including meeting the needs of babies, toddlers, children with allergies, children with special dietary needs, and those with specific cultural, ethical, or medical dietary requirements.

1.2 Regulatory and Legal Framework

This policy is informed by, and fully compliant with, the following statutory frameworks, regulations, and Best Practice Guidance:

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework (September 2025)
- Food Safety Act 1990
- Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013
- Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 as retained in UK law (Food Information for Consumers / Allergen Law)
- Food Information Regulations 2014
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Public Health England: Infection Control in Childcare Settings
- Food Standards Agency (FSA) Safer Food Better Business Guidance
- Local Authority Environmental Health Standards

1.3 Scope and Application

This policy applies regardless of whether food is prepared on-site or off-site.

Currently, Little Lambs Nursery receives freshly prepared meals from an approved early years external catering contractor. A nominated staff member is trained to receive, check, store, and oversee the safe distribution of meals.

If the nursery begins on-site food preparation at a later stage, this policy will be amended to reflect additional regulatory responsibilities relating to food premises registration, HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) processes, and expanded hygiene controls.

1.4 Inclusivity and Cultural Respect

We welcome and respect the cultural, religious, ethical, and personal dietary preferences of families. We ensure that meals reflect a diverse range of cuisines and that parents feel empowered to discuss dietary needs openly. We are committed to providing equitable access to safe, nutritious meals for all children, including those with allergies, intolerances, SEND requirements, or medical conditions requiring therapeutic diets.

1.5 Environmental Sustainability

Aligned with the sustainability ethos of our catering partner, we promote environmentally responsible food practices including reduction of single-use packaging, use of local and seasonal produce where possible, responsible recycling, waste reduction, and conscious menu planning. Children are encouraged to learn about sustainable food habits as part of our everyday curriculum.

This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if required due to legislative changes, changes in catering arrangements, an allergy-related incident, food safety concern, or feedback from parents, staff, the Local Authority, or Environmental Health. All staff are required to read, understand, and adhere to this policy upon induction and whenever updates occur. Parents may request a copy at any time.

2. Legal and Regulatory Framework

Little Lambs Nursery operates its food hygiene and allergy management practices within a strict legal and regulatory framework designed to safeguard children's health and ensure that all food provided is safe, nutritious, and compliant with statutory duties. As an early years provider, we are legally obliged to comply with the requirements set out within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework (September 2025), which mandates that all food and drink served to children must be safe, hygienic, and appropriate for their age and stage of development; that providers must be alert to allergies and dietary requirements; and that staff must have the knowledge, skills, and understanding to implement safe food-handling procedures at all times.

2.1 Primary Legislation Governing Food Safety

Our practices reflect full compliance with the following legislation:

2.1.1 Food Safety Act 1990

This Act provides the foundation for all food safety obligations in the UK. It requires that all food served is safe for consumption, is of the nature and substance expected, and is prepared in accordance with established safety and hygiene controls. The nursery must ensure that no contaminated, out-of-date, or improperly stored food is served to children at any time.

2.1.2 Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013

These regulations outline mandatory hygiene requirements for food premises, food handlers, and food storage arrangements. Although meals are prepared off-site, the nursery is responsible for ensuring that food is stored, reheated, served, and handled in accordance with these regulations. Staff involved in food handling must follow correct hygiene procedures and must not work with food if they are unwell or pose a risk of contamination.

2.1.3 Regulation (EU) 1169/2011 as retained in UK law (Food Information for Consumers – Allergen Law)

The nursery is required to ensure that accurate allergen information accompanies all food served and that this information is shared with parents and staff. Fourteen major allergens must be clearly identified, and all staff must understand how to prevent cross-contamination and respond to allergic reactions.

2.1.4 Food Information Regulations 2014

These regulations support the legal requirements on allergen information and ensure that all pre-packed and non-pre-packed foods provided by our external catering contractor include clear, accurate allergen declarations. Staff must read and check these documents daily before meals are served.

2.1.5 Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

This Act places a duty on the nursery to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety, and welfare of all employees and those affected by their work, including children, parents, and visitors. This includes providing safe systems of work in relation to food handling, storage, temperature control, cleaning routines, and the management of food allergies.

2.1.6 Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

These regulations require the nursery to conduct full and regular risk assessments in respect of food handling, consumption, and allergy risks. Control measures must be implemented, recorded, reviewed, and communicated to all staff.

2.1.7 Public Health England & UKHSA Guidance: Infection Control in Childcare Settings

Food hygiene and infection control are closely linked. Staff must follow procedures that reduce the transmission of infectious illnesses through appropriate sanitisation practices, hand hygiene, PPE use, and safe cleaning of food preparation and eating areas.

2.2 EYFS 2025 Requirements Specific to Food & Allergies

The EYFS Statutory Framework (September 2025) emphasises the following legal duties:

- Food and drink must be healthy, balanced, and nutritious.
- Providers must have robust procedures for checking, recording, and accommodating allergies, dietary needs, and cultural requirements.
- Drinking water must be accessible at all times.
- Staff involved in food handling must be competent and trained.
- Providers must maintain written records of dietary needs, allergies, and parental permissions.
- Providers must take all necessary steps to keep children safe from food allergens, contamination, choking risks, and unsafe food practices.

The nursery is inspected by Ofsted, who will evaluate food safety and allergy management as part of their judgement on leadership, welfare, health and safety, and overall quality of care.

2.3 Local Authority Environmental Health Requirements

As a food business, the nursery is subject to inspection by the Local Authority Environmental Health Officer (EHO). Inspections may be scheduled or unannounced. The nursery must demonstrate compliance with:

- Safe food receiving and temperature checking
- Cleanliness and sanitisation routines
- Pest control measures
- Accurate record-keeping
- Allergy management controls
- Staff food hygiene training

Environmental Health findings will be implemented without delay, and the nursery will cooperate fully with all recommendations.

2.4 Allergen Legislation and Safety Protocols

The nursery adheres strictly to all allergen safety regulations. This includes:

2.4.1 Legal Requirement to Identify 14 Allergens

The catering provider must clearly document the presence or absence of the 14 legally defined allergens in each meal. Staff must cross-check this information daily.

2.4.2 No Cross-Contamination

All nursery staff must take steps to prevent cross-contamination during storage, handling, and service. Dedicated utensils, plates, and mats are used for children with allergies.

2.4.3 Legal Requirement for Parental Notification

Parents must be informed of allergens present in meals, and written consent must be obtained for any permitted alternatives or emergency procedures.

2.5 Record Keeping Obligations

All food hygiene, allergen, and safety-related documentation must be:

- Up-to-date
- Legible
- Stored securely
- Retained for minimum statutory periods
- Made available to Ofsted and Environmental Health upon request

These include temperature logs, delivery checks, cleaning schedules, allergy care plans, staff training records, and risk assessments.

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The Nursery Manager has overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with all legal duties. All staff are individually responsible for following the procedures and expectations set out within this policy, as required under health and safety legislation and the EYFS.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

At Little Lambs Nursery, the safe management, preparation, handling, and serving of food is a collective responsibility shared across the entire organisation. Clear roles and expectations ensure that food safety and allergy procedures are consistently implemented, routinely monitored, and continuously improved.

The following subsections outline the responsibilities of all individuals involved in the provision of food, including management, designated food handlers, room-based practitioners, parents and carers, and external catering partners. All responsibilities within this section align with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework (September 2025), the Food Standards Agency (FSA) Code of Practice, the Food Safety Act 1990, and the Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013.

3.1 Nursery Manager Responsibilities

3.1.1 Legal Compliance and Oversight

The Nursery Manager has overall responsibility for ensuring that the nursery complies with all food hygiene, food safety, and allergen management legislation. This includes ensuring processes reflect the requirements of the Food Information Regulations 2014, relevant provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, environmental health expectations, and all food-related EYFS requirements concerning health, nutrition, and safety.

3.1.2 Monitoring and Review of Procedures

The Manager oversees all internal audits, monitors the nursery's compliance with hygiene routines and allergen systems, and ensures that any identified risks or non-compliances are addressed promptly.

Risk assessments relating to the kitchen, food storage, transportation, reheating, serving procedures, mealtime supervision, and allergen management are reviewed termly as a minimum and immediately following any incidents or changes in practice.

3.1.3 Oversight of Training and Competency

The Manager ensures all staff receive appropriate and timely training in food hygiene, infection control, allergy awareness, choking prevention, emergency procedures, and relevant safeguarding considerations. The Manager also maintains complete training logs and ensures refresher training is booked and completed within required timescales.

3.1.4 Supervision of Allergy Management Systems

The Manager ensures all children with allergies, intolerances, religious dietary requirements, or food-related medical conditions have an up-to-date Individual Allergy and Dietary Care Plan. These plans must be reviewed termly or sooner if changes occur. The Manager ensures that allergen information is displayed clearly and discreetly within relevant areas of the setting and that staff follow safe procedures around identification, segregation, and serving.

3.2 Designated Food Receiver Responsibilities

3.2.1 Initial Safety Checks on Delivery

A trained and appointed staff member acts as the designated Food Receiver. Their responsibilities include checking the condition, temperature, date labelling, packaging integrity, and allergen documentation of all food received from the external catering provider.

No food is accepted if temperatures fall outside safe limits or if allergen information is incomplete or unclear.

3.2.2 Safe Storage and Documentation

Once the food is approved, the Food Receiver is responsible for documenting delivery details, recording temperatures in the daily log, and storing items immediately in the appropriate controlled environment.

This includes placing chilled items in the refrigerator below 5°C, storing hot food above 63°C, and ensuring no cross-contamination occurs during transfer.

3.3 Room Staff Responsibilities

3.3.1 Mealtime Preparation and Hygiene

Room staff have daily responsibility for preparing dining areas, supervising mealtimes, following safe food-handling procedures, and ensuring each child's dietary needs are correctly implemented.

All staff must follow handwashing protocols and model good hygiene practices to the children.

Eating surfaces and equipment must be thoroughly sanitised before use and after all meals.

3.3.2 Safe Serving and Allergen Awareness

Staff must ensure children receive only food that is safe for them according to their individual care plan. They must check plates, labels, utensils, and allergen identifiers before serving.

Staff remain vigilant for signs of allergic reaction, choking, or distress and act immediately in line with first aid procedures.

3.3.3 Communication and Recording Obligations

Room staff must inform the Manager of any inconsistencies in food delivered, unexpected food substitutions, unusual reactions to food, or concerns regarding a child's eating habits. Staff must complete any required mealtime logs and contribute to allergy and dietary reviews as appropriate.

3.4 Parents and Carers Responsibilities

3.4.1 Provision of Accurate Information

Parents and carers must provide complete, accurate, and up-to-date information regarding their child's allergies, intolerances, medical dietary requirements, cultural or religious restrictions, feeding preferences, and weaning information. They must inform the nursery immediately of any changes, including new diagnoses, trial introductions of allergenic foods at home, or updates from healthcare professionals.

3.4.2 Appropriate Provision of Alternatives

When dietary restrictions are based on lifestyle choice, preference, or religious requirement rather than medical need, parents may be required to provide clearly labelled alternative food items in unopened, sealed packaging. These items must not conflict with the nursery's allergy policy (e.g., no nut-containing foods).

3.5 External Catering Providers Responsibilities

3.5.1 Compliance and Standards

Our external catering provider must operate in full accordance with all legal and regulatory requirements relevant to food businesses, including maintaining a high Food Hygiene Rating, ensuring staff training, completing HACCP-aligned risk assessments, and preparing food in a strictly nut-free environment.

3.5.2 Provision of Accurate Allergen Information

The provider must supply complete and accurate allergen documentation with every delivery. Any menu changes, ingredient substitutions, or manufacturing warnings must be communicated to the nursery in writing before food is delivered.

3.5.3 Safe Delivery Practices

Food must be transported in temperature-controlled, insulated containers. Hot food must arrive at or above 63°C, and chilled food at or below 5°C. Deliveries must be punctual to maintain food safety and ensure safe reheating or serving.

4. Food Safety Procedures

At Little Lambs Nursery, maintaining consistently high standards of food safety is fundamental to the health and well-being of every child in our care. Because meals are delivered by an external catering provider, our responsibility begins the moment food enters the premises and continues through storage, reheating (where applicable), portioning, serving, and the safe disposal of leftovers.

All procedures described in this section are designed to ensure compliance with the Food Safety Act 1990, the Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013, the Food Information Regulations 2014, and the relevant requirements set out within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework (September 2025). These procedures also form part of our wider Health and Safety and Infection Control systems and are monitored regularly by management and environmental health professionals.

4.1 Food Delivery, Receipt, and Initial Checks

4.1.1 Temperature, Packaging and Condition Checks

All food supplied by the external early years catering provider must be transported in insulated, temperature-controlled containers to prevent bacterial growth and maintain quality. Upon arrival, the designated Food Receiver conducts an immediate assessment of the delivery. This includes checking the external and internal condition of packaging, confirming that no containers show signs of leakage, swelling, compromised seals, contamination, or temperature abuse.

The internal temperature of chilled items must read 5°C or below, while hot food must register 63°C or above. These readings are recorded accurately in the Food Delivery Log, and food is only accepted if all safety criteria are met.

Any deliveries failing to meet these standards are rejected, returned to the provider, and logged as a food safety concern.

4.1.2 Verification of Allergen and Ingredient Information

Before any food is stored or served, the Food Receiver verifies that the complete allergen matrix and ingredient list accompany the delivery. The nursery does not accept meals without clear, written allergen information compliant with the Food Information Regulations 2014. This requirement is essential for the protection of all children, especially those with allergies or intolerances. Any discrepancy is reported immediately to management, and food will not be used until safe clarification is obtained.

4.1.3 Safe Transfer to Storage

Once signed off, all food is transferred without delay to temperature-controlled storage. Chilled items are placed in the refrigerator, ensuring raw and ready-to-eat foods are separated in line with cross-contamination controls. Hot food that is served immediately is placed in approved hot-holding units, and food intended for later service is reheated safely following our reheating procedures.

Staff ensure that no food is left at room temperature longer than absolutely necessary.

4.2 Storage of Food and Temperature Control

4.2.1 Refrigeration and Freezer Management

The nursery maintains strict controls over food storage to reduce the risk of contamination and spoilage. Refrigerators are kept at 5°C or below, and freezers at -18°C or below, with temperatures monitored and recorded twice daily.

Shelves and drawers are cleaned thoroughly once per week using warm soapy water, followed by sanitisation with an approved antibacterial solution.

Non-frost-free freezers are defrosted monthly, ensuring ice build-up does not compromise temperature control.

Items are organised logically according to risk: raw foods (where supplied) are kept at the lowest shelves to avoid drip contamination, while ready-to-eat foods are stored higher, clearly labelled, and dated.

4.2.2 Labelling, Rotation and Stock Management

All stored food is labelled with delivery dates and use-by dates to support effective stock rotation using the “first in, first out” principle. Staff check expiry dates daily and remove any foods nearing expiry for appropriate disposal. Opened packages must be re-sealed hygienically, stored correctly, and labelled with a new date where applicable, following manufacturer’s safety instructions.

4.3 Cleaning, Sanitisation and Safe Food Handling

4.3.1 Preparation Surfaces and Utensils

Food preparation surfaces are sanitised thoroughly before and after use using approved antibacterial products. Disposable cloths are used to prevent the spread of bacteria, and staff follow strict cleaning protocols for chopping boards, utensils, serving equipment and food containers. Colour-coded chopping boards are used where food preparation occurs to prevent cross-contamination between raw and cooked items.

Although most meals arrive ready-to-serve, staff must continue to follow the full safety procedures for any slicing, portioning, separating or plating that takes place on site.

4.3.2 Personal Hygiene Requirements for Staff

All staff involved in food handling must maintain the highest standards of personal hygiene. Hands must be washed thoroughly with warm water and antibacterial soap before handling food, after touching waste, after assisting with toileting, after coughing or sneezing, and after removing gloves.

Protective clothing must be worn, including aprons, gloves where appropriate, and hair tied back or covered. No watches, bracelets or rings (except plain wedding bands) may be worn during food handling. Nail varnish and artificial nails are prohibited.

Staff who are unwell, particularly with gastrointestinal illness, must not handle food under any circumstances and must comply with the nursery’s return-to-work policy.

4.4 Temperature Monitoring and Record Keeping

4.4.1 Daily Temperature Logs

Temperatures for refrigerators, freezers, hot-holding units, and delivered meals are recorded meticulously using the appropriate logs. The Nursery Manager reviews logbooks weekly to verify compliance and identify any anomalies that may suggest equipment malfunction or poor practice.

Equipment faults are reported immediately, with contingency measures implemented to protect food safety until repairs are completed.

4.4.2 Reheating Procedures

Where reheating is necessary, staff must ensure food is heated rapidly to a core temperature of at least 75°C before serving. Food that has been reheated must not be reheated again. Any food that fails to reach safe reheating temperatures must be discarded and recorded as a food safety incident.

4.5 Managing Leftovers and Waste Disposal

4.5.1 Disposal of Unused Food

In line with food hygiene regulations, any leftover food that has been served or placed on communal serving dishes is discarded immediately and never reused or reheated for later meals. This prevents bacterial growth and cross-contamination.

4.5.2 Waste Segregation and Removal

All food waste is disposed of in foot-operated, lidded bins lined with heavy-duty waste bags. Bins are emptied daily, cleaned, and sanitised to prevent odours and pest attraction. Waste disposal follows environmental health guidance and complements infection control and Coshh procedures.

4.6 Cleaning Schedules, Audits and Environmental Health Compliance

The nursery follows strict daily, weekly and monthly cleaning routines which include sanitising food contact surfaces, deep-cleaning refrigerators and storage units, and completing environmental safety checks. Detailed cleaning logs are completed and stored as evidence of compliance, forming part of the nursery’s internal audit cycle.

The Nursery Manager invites Environmental Health Officers to inspect the premises as required and ensures that any recommendations or improvement notices are acted upon promptly.

5. Mealtime Practice

At Little Lambs Nursery, mealtimes are recognised as an essential part of the daily routine, providing both nutritional sustenance and rich opportunities for learning, social development, communication and the fostering of independence.

In line with the EYFS Statutory Framework (September 2025), mealtimes must always be conducted in a safe, hygienic, inclusive and developmentally supportive manner. This section sets out the procedures, expectations and guiding principles that underpin our approach to the safe, respectful and nurturing facilitation of all meals and snacks.

5.1 Preparing the Mealtime Environment

5.1.1 Cleanliness and Hygiene of Surfaces

Before each meal or snack time, staff prepare the dining area by thoroughly cleaning and sanitising all eating surfaces using approved antibacterial cleaning products. Tables must be fully dried before plates or utensils are placed on them. Chairs, booster seats and highchairs are checked for cleanliness and stability, with tray surfaces cleaned between uses. All preparation and dining areas must be free from clutter, hazards or unrelated materials.

5.1.2 Organisation of Equipment and Utensils

All plates, bowls, cups and utensils used during mealtimes must be clean, intact and age-appropriate. Staff ensure that each child has the correct equipment according to their age, allergy status and developmental stage. Children with allergies are provided with designated, clearly identifiable utensils, plates and placemats to prevent cross-contamination. Where self-service is offered, serving utensils must be supervised and used in a controlled, safe manner.

5.2 Supporting Children's Hygiene and Independence

5.2.1 Handwashing and Personal Hygiene

All children wash their hands with warm water and liquid soap immediately before eating. Staff supervise handwashing carefully to ensure that each child washes thoroughly and dries hands using disposable paper towels. Hand sanitiser may be used temporarily during outings or emergencies but does not replace handwashing. Staff must also wash their hands before assisting children with food and after any contact with bodily fluids.

5.2.2 Promoting Independence and Self-Help Skills

Where developmentally appropriate, children are encouraged to participate in aspects of mealtime preparation, including collecting cutlery, helping to set tables, or serving themselves small quantities of food under close supervision. Staff provide gentle guidance to support independence while ensuring safety and preventing choking risks. Children are encouraged to pour water from small jugs, use cutlery independently, and explore new foods at their own pace. Staff always remain seated or positioned at the children's level to offer prompt support.

5.3 Safe Serving Procedures and Supervision

5.3.1 Portioning and Serving Food

Food is portioned safely by trained staff following the allergen management procedures set out in Section 7 of this policy. Each plate is served individually, with allergen-aware procedures followed rigorously for children with dietary needs. Food must be cut into age-appropriate sizes to prevent choking. For babies and younger toddlers, food is served in manageable, soft-textured pieces that reflect their stage of development.

Food temperature is checked prior to serving to ensure it is warm but not hot enough to cause burns.

5.3.2 Effective Supervision and Seating Arrangements

Children must always be seated securely while eating – either in chairs, highchairs fitted with safety straps, or at floor-level picnic-style seating for very young children if approved by risk assessment. Staff must maintain close supervision at all times.

Under no circumstances may a child walk around with food, lie down while eating, or engage in physical play during mealtimes. Staffing ratios must reflect the children's age and needs, and supervision must be vigilant to prevent choking and ensure safe swallowing.

5.3.3 Managing Behaviour and Encouraging Positive Social Interactions

Mealtimes offer opportunities to support children's social, emotional and communication development. Staff model calm, respectful language, encourage turn-taking and conversation, and gently support children in learning appropriate table manners. Behaviour expectations are communicated positively and consistently. Where a child presents challenging behaviour, staff intervene sensitively and maintain safety without disrupting others' mealtime experience.

5.4 Allergen Control and Dietary Oversight During Mealtimes

5.4.1 Allergen Identification and Verifying Meals

Before meals are served, staff must check the displayed allergy lists and each child's Individual Allergy and Dietary Care Plan. Allergen-safe meals must be clearly distinguishable from standard meals and must be plated and delivered separately. Staff must confirm the correct meal for each child, using identifiers such as colour-coded plates, placemats or labelled toothpick flags.

5.4.2 Preventing Cross-Contamination

All children with allergies are seated strategically, either in designated allergy-safe seating or at tables where cross-contamination risks are minimal. Staff responsible for serving allergen-safe meals must wash hands thoroughly and use separate utensils. No food sharing is ever allowed. Staff monitor closely to ensure children eat only the appropriate food provided for them.

5.5 Supporting Children with Additional Needs or Feeding Requirements

5.5.1 Children with SEND, Medical or Feeding Difficulties

Children with additional needs, developmental delays, physical disabilities, sensory differences or medically diagnosed feeding difficulties are supported through individualised feeding plans developed in partnership with parents and relevant healthcare professionals. Staff follow these plans precisely, ensuring that adaptations, equipment, posture support, pacing strategies or specialist utensils are used consistently.

5.5.2 Cultural, Religious and Family Dietary Practices

The nursery respects and accommodates diverse cultural, religious and ethical dietary practices. Staff are required to honour all documented food restrictions and work sensitively with families to ensure that each child's values and traditions are respected during mealtimes. Families are invited to share cultural insights, alternative food suggestions or preferences that support the child's sense of identity and belonging.

5.6 Supporting Emotional Wellbeing and Positive Eating Habits

5.6.1 Encouraging Healthy, Balanced Eating

Staff promote healthy eating by modelling enthusiasm for food, offering positive encouragement and gently supporting children to try new foods without pressure. Children are never forced to eat or finish meals and are instead encouraged to listen to their hunger cues. Food is never used as a reward or punishment, in line with safeguarding and wellbeing guidance.

5.6.2 Creating a Calm and Inclusive Mealtime Atmosphere

Mealtimes are calm, unhurried and predictable. Staff balance conversation, supervision and engagement to create a relaxed environment where children feel safe to explore food, express preferences and ask for help. Noise levels are kept low, transitions are carefully managed, and children are given time to complete their meals without feeling rushed.

5.7 Post-Meal Procedures

5.7.1 Cleaning and Sanitising After Meals

After eating, children's faces and hands are cleaned with warm water, disposable wipes or damp cloths designated solely for that purpose. Tables, chairs and highchair trays are cleaned with antibacterial spray and dried thoroughly. Floors are swept and mopped as required. Any spillages are cleaned promptly to maintain hygiene and prevent slips.

5.7.2 Recording Any Incidents or Concerns

Any incidents occurring during mealtimes, including allergic reactions, choking episodes, refusal to eat, behaviour concerns or unusual symptoms, must be recorded and reported immediately to the Nursery Manager. Parents are informed on the same day, and relevant care plans and risk assessments are reviewed if necessary.

6. Healthy Eating and Menu Planning

At Little Lambs Nursery, we recognise the fundamental importance of providing balanced, nutritious meals that support children's growth, health, and cognitive development. In accordance with the EYFS Statutory Framework (September 2025), children attending the nursery must have access to meals, snacks and drinks that are healthy, balanced, safely prepared and reflective of cultural, medical and developmental needs. Our approach to menu planning is grounded in nutritional science, statutory requirements, and the belief that mealtimes are an opportunity to introduce children to a diverse range of flavours, textures, and experiences that contribute positively to lifelong healthy eating habits.

Nutrition is considered a core element of safeguarding and wellbeing. Meals must support children's health, maintain stable energy levels, and accommodate the individual dietary requirements set out in each child's personal care plan. Through careful menu design, consistent staff training, and collaboration with parents and our external catering provider, we ensure children receive meals that are safe, age-appropriate, culturally inclusive, and aligned with recommended early years portion sizes and food group balance.

6.1 Nutritional Standards and Principles

6.1.1 Compliance with recognised nutritional guidance

All meals and snacks provided at Little Lambs Nursery meet the nutritional standards set out by the First Steps Nutrition Trust, Public Health England and the EYFS. Our external catering provider designs menus according to evidence-based recommendations, ensuring appropriate proportions of fruit and vegetables, starchy carbohydrates, proteins and dairy or fortified alternatives for growing children.

Meals are planned to ensure:

- Reduced salt, sugar and saturated fat
- Sufficient iron, calcium, vitamin D and essential fatty acids
- Developmentally appropriate portion sizes
- Adequate hydration and opportunities to drink water throughout the day

Sugary drinks, confectionery and processed snacks are not served in the nursery under any circumstances.

6.1.2 Food variety and exposure to diverse flavours

Menus are designed to expose children to a broad range of foods, including vegetables, wholegrains, legumes, lean proteins, and dishes inspired by a variety of cultural traditions. Repeated exposure to new foods is encouraged, particularly for children who may be cautious eaters. Staff model positive attitudes toward healthy eating by discussing ingredients, colours, textures and the origins of foods with enthusiasm and encouragement.

6.1.3 Developmentally appropriate food and drink

Food texture, size and preparation are aligned with children's developmental stages. Babies and young toddlers receive food that is soft, moist and cut into safe sizes to minimise choking risks, while older children receive meals that support age-appropriate chewing and independence. Drinks offered are limited to water and milk, with no fruit juices or flavoured drinks.

6.2 Menu Structure and Rotation

6.2.1 Four-week seasonal rotation

A structured four-week menu cycle is used to ensure variety and consistency while accounting for seasonal availability. Menus differ significantly between autumn/winter and spring/summer seasons to incorporate seasonal produce, enhance freshness and maintain nutritional balance. Updated menus are shared with parents at the start of each term or whenever significant changes occur.

6.2.2 Daily provision of balanced meals

Each day includes:

- A nutritious morning snack
- A balanced hot lunch
- A healthy afternoon snack

Snacks consist of fruit, vegetables, wholegrain crackers, yoghurt, or similar nutritious options. Snacks must never include biscuits, cakes or processed foods unless part of an approved supervised cooking activity.

6.2.3 Multicultural and inclusive menu planning

Menus reflect the diverse cultural heritage of the nursery community. Traditional dishes are incorporated respectfully, and families are invited to share suggestions, recipes or information about culturally significant foods. Religious and ethical dietary practices, such as halal, kosher, vegetarian, vegan or allergen-based restrictions, are always acknowledged and catered for safely.

6.3 Partnership with External Catering Provider

6.3.1 Food preparation standards and compliance checks

Our contracted catering provider must operate within full compliance of the Food Safety Act 1990, the Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013, HACCP requirements, and all relevant FSA guidance for early years settings. The provider must maintain a minimum food hygiene rating of “5 – Very Good.”

The nursery verifies:

- The hygiene rating and certification of the preparation kitchen
- Allergen labelling and ingredient lists for every meal delivered
- Temperature compliance upon delivery
- Preparation methods that reflect nut-free and allergy-aware environments

6.3.2 Delivery procedures and temperature control

Food is delivered in insulated, temperature-controlled containers. A trained staff member receives all deliveries, performs temperature checks and records readings in the Delivery Log. Any food that does not meet required temperature thresholds is rejected immediately to ensure children are never exposed to foodborne risks.

6.3.3 Transition to on-site food preparation (future-proofing)

Should the nursery transition to preparing food on site in the future, the policy will expand to include:

- Full kitchen layout requirements
- Detailed HACCP plans
- Food hygiene rating inspections
- Ventilation and equipment standards
- Documented cleaning schedules
- Staff qualification requirements (minimum Level 2 Food Hygiene)

This ensures the policy remains adaptable and forward-looking.

6.4 Collaboration with Parents and Carers

6.4.1 Transparent communication of menus

Parents receive copies of the menu cycle and allergen matrix at least termly. Any proposed changes are communicated in advance. We encourage parents to discuss their child's food preferences, cultural dishes, family practices and preferred approaches to food introduction.

6.4.2 Parent involvement in dietary adjustments

Where adjustments are requested for medical or religious reasons, parents must provide full written information, and where relevant, medical documentation. Staff and parents work collaboratively to create or update each child's Individual Allergy and Dietary Care Plan. For general preferences, flexibility is considered where reasonable and safe.

6.5 Sustainability and Ethical Sourcing

6.5.1 Environmentally responsible food practices

The nursery is committed to supporting environmentally responsible food consumption through:

- Prioritising fresh and locally sourced ingredients
- Reducing food and packaging waste
- Limiting single-use plastics
- Encouraging plant-rich meal options
- Using reusable or compostable serving materials where feasible

6.5.2 Reducing waste and promoting respect for food

Children are encouraged to take small portions initially and request more if desired, helping to reduce waste. Staff discuss respect for food, the environment and healthy choices as part of mealtime conversations.

6.6 Monitoring, Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

6.6.1 Ongoing menu evaluation

Menus are reviewed termly, or sooner if required. Evaluation includes:

- Nutritional balance
- Children's acceptance and preferences
- Allergen management outcomes
- Parental feedback
- Inspection or audit recommendations
- Emerging guidance from nutrition authorities

6.6.2 Staff feedback and reflective practice

Room staff are encouraged to comment on portion sizes, children's responses to meals, potential choking risks, food temperatures and suitability for specific developmental stages. Their feedback directly informs menu refinements, kitchen communication and policy updates.

6.6.3 Compliance with inspections and regulatory expectations

Food provision is examined during Ofsted inspections and environmental health audits. Any recommendations from inspectors or health officers are actioned promptly, logged, and reflected in future practice.

7. Allergy Awareness and Dietary Requirements

At Little Lambs Nursery, we recognise that allergies, intolerances, and dietary requirements must be managed with the highest level of care, accuracy, and vigilance. Our approach is grounded in the principle that the safety and well-being of children with allergies or dietary restrictions is a shared responsibility across the whole nursery team. We are fully committed to ensuring that no child is placed at risk of exposure to an allergen and that all meals provided reflect their medical, cultural, ethical, or developmental needs.

This section outlines the procedures and safeguards that ensure compliance with the EYFS Statutory Framework (2025), the Food Information Regulations (FIR) 2014, the Food Safety Act 1990, and recognised best practice guidance from the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Public Health authorities.

7.1 Identification and Documentation of Allergies and Dietary Requirements

All allergies, intolerances, medical dietary needs, and cultural or ethical dietary preferences are identified at the point of enrolment and documented in detail on the child's Individual Allergy and Dietary Care Plan. This plan is created collaboratively with parents or carers and, where necessary, health professionals. The plan includes medical information, specific allergens, symptoms of reaction, required medication, emergency procedures, and any additional instructions relevant to the child's daily routine.

The completed plan is reviewed at least once per term, or sooner if parents report any change in diagnosis, symptoms, or required treatment. Parents have an ongoing duty to provide timely updates. The nursery will not

accept verbal updates alone where medical needs have changed; written confirmation is required to safeguard accuracy.

Copies of each child's care plan are securely stored but remain readily accessible to all staff involved in food service, supervision, and emergency response. A summary of essential information is displayed discreetly in food preparation and serving areas, consistently reinforcing awareness among all staff.

7.2

Statutory Allergens and Required Compliance

In compliance with the Food Information Regulations 2014, the nursery ensures that all staff involved in food handling, serving, or supervision are familiar with the fourteen legally recognised allergens. These allergens must always be identifiable in menu documentation, meal delivery notes, ingredient lists, and allergy care plans. For clarity and compliance, the statutory allergens are:

- Celery
- Cereals containing gluten (including wheat, barley, oats, rye)
- Crustaceans
- Eggs
- Fish
- Lupin
- Milk
- Molluscs
- Mustard
- Nuts (including tree nuts such as almond, hazelnut, walnut, pecan, Brazil nut)
- Peanuts
- Sesame
- Soybeans
- Sulphur dioxide and sulphites at concentrations above 10 mg/kg

These allergens are noted explicitly in all food documentation, and no meal containing any allergen that affects a child within the setting will be served to that child under any circumstances.

7.3

Communication, Labelling, and Visual Identification Systems

Clear communication is central to safe allergy management. All dietary information is communicated to room teams at handover times and during daily briefings. The nursery employs a consistent system of visual identifiers which allow staff to quickly recognise children with allergies without drawing unnecessary attention to them. These identifiers may include colour-coded placemats, plates, lanyards, wristbands, or discreet icons on meal trays. Each identifier corresponds to the child's care plan and is checked before every meal or snack.

Food provided for children with allergies is clearly labelled with the child's name, room, allergen exclusions, and any additional instructions. Staff must cross-check these labels against the child's care plan before serving food. Meals for children with allergies are handled separately, plated individually, and never placed near other dishes to prevent accidental contact or cross-contamination.

7.4

Preventing Cross-Contamination and Ensuring Safe Meal Service

Preventing cross-contamination is essential to keeping children safe. All staff must adhere to strict hygiene and handling protocols when preparing or serving meals, including the use of dedicated utensils, tongs, serving trays, and preparation areas for children with allergies. Meals for children with allergies must be served first or through a separate service route to minimise the risk of accidental exposure.

Food must never be shared between children, and staff must actively supervise to prevent such occurrences. Food brought in from home for cultural or religious reasons, if permitted, must be clearly labelled and handled with the same stringent care as nursery-prepared meals.

Only trained staff may handle or serve meals to children with allergies. Cover staff or agency staff may not undertake this responsibility unless they have received a full allergy briefing and been authorised by management.

7.5 Monitoring Children During Mealtimes

Children with allergies are monitored closely throughout mealtimes to ensure that no accidental exposure occurs. Staff maintain appropriate seating arrangements, avoid placing children with severe allergies near potential allergens, and ensure heightened vigilance during transitions such as clearing plates, cleaning hands, and wiping surfaces.

Children are encouraged to wash their hands before and after meals, and staff maintain clean, sanitised surfaces at all times. Staff intervene immediately if a child attempts to exchange food, pick up food from the floor, or approach items not intended for them.

7.6 Recognising and Responding to Allergic Reactions

All staff receive training in recognising and responding to allergic reactions, including mild reactions and life-threatening anaphylaxis. Although the signs of allergic reactions can vary, the following symptoms may indicate an allergic response and require immediate action:

- Swelling of the lips, face, or eyes
- Hives, rash, or itching
- Difficulty breathing, wheezing, or persistent cough
- Vomiting or diarrhoea shortly after eating
- Dizziness, collapse, or sudden lethargy
- Changes in voice, hoarseness, or difficulty swallowing

Staff must never hesitate to act. Any concern that a child may be experiencing a reaction must be treated as an emergency.

When a reaction occurs, staff follow the child's care plan, administer prescribed emergency medication such as an EpiPen or antihistamine (depending on severity and care plan guidance), and call 999 immediately.

Emergency services are informed that the incident involves a child with a suspected allergic reaction. Parents are contacted without delay, and the child remains under continuous supervision until emergency help arrives.

A staff member will accompany the child to hospital if a parent has not yet arrived. All actions taken during the emergency are recorded in detail on the child's care plan and incident form.

7.7 Collaboration with Parents and External Agencies

Parents are integral partners in allergy management. They must provide written medical documentation for any diagnosed allergy or intolerance and must ensure that all prescribed medication is in date and supplied to the nursery in clearly labelled original packaging. The nursery may consult with healthcare professionals, including paediatricians, dietitians, or allergy specialists, to ensure that the child's care plan is clinically accurate and reflects best-practice guidance.

Where complex allergies or multiple dietary restrictions exist, multi-agency meetings may be held to ensure the nursery can support the child safely.

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The Nursery Manager monitors all aspects of allergy management through regular supervision, audits, incident reviews, and staff training updates. Staff complete allergy awareness training during induction, with refresher training scheduled annually or sooner if a child with a new or complex allergy joins the nursery.

Care plans, visual identifiers, and procedures are reviewed termly, after any allergic incident or near miss, and whenever relevant legislation changes. Staff are informed immediately of any adjustments, and documentation is updated accordingly.

This section of the policy is reviewed annually as part of the full policy review cycle and whenever changes in legislation, catering arrangements, or medical best practice make this necessary.

8. Infant Feeding and Weaning

Little Lambs Nursery recognises that infant feeding requires meticulous hygiene, sensitivity to family preferences, and unwavering adherence to statutory safety standards. Infants are among the most vulnerable children in our care, and the procedures set out in this section ensure that all feeding practices comply with the EYFS Statutory Framework (2025), NHS and Public Health England guidance, and relevant food safety legislation. Our approach emphasises responsive feeding, strong partnership with parents, and rigorous control measures designed to protect infants' health, wellbeing, and nutritional development.

At Little Lambs Nursery, infant feeding and weaning take place within a carefully controlled environment that reflects the unique context of our setting on a working farm. Staff follow enhanced hand hygiene procedures, ensuring that no outdoor clothing, footwear, or farm-associated equipment enters any feeding or bottle-preparation area. Babies are fed in the main room, and bottles are prepared in a private kitchen area designated solely for this purpose. These arrangements protect infants from avoidable exposure to environmental contaminants and uphold the highest standards of cleanliness.

8.1 Infant Feeding Principles

Infant feeding is undertaken using a responsive, child-focused approach where babies' cues, individual routines, and established preferences guide practice. Staff hold infants securely throughout every bottle feed and ensure that feeding occurs in a calm environment free from distractions. Propping bottles or leaving infants unattended at any time is strictly prohibited.

Feeding routines are agreed with parents upon enrolment and reviewed regularly. Any changes to quantity, timing, formula type, or feeding method must be supported by written parental instruction to protect accuracy and ensure continuity between home and nursery. Staff record all feeds, observations, and any concerns using the Family digital system, providing both real-time updates and end-of-day summaries.

8.2 Breast Milk Handling

The nursery has a dedicated breast milk fridge located in the room kitchenette, used exclusively for the safe storage of expressed breast milk. To maintain hygiene and ensure traceability, each child's breast milk is stored within an individually labelled box that includes the child's full name, the date and time of expression, and any specific parental instructions.

Parents may provide both chilled and frozen expressed breast milk. Frozen milk is stored in accordance with NHS guidance, defrosted safely in the refrigerator, and never refrozen. Staff warm breast milk using approved warm-water jugs rather than microwaves, ensuring the gentle and even heating required to preserve nutritional content and prevent scalding.

Any breast milk that has been warmed for feeding must be used immediately and discarded after one hour if not fully consumed. Partially consumed bottles are never reused, and breast milk belonging to one child is never used for another child under any circumstances. Parents are notified promptly when supplies are low.

8.3 Formula Preparation and Storage

To ensure safety, formula is always prepared fresh on site by trained staff. Parents do not send home-prepared formula, and pre-prepared bottles are not accepted under any circumstances due to the heightened bacterial risks associated with storage and cooling. Parents may supply unopened ready-made formula if they prefer, or powdered formula alongside sterilised bottles and teats.

Formula is prepared in the private kitchen using boiled water that has cooled for no more than thirty minutes, following NHS and Public Health England guidelines to ensure that harmful bacteria are destroyed during preparation. Staff adhere strictly to the manufacturer's instructions and never estimate measurements. Each bottle is prepared individually to ensure accuracy and prevent cross-contamination.

Staff use cold-water sterilising solution to sterilise bottles where required, although parents may choose either cold-water or steam sterilisation methods at home. Sterilised equipment is handled using strict hygiene protocols, and surfaces are sanitised before and after preparation. Only fresh formula is served; leftover milk is discarded immediately after feeding.

8.4 Sterilisation and Equipment Hygiene

All feeding equipment, including bottles, teats, caps, and any additional attachments, must be supplied by the nursery unless parents provide breast milk, in which case parents supply sterilised bottles for breast milk use.

The nursery ensures that all equipment is intact, safe, and appropriately sterilised using cold-water sterilising solutions or other approved methods.

Staff follow defined equipment-handling procedures to prevent recontamination after sterilisation. Sterilised items remain covered until needed, and feeding equipment is kept separate from any food preparation utensils. Damaged, cracked, or deteriorated bottles or teats are removed from use immediately, and parents are informed if replacements are needed.

8.5 Weaning and Introducing Solid Foods

The nursery supports a mixed weaning approach that includes both traditional (spoon-fed purées) and baby-led weaning, depending on parental preference and the child's developmental readiness. Weaning typically commences around six months of age in accordance with NHS guidance unless a healthcare professional advises otherwise.

All weaning foods provided by the nursery are prepared safely, age-appropriately, and in accordance with statutory food safety requirements. Legal restrictions, such as avoiding honey for children under one year and ensuring that grapes are quartered lengthways, are strictly adhered to. Foods are cut to safe sizes and textures to minimise choking risk, and infants are supervised at close proximity at all times.

To protect infants from avoidable allergic reactions, the nursery does not introduce new allergens as part of the weaning process. Instead, parents must introduce all common allergens at home first and provide written confirmation before those foods may be offered at nursery. This rule ensures compliance with best practice in allergy prevention and reinforces the safety measures outlined in Section 7.

8.6 Responsive Feeding and Supervision

Responsive feeding is central to our approach. Staff recognise and respond to hunger and satiety cues, understanding that infants' needs change day to day. Babies are never encouraged to finish feeds beyond their appetite, nor are they discouraged from seeking additional milk if their established patterns indicate this is developmentally appropriate.

During bottle feeding and solid food weaning, infants are supervised continuously and never left unattended. Bottle feeding occurs in the main room where staff can maintain visual and physical proximity, and weaning foods are served at infant-appropriate seating with staff seated closely to maintain safety.

8.7 Managing Allergies When Introducing Foods

To protect infants with allergies or those at increased risk, the introduction of new allergens does not take place at nursery. Parents must introduce all allergenic foods at home in a controlled environment and provide written confirmation that the child has previously consumed the food safely before it is added to the nursery's meal provision.

Staff remain vigilant for any signs of allergic reaction during or after feeding, following the procedures set out in Section 7.6. Any reaction or suspected reaction is treated as a medical emergency. Detailed feeding records are maintained, and parents are provided with a full summary of all foods offered each day through Famly.

8.8 Parent Partnership and Documentation

Partnership with parents is essential to safe feeding and weaning. Parents are responsible for providing breast milk in appropriate labelled containers and must ensure that all instructions relating to feeding routines, formula brand, quantity, and any medical-related dietary requirements are supplied in writing. Staff record each feed, quantity consumed, and any observations digitally through Famly, ensuring transparency and enabling parents to remain fully informed.

Parents receive real-time updates for feeds and are provided with a full written summary at the end of each day detailing all milk consumed, weaning foods offered, and any relevant behavioural or developmental notes. Staff communicate promptly with parents if feeding concerns arise or if a baby demonstrates difficulty adjusting to new foods or textures.

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Infant feeding and weaning at Little Lambs Nursery are delivered with exceptional care, rigorous hygiene, and the utmost respect for each family's preferences and the individual needs of every infant. Through a combination of evidence-based practice, strong parental partnership, robust allergy control, and the enhanced hygiene measures

required within our working farm environment, we ensure that all babies are fed safely, responsively, and in a way that supports healthy development and emotional security.

9. Cooking Activities with Children

Cooking activities form an important part of the curriculum at Little Lambs Nursery, offering children the opportunity to explore food, develop practical life skills, build confidence, and learn about healthy eating in a hands-on and enjoyable way. Our approach to cooking with children is rooted in the principles of safety, hygiene, inclusivity, and child development, ensuring that all activities are carefully planned, supervised, and aligned with the EYFS Statutory Framework (2025).

All cooking experiences take place in a clean, organised, and well-prepared environment where risks are minimised, hygiene routines are embedded, and children are supported to participate at a level appropriate to their age and ability. Given that Little Lambs Nursery is situated on a working farm, additional controls are in place to ensure that children's exposure to outdoor environments does not compromise food hygiene. Clothing worn during outdoor animal interactions is never used during cooking activities, and enhanced handwashing procedures are followed before, during, and after all food-based experiences.

Cooking activities also offer opportunities to promote cultural diversity, language development, sensory exploration, and early mathematical understanding. Children are encouraged to explore ingredients, develop their fine motor skills, and build their understanding of how food is prepared, handled, and enjoyed within a safe and nurturing setting.

9.1 Educational Purpose and Curriculum Links

Cooking activities are designed to enhance children's learning across multiple areas of the EYFS curriculum. Staff plan activities that introduce new vocabulary, support children to follow instructions, encourage counting, measuring, and sequencing, and help them to understand where food comes from. The use of farm-grown or locally sourced ingredients, where appropriate, helps children connect their cooking experiences with the natural world and supports their understanding of sustainable food practices.

Cooking experiences are inclusive and accessible. Children with dietary restrictions, allergies, or cultural requirements are offered alternative ingredients that allow them to participate fully and safely. Staff take time to discuss ingredients, tools, and methods with children, supporting their confidence and curiosity while maintaining stringent safety standards.

9.2 Planning Safe and Age-Appropriate Activities

All cooking activities are planned in advance to ensure that the chosen ingredients, tasks, and equipment are suitable for the age and developmental stage of the participating children. Younger children may focus on sensory experiences, such as mixing, pouring, or exploring textures, while older children may take part in more complex tasks such as kneading, shaping, or following simple recipes.

Staff conduct a full activity-specific risk assessment before each cooking session, reviewing hazards, supervision ratios, allergen management needs, and hygiene requirements. Only activities that can be delivered safely within the given space, staffing levels, and available equipment are approved.

Utensils used during cooking activities are child-safe, age-appropriate, and designed to minimise the risk of injury. Sharp tools, high heat, hot liquids, and electrical appliances are never used with children unless strict controls, adult-only handling, and close supervision are in place.

9.3 Hygiene and Infection Control Measures

Robust hygiene procedures underpin every cooking activity. Children and staff wash their hands thoroughly for at least twenty seconds before handling ingredients and again after touching raw foods, wiping noses, sneezing, or switching between tasks. Staff model correct handwashing techniques and support younger children to complete each step confidently.

All surfaces are cleaned and sanitised before and after cooking. Ingredients are stored in accordance with food safety requirements, and perishable items remain refrigerated until needed. Children wear clean aprons during cooking to prevent cross-contamination from outdoor play or farm visits. Staff ensure that long hair is tied back and that any cuts or grazes on hands are covered with blue catering-grade dressings.

Where cooking activities involve raw ingredients, such as eggs or flour, staff take additional precautions to prevent contamination. Children never handle raw eggs directly, and raw dough that contains eggs is not eaten. Staff manage these materials carefully, ensuring that children's exposure is controlled and that handwashing occurs immediately after tactile exploration.

9.4 Allergen Management and Safety Controls

Cooking activities are planned in strict accordance with the allergy procedures set out in Section 7. Staff check every child's allergy and dietary information before planning the activity and remove or substitute any ingredient that poses a risk. Recipes may be adapted to ensure inclusivity, and allergy-friendly alternatives will be provided wherever this is required to ensure that all children can take part without risk of exposure.

Ingredients used during cooking sessions are checked thoroughly for allergen content, and packaging is retained until the activity has finished to ensure traceability and facilitate any necessary checks. Children with allergies are supervised closely, and their participation is adapted where necessary to ensure their safety without drawing undue attention to their needs.

Children are never exposed to new allergens during cooking sessions, reflecting the nursery's approach to allergen introduction during infancy and early childhood. Parents are informed in advance of planned cooking activities and may share additional guidance if their child has specific requirements.

9.5 Supervision and Staff Responsibilities

Cooking activities are supervised at all times by trained staff who understand both the safety procedures and the educational purpose of the session. Staff prepare all hot elements in advance and keep them away from children's reach. During the activity, adults take responsibility for cutting, heating, or handling any utensils or ingredients that involve additional risk.

Children are supported to use child-safe utensils, explore ingredients, and follow steps of the activity at their own pace. Staff remain vigilant, maintain close physical proximity, and intervene promptly to prevent accidents, spills, or unsafe handling of food or equipment.

Clear communication, predictable routines, and the use of visual prompts or step-by-step demonstrations help children understand the process and remain engaged safely throughout the activity.

9.6 Inclusion, Cultural Diversity, and Parental Engagement

Cooking activities reflect the diversity of the children, families, and wider community. Recipes may be inspired by cultural festivals, family traditions, or children's personal interests, helping children develop an appreciation for different cuisines and food practices. Parents are encouraged to share family recipes, cultural foods, or celebrations that may inspire future cooking sessions.

Children with SEND or additional needs are provided with differentiated support to participate meaningfully and safely. Adaptations may include alternative utensils, adjusted seating, simplified steps, or sensory-based involvement depending on the child's developmental needs and preferences.

Parents are informed of any cooking activity taking place, and photos, notes, or observations may be shared through the Family platform, allowing families to build upon these learning experiences at home.

9.7 Environmental and Sustainability Considerations

Aligned with Little Lambs Nursery's ethos of environmental responsibility and connection to the natural world, cooking activities are designed to minimise waste and promote sustainable practices. Children are encouraged to understand concepts such as composting, recycling food packaging, reducing food waste, and respecting ingredients.

Where appropriate, cooking activities may incorporate seasonal or farm-linked foods, helping children develop an understanding of food origins and sustainability. Staff discuss these themes in developmentally appropriate ways, reinforcing children's awareness of environmental stewardship.

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Cooking activities enrich children's learning and provide a meaningful context for exploring food, culture, creativity, and healthy lifestyles. Through careful planning, robust hygiene and allergen controls, inclusive teaching practices, and strong connections to the natural environment, Little Lambs Nursery ensures that all cooking experiences are safe,

engaging, educational, and developmentally appropriate. This structured yet flexible approach supports children's curiosity, confidence, and independence while maintaining the highest standards of food safety and regulatory compliance.

10. Packed Lunches and Outings

Little Lambs Nursery is committed to ensuring that all food consumed by children during outings or off-site activities meets the same high standards of safety, hygiene, allergen control, and nutritional quality as food served within the nursery building. Although the nursery provides all meals and snacks as part of its normal daily provision, there may be occasions where packed lunches are required, particularly during full-day outings or trips to local farm areas. This section outlines the procedures that ensure packed lunches—whether prepared by the nursery or supplied by parents—are stored, transported, and served safely, and that children with allergies or dietary requirements remain fully protected.

Given that Little Lambs Nursery operates on a working farm, particular attention is paid to preventing contamination from outdoor environments. All food taken off site is stored securely, handled with clean hands, and transported in dedicated insulated containers that remain separate from other equipment such as outdoor clothing or farm-related materials. Staff follow enhanced hygiene protocols, ensuring that food is never exposed to animal areas, contaminated equipment, or outdoor surfaces that may compromise safety.

10.1 Packed Lunches Provided by the Nursery

When the nursery provides packed lunches for outings, meals are prepared by trained staff in accordance with the food safety and hygiene procedures outlined in Sections 4 and 5. All foods are freshly prepared, age-appropriate, and inclusive of children's medical, cultural, and ethical dietary requirements. Menus are planned with the same level of nutritional consideration as regular meals, ensuring that children receive a balanced, healthy lunch that supports energy needs during active outings.

Food is stored in insulated containers to maintain safe temperatures and is labelled clearly to ensure that each child's dietary needs are met accurately. Staff serving food during outings follow the same allergen control measures used in the nursery setting, cross-checking every meal against individual allergy and dietary care plans. Water is carried in clean, clearly labelled containers and offered frequently throughout the day.

10.2 Packed Lunches Provided by Parents (If Required)

Although the nursery normally provides meals, there may be rare circumstances—such as family-specific cultural requirements, exceptional dietary restrictions, or certain types of outings—where parents may be asked to supply a packed lunch for their child. In these situations, the nursery provides clear written guidance to ensure that food supplied from home meets required standards of safety and suitability.

Parents must ensure that all packed lunches are stored in appropriate insulated lunch bags with ice packs to maintain safe temperatures until they are collected by staff. All items must be clearly labelled with the child's name and must not contain any allergens that put other children at risk. Foods that pose choking hazards or are unsuitable for young children must be avoided. Staff inspect all home-supplied lunches prior to the outing and reserve the right to remove any food items that contravene safety or allergen requirements.

Children are not permitted to share food under any circumstances. Staff supervise closely to ensure that food from home cannot be accessed by other children, and that children with allergies are fully protected from accidental exposure.

10.3 Allergen Management During Packed Lunches and Outings

The safety of children with allergies remains paramount during all outings. Staff follow the procedures detailed in Section 7, ensuring that all meals, snacks, containers, and utensils are checked thoroughly before leaving the nursery. Meals for children with allergies are packaged securely to prevent contamination and are clearly labelled with the child's details, allergen information, and any additional instructions from their care plan.

A designated member of staff remains responsible for overseeing allergy management during the outing. They carry all relevant medication—including auto-injectors, antihistamines, and emergency care plans—and ensure that this medication remains accessible at all times. Staff maintain close supervision during mealtimes and prevent children from sharing or swapping food, even as part of well-meaning social interaction.

In the event of an allergic reaction, staff follow the emergency procedures outlined in Section 7.6, administering prescribed medication and calling emergency services immediately. Clear communication with parents is maintained throughout.

10.4 Food Hygiene and Safe Transport of Meals

All food transported off site is handled in accordance with statutory food safety requirements. Staff follow strict handwashing routines before packing food and wear clean clothing that has not been used in any farm-related activity immediately prior to handling meals. Food is placed in clean, sealed containers and transported in insulated cool bags or boxes that maintain appropriate temperatures throughout the outing.

Staff check food storage conditions periodically and ensure that meals are consumed within safe time frames. Any unused food is disposed of before returning to the nursery to avoid cross-contamination. All containers, cool bags, and utensils used during the outing are cleaned and sanitised thoroughly upon return.

Surfaces used for serving food during outings are checked for cleanliness and suitability. Staff use clean, washable mats where appropriate, ensuring that outdoor conditions do not compromise hygiene. Hands are washed or sanitised before and after handling food, and children are supported to do the same.

10.5 Drinking Water and Hydration

Hydration is a crucial consideration during outings, particularly in warm weather or when physical activity is extensive. Fresh drinking water is carried in dedicated, clearly labelled containers and offered regularly throughout the outing. Water bottles used by children remain clearly labelled and are never shared. Staff monitor consumption, particularly for younger children, to ensure that each child remains hydrated and comfortable throughout the day.

10.6 Staff Supervision and Responsibilities

All outings are risk assessed in advance, including a specific review of food safety, allergen risks, hygiene arrangements, and emergency response protocols. Staff-to-child ratios meet or exceed statutory requirements, ensuring that supervision remains attentive and that children are supported during mealtimes.

Staff are responsible for checking all lunch items, monitoring dietary needs, maintaining hygiene standards, carrying necessary medical equipment, and keeping accurate records of food consumed. Any concerns, incidents, or changes in children's health during outings are documented promptly and communicated to parents through the Family system.

10.7 Environmental Considerations and Farm-Specific Controls

Given the nursery's position on a working farm, additional safety measures ensure that food consumed during outdoor experiences is never placed near livestock areas, contaminable surfaces, or equipment associated with farming activities. Staff select clean, safe eating locations away from mud, animals, machinery, or standing water, and ensure that all children wash their hands thoroughly after visiting any farm areas and before eating.

Children learn through experience how to behave safely around animals and farm machinery, and these lessons extend to understanding the importance of hygiene, safe eating practices, and respecting the natural environment. Staff reinforce these messages clearly and consistently during all outings.

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Packed lunches and food consumed during outings are managed with the same precision, care, and regulatory compliance as meals served within the nursery building. Through careful planning, rigorous hygiene and allergen controls, clear parental communication, and enhanced safety measures reflective of our farm environment, Little Lambs Nursery ensures that all children eat safely, comfortably, and confidently during any off-site experience. These procedures support children's enjoyment of enriching educational outings while maintaining the highest standards of health, safety, and nutritional care.

11. Emergency Procedures

Emergency procedures relating to food, allergies, choking, contamination, illness, and meal-related incidents are an essential part of keeping children safe at Little Lambs Nursery. The nursery recognises that food-related emergencies

demand swift, confident, and well-coordinated responses from trained staff. This section describes the actions taken during any emergency arising from meals, snacks, cooking activities, or food exposure, ensuring full compliance with the EYFS Statutory Framework (2025), the nursery's safeguarding policies, and relevant health and safety law.

All staff responsible for preparing, serving, or supervising food activities receive training in the prevention, recognition, and early management of emergency situations. Staff remain vigilant at all times, understanding that young children, particularly infants, may become unwell rapidly and that food-related risks – such as allergies, choking hazards, contamination, or illness – require immediate intervention. Clear communication, quick decision-making, and accurate documentation underpin every emergency response.

11.1 Preparing for Food-Related Emergencies

The nursery ensures that emergency preparedness is embedded across daily practice. All rooms, including the main kitchen and areas used for cooking activities, have quick access to first aid equipment, allergy medication, and emergency contact information. Staff are confident in their responsibilities and know the location of all relevant resources, including EpiPens, antihistamines, allergy care plans, and emergency inhalers.

Before each mealtime or cooking activity, staff confirm that a designated first aider is present within the room or immediately available nearby. This ensures that emergency intervention can take place without delay. Children with allergies or medical dietary needs are seated strategically to allow close supervision, and staff review care plans regularly to maintain constant awareness of each child's needs.

11.2 Responding to Allergic Reactions

Any suspected allergic reaction is treated as a medical emergency. Staff are trained to recognise early signs, which may include hives, swelling, breathing difficulties, vomiting shortly after eating, sudden lethargy, or changes in voice. If a reaction is suspected, staff follow the child's Allergy and Dietary Care Plan without hesitation. Medication is administered immediately, and emergency services are contacted by dialling 999, informing responders that a possible anaphylactic reaction is occurring.

A staff member remains with the child at all times, providing reassurance and monitoring breathing, colour, and consciousness. Emergency medication such as auto-injectors is administered in accordance with the child's plan, and staff support paramedics upon arrival by providing a clear account of the incident, actions taken, and foods consumed. Parents are notified as soon as emergency measures are underway, and a staff member accompanies the child to hospital if a parent has not yet arrived.

After an incident, managers conduct a full review of procedures, update care plans, and implement any lessons learned to prevent recurrence.

11.3 Responding to Choking Incidents

Choking is a recognised risk during mealtimes, particularly for younger children or those still developing feeding skills. Staff remain within arm's reach of infants and close proximity to all children during mealtimes. If a choking incident occurs, staff follow paediatric first aid protocols immediately.

Back blows and chest or abdominal thrusts (as age-appropriate) are administered by a trained first aider while another staff member calls 999. Staff check the mouth only if the object is clearly visible and can be removed safely. Children are monitored continuously after the obstruction is cleared to ensure there are no further complications.

Following any choking incident, parents are informed promptly, documentation is completed in full, and managers assess whether any adjustments to serving practices or food textures are required.

11.4 Responding to Suspected Food Contamination or Foodborne Illness

If staff suspect that food may be contaminated—through unusual appearance, smell, packaging damage, temperature deviation, or reports from the catering provider—the food is removed from service immediately and isolated for assessment. No food is consumed until a senior staff member has reviewed the concern.

Where a child exhibits symptoms of foodborne illness, such as vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pain, or fever, the child is removed from the meal area, comforted, and monitored while parents are contacted. Infection control procedures are followed as set out in Section 8 of the Health & Safety Policy, including cleaning, sanitisation, and exclusion periods in accordance with Public Health England guidance.

Any suspected outbreak is reported to the local authority under statutory requirements. Managers retain relevant food samples, delivery notes, and temperature records to support investigation.

11.5 Emergency Procedures During Outings

Food-related emergencies that occur during outings follow the same protocols as those within the nursery building. Staff carry children's medication, first aid supplies, allergy care plans, mobile phones, and emergency contact details at all times. Any incident that occurs off-site is managed promptly using appropriate emergency techniques, with 999 called immediately if required.

Children are returned to the nursery only once it is safe to do so, and staff ensure that all details are recorded and communicated to parents. For severe incidents, such as anaphylaxis or choking, a staff member accompanies the child to hospital while the remaining team continues to supervise other children safely.

Outings are planned with emergency preparedness in mind, including suitable staffing levels, proximity to emergency services, and safe locations for mealtimes.

11.6 Containment, Cleaning, and Infection Control After Emergency Incidents

After any food-related emergency, affected areas are cleaned and sanitised thoroughly using appropriate cleaning agents that comply with COSHH requirements. Contaminated equipment, utensils, or surfaces are removed from use until properly sanitised. Enhanced cleaning routines may be implemented temporarily to reduce the risk of cross-contamination or infection spread.

Where bodily fluids are present, staff follow the nursery's Infection Control Policy and use PPE to protect themselves and others. All affected materials are disposed of securely and in accordance with statutory waste disposal requirements.

11.7 Documentation and Post-Incident Review

Accurate documentation is essential for accountability, safeguarding, and continuous improvement. Staff record all emergency incidents on the nursery's digital system, uploading details of the event, actions taken, observations, medical treatment given, and the outcome.

Senior leadership conducts a full review of each incident to identify contributing factors, assess the adequacy of current procedures, and implement improvements. Where necessary, staff receive additional training, care plans are updated, and communication with parents is strengthened.

Managers also review related risk assessments and update them to reflect any changes in practice or identified hazards. Patterns or repeated incidents are analysed to ensure that systemic issues are addressed promptly and effectively.

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Emergency procedures relating to food safety are an indispensable part of the nursery's commitment to protecting children's health and wellbeing. Through rapid, well-coordinated responses, clear communication, and rigorous post-incident analysis, Little Lambs Nursery ensures that emergencies are managed with professionalism, compassion, and strict adherence to statutory requirements. The safety measures detailed in this section form part of the nursery's wider safeguarding and health and safety systems, ensuring that children are cared for with diligence, expertise, and unwavering attention to risk.

12. Staff Training and Competency

The safe provision, preparation, and serving of food at Little Lambs Nursery relies on the knowledge, competence, and professional judgement of trained staff. The nursery recognises that food safety is a shared responsibility across the whole team and that high-quality training underpins safe practice, effective risk management, and compliance with statutory requirements. All staff involved in food handling, meal service, cooking activities, or allergy management receive training that is current, relevant, and proportionate to their role within the setting.

Training is delivered as part of the induction programme for all new staff and is refreshed regularly to ensure that competence is maintained and that staff remain confident in carrying out food-related duties. Reflective supervision, team meetings, and ongoing professional development further strengthen staff understanding of safe food practices,

allergen control, nutrition, and emergency procedures. The commitment to staff training forms an essential part of our culture of safety, diligence, and continuous improvement.

12.1 Induction Training

Every new staff member receives comprehensive induction training before taking part in any food handling, serving, or supervision duties. This training covers the full scope of the nursery's food hygiene and safety procedures, including personal hygiene requirements, safe food storage, temperature control, cleaning and sanitisation routines, allergen awareness, infection control, and emergency procedures in the event of an allergic reaction or choking incident.

Induction training ensures that all staff understand the legal obligations under the Food Safety Act 1990, the Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013, and the EYFS Statutory Framework (2025). Staff are introduced to the nursery's systems for documenting temperature checks, managing dietary requirements, responding to food-related incidents, and maintaining accurate records using the digital Family system. They receive practical guidance on working safely within the unique context of a nursery based on a working farm, focusing on enhanced hand hygiene and the strict separation of farm activities and food-handling areas.

Staff are not permitted to prepare, serve, or supervise food until induction training is completed and signed off by a senior member of the management team.

12.2 Food Hygiene and Safety Training

To maintain a high and consistent standard of food handling, all staff involved in meal preparation, distribution, cooking activities, or infant bottle preparation receive accredited Level 2 Food Hygiene and Safety training (or equivalent). This ensures that staff understand the principles of safe food storage, preparation, cooking, cooling, and reheating; can recognise and prevent cross-contamination; and follow correct cleaning, disinfection, and sanitation protocols.

Food hygiene training is refreshed at least every three years or sooner if recommended by the awarding body or required by changes in regulation. Senior leaders monitor expiration dates and ensure that training is renewed in good time. Practical refreshers may also be delivered during staff meetings, particularly if audits identify areas for improvement.

12.3 Allergy Awareness and Emergency Response Training

Given the significant risks associated with allergies and the prevalence of dietary needs among young children, the nursery places strong emphasis on allergy management training. All staff receive comprehensive training in recognising signs of allergic reactions, preventing cross-contamination, understanding the 14 statutory allergens, and following the procedures outlined in individual Allergy and Dietary Care Plans.

Training includes practical instruction on the administration of emergency medication such as EpiPens, inhalers, antihistamines, and other prescribed treatments. Staff practise simulated scenarios so that they can respond confidently and calmly during real emergencies. This training is refreshed annually or sooner if a child with a complex or severe allergy joins the nursery.

Staff must demonstrate competence in reading labels, identifying hidden allergens, and adapting recipes or cooking activities to ensure that all children can participate safely. Cover staff and agency workers may not supervise children with allergies unless they have received a full allergy briefing from the management team.

12.4 Infant Feeding and Weaning Competency

Staff working with infants receive specialised training in infant feeding, weaning, and bottle preparation. Training includes safe handling of expressed breast milk, NHS-compliant formula preparation, sterilisation methods, responsive feeding principles, safe positioning during feeds, recognition of feeding difficulties, and the nursery's strict controls on allergen introduction.

Staff learn how to use the dedicated breast milk fridge, warm-water heating methods, cold-water sterilisation solutions, and the hygiene procedures required for preparing bottles in the private kitchen. They are trained to follow parental instructions accurately while adhering to statutory safety requirements. Competency assessments form part of the induction process for infant room staff and are reviewed regularly during supervision.

12.5 Cooking Activities, Cultural Diversity, and Curriculum Skills

Staff leading cooking activities receive additional training in planning, facilitating, and supervising safe and developmentally appropriate food-based experiences. Training covers safe use of utensils, prevention of cross-contamination, ingredient handling, age-appropriate risk assessments, and adaptation of recipes for dietary and cultural needs.

Staff also receive training in integrating cooking activities into the EYFS curriculum, supporting children's literacy, mathematics, physical development, cultural awareness, and sensory exploration. Training ensures that staff deliver cooking activities in a way that is inclusive, meaningful, and aligned with the nursery's ethos of environmental responsibility and connection to the natural world.

12.6 Farm-Specific Hygiene and Safe Practice

Because Little Lambs Nursery is situated on a working farm, all staff receive training in the specific hygiene requirements that apply to farm-based early years settings. Training covers safe movement between farm areas and the nursery building, correct handwashing protocols after animal contact, safe handling of equipment, separation of outdoor clothing and feeding environments, and the prevention of environmental contamination.

This training is refreshed regularly and forms part of the nursery's wider environmental health risk management strategy.

12.7 Ongoing Professional Development and Reflective Practice

The nursery promotes a culture of continuous learning. Managers monitor staff competency through supervision, audits, mealtime observations, and feedback. Where training needs are identified, additional support or refresher sessions are provided promptly. Staff are encouraged to reflect on their practice, share ideas, and contribute to the ongoing development of safe food routines.

Professional development opportunities may include advanced food hygiene qualifications, courses in nutrition, SEND-related feeding training, infant feeding updates, or workshops delivered by external specialists. Staff are supported to develop their skills in line with the nursery's commitment to quality and excellence.

12.8 Record Keeping, Training Logs, and Compliance Monitoring

The nursery maintains an up-to-date training matrix that records every staff member's training, expiry dates, competency assessments, and any additional qualifications relevant to food safety and allergy management. This matrix is reviewed regularly by the Manager to ensure ongoing compliance with EYFS requirements and local authority expectations.

Training records are available for inspection at any time by Ofsted, Environmental Health Officers, or other regulatory bodies. Staff understand their responsibility to complete required training on time and to comply fully with the nursery's policies and procedures.

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Staff training and competency form the foundation of safe, high-quality food provision at Little Lambs Nursery. Through rigorous induction, accredited food hygiene training, specialist allergy and infant feeding instruction, and a strong culture of reflective practice, the nursery ensures that all staff are equipped to deliver safe, inclusive, and developmentally enriching experiences. This commitment to professional excellence underpins the nursery's food safety standards and reinforces our dedication to protecting children's health and wellbeing.

13. Monitoring and Record Keeping

Effective monitoring and detailed record keeping are essential components of maintaining high standards of food hygiene, safety, nutrition, and allergen control at Little Lambs Nursery. The nursery recognises that accurate documentation not only supports regulatory compliance but also strengthens safeguarding, promotes transparency, and ensures that all children receive meals and feeding experiences that are safe, appropriate, and responsive to their individual needs. Records provide a clear audit trail for Environmental Health Officers, Ofsted, health professionals, and parents, demonstrating that the nursery's procedures are consistently applied, evaluated, and improved upon over time.

Monitoring processes form part of the nursery's quality assurance framework. They allow managers to identify trends, address shortfalls, plan staff training, and maintain a continual cycle of improvement. All staff working with food are responsible for maintaining accurate documentation in accordance with their roles, and all records are stored securely while remaining accessible to relevant personnel.

13.1 Temperature Monitoring and Food Safety Checks

Temperature control is fundamental to preventing foodborne illness and ensuring compliance with the Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013. The nursery undertakes daily temperature monitoring of fridges, freezers, and hot-holding equipment using calibrated thermometers. These checks are recorded in the kitchen temperature log, with any deviations promptly reported to management for action.

Meals delivered from external catering providers are checked immediately upon arrival for temperature compliance and packaging integrity. Staff document delivery temperatures, condition of food items, allergen information, and any discrepancies or concerns. Hot and cold food is never served unless it has remained within safe temperature ranges throughout delivery, storage, and preparation.

Information recorded during temperature checks is reviewed weekly by the Nursery Manager as part of routine monitoring and is readily available for Environmental Health inspections.

13.2 Allergen Documentation, Care Plans, and Cross-Checking Procedures

Given the high level of risk associated with food allergies, meticulous allergen record keeping is maintained. Each child with an allergy has an individualised Allergy and Dietary Care Plan that is updated regularly and shared with all relevant staff, including kitchen staff, room staff, and managers.

Before every meal, staff cross-check meals against children's dietary requirements, confirming that allergen controls have been followed and that cross-contamination risks have been eliminated. These checks are documented digitally through Family or within designated meal service logs.

Cooking activities include a record of ingredients used, adaptations for children with allergies or dietary needs, and checks completed before the activity begins. Allergen-related incidents, near misses, or errors are recorded immediately and reviewed by management to identify training or procedural improvements.

13.3 Infant Feeding, Weaning, and Bottle Preparation Records

Records relating to infant feeding are maintained with exceptional care due to the vulnerability of younger babies and the higher risks associated with formula preparation and breast milk handling. Staff record the quantity and timing of every feed, whether milk was finished or refused, the method of heating breast milk, and any observed feeding concerns. These records are shared with parents in real time through Family, alongside a daily summary.

For bottle preparation, staff document the use of boiled water, sterilisation procedures, preparation location, any issues with equipment, and the disposal of leftover milk. Weaning records detail foods offered, tolerance, textures used, developmental observations, and confirmation that no new allergens were introduced.

These records support continuity of care, ensure accuracy, and demonstrate compliance with infant feeding guidance and statutory requirements.

13.4 Cleaning, Sanitisation, and Environmental Hygiene Checks

All cleaning and sanitisation routines are recorded as part of the nursery's environmental hygiene schedule. Staff document the cleaning of food preparation areas, sanitisation of tables, washing of utensils, and the completion of daily, weekly, and deep-clean tasks.

Checklists are reviewed by management to ensure that cleaning routines remain consistent, effective, and aligned with COSHH requirements. Any failures or missed tasks are escalated immediately to the senior team for investigation.

On the working farm, enhanced cleaning records are maintained to demonstrate the clear separation between farm activity and food-handling areas. Staff record times of handwashing following farm visits and ensure that no outdoor clothing or footwear enters food preparation or serving spaces.

13.5 Cooking Activity Records

All cooking sessions include documentation of the recipe used, ingredients selected, children who participated, hygiene measures taken, and any adaptations made for children with allergies or dietary requirements. Staff also record learning outcomes, children's engagement, and any safety observations.

This documentation supports curriculum planning, allergy control, and continuous risk assessment of food-based activities.

13.6 Emergency Incident Records

All food-related emergencies, including allergic reactions, choking incidents, contamination concerns, or mealtime accidents, are documented immediately using the digital reporting system. Records include a detailed account of the incident, the actions taken by staff, medication administered, communication with emergency services, and the outcome.

The Nursery Manager reviews all emergency incident records, ensuring that follow-up actions, parent communication, and staff debriefs take place without delay. Lessons learned contribute to staff training updates and risk assessment reviews.

13.7 Staff Training, Competency Logs, and Audit Trails

Training records, competency assessments, supervision notes, and renewal dates are maintained within a comprehensive training matrix. This enables the Manager to monitor compliance with statutory training requirements, including food hygiene, allergen awareness, first aid, and infant feeding.

Internal audits of food safety, temperature logs, cooking activities, cleaning routines, and allergy control procedures take place regularly. Findings are recorded and reviewed during staff meetings, allowing the team to reflect on practice and implement improvements where needed.

13.8 Storage, Retention, and Access to Records

All records are stored securely in accordance with data protection legislation while remaining accessible to those who require them to fulfil their duties. Records relating to food safety, allergies, emergencies, and training are retained in line with statutory retention periods and local authority guidance.

Digital records stored on Famly are encrypted and backed up, ensuring confidentiality and data integrity. Paper-based documentation, such as temperature logs or cleaning schedules, is kept in secure, clearly labelled folders in the kitchen or office, accessible only to authorised staff.

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Monitoring and record keeping provide the backbone of Little Lambs Nursery's approach to safe, consistent, and high-quality food provision. Through diligent documentation, regular audits, and clear accountability structures, the nursery ensures that all procedures remain transparent, effective, and fully aligned with regulatory expectations. These systems support continuous improvement and demonstrate the meticulous standards expected within a modern, inspection-ready early years setting.

14. Communication with Families

Effective communication with families is central to the safe, inclusive, and responsive management of food, nutrition, allergies, and dietary needs at Little Lambs Nursery. We recognise that parents and carers hold essential knowledge about their child's health, preferences, cultural practices, and developmental stage, and we are committed to building strong partnerships that support children's wellbeing and enjoyment of food. This section outlines the principles and systems through which the nursery ensures open, transparent, and proactive communication with families.

Communication is delivered through a combination of daily verbal exchanges, digital updates via Famly, termly reviews, and structured meetings as required. Our approach prioritises clarity, accuracy, sensitivity, and timeliness, ensuring that parents feel confident, informed, and involved in all aspects of their child's feeding, dietary care, and food-related learning experiences.

14.1 Daily Communication and Digital Updates

The nursery uses the Family digital platform to provide real-time updates throughout the day, ensuring that parents receive immediate information regarding their child's meals, feeds, weaning foods, and any relevant observations. Staff log milk feeds, portion sizes, weaning foods offered, and children's responses to new textures or recipes. Where applicable, parents are informed of toileting patterns, hydration, appetite changes, and comfort levels during mealtimes.

At the end of each day, a detailed summary is shared via Family, consolidating key information about the child's food intake, their mood and engagement during meals, and any concerns or notable achievements. These summaries support continuity between home and nursery, enabling families to maintain consistent routines and respond promptly to any emerging needs.

14.2 Communication About Allergies, Dietary Requirements, and Medical Needs

All parents of children with allergies, intolerances, medical dietary needs, or cultural dietary restrictions receive ongoing communication from staff. Updates may include reminders to provide new medication, requests for updated written medical information, or notifications of any observed symptoms or concerns that may relate to dietary needs.

When a child joins the nursery, staff work with parents to develop a comprehensive Allergy and Dietary Care Plan, ensuring that all relevant information is documented accurately. Any proposed changes to the child's dietary needs—whether due to medical advice, developmental progress, or cultural considerations—must be shared in writing. Verbal updates alone are not accepted where medical conditions are involved.

Parents are informed immediately of any food-related incident, near miss, or reaction, and staff follow formal communication protocols to ensure accuracy, reassurance, and transparency.

14.3 Infant Feeding, Breast Milk, and Weaning Communication

Parents of infants receive detailed daily updates on feeds, including the quantity of milk consumed, feeding patterns, and observations made by staff. Where expressed breast milk is provided, staff notify parents when stock is running low, when frozen milk has been used, or if any concerns arise regarding containers, labelling, or storage.

Before any weaning foods are offered at nursery, parents and staff discuss the child's developmental readiness, established routines, and preferences. As part of the nursery's safety policy, new allergens are never introduced at nursery; parents must introduce these foods at home first and provide written confirmation before the nursery includes them. This rule is communicated clearly and consistently to support the safe introduction of new foods.

Staff communicate closely with parents about the child's progress during weaning, including their reactions to new textures, appetite variations, and any signs of feeding difficulty. This ensures a unified, supportive approach that prioritises the child's comfort and safety.

14.4 Communication About Cooking Activities and Food-Based Learning

Parents are informed in advance when cooking activities are planned, particularly where ingredients may need to be checked against allergy lists or cultural dietary requirements. Staff share information about planned recipes, learning objectives, and any adaptations that may be required to ensure full inclusion.

Following cooking activities, parents may receive photos, observations, and learning notes via Family, giving them a window into their child's experiences and supporting ongoing conversation at home. Staff welcome parental contributions, such as family recipes or cultural foods, which may be incorporated into future cooking experiences with sensitivity and safety in mind.

14.5 Communication During Outings and Special Events

Parents receive clear information regarding any outings that involve food, including details of where meals will be consumed, how food will be transported, and any adjustments made to ensure hygiene and allergy safety. Parents may also be asked to supply food for specific cultural events, picnics, or themed days, in which case detailed guidance is provided to ensure suitability, safety, and compliance with nursery policy.

Staff communicate promptly during outings if a child becomes unwell, refuses food, or experiences any food-related concern. Upon return, parents receive an update summarising the child's eating and hydration patterns during the trip.

14.6 Collaboration and Partnership with Parents

The nursery views parents as essential partners in supporting children's nutrition and well-being. Staff encourage open dialogue about children's eating habits, preferences, cultural practices, and any feeding challenges experienced at home. Parents are invited to share feedback on menus, ask questions about food preparation, and participate in termly meetings to discuss children's dietary progress.

Where children have complex needs, feeding difficulties, or medical conditions, staff work collaboratively with parents and external professionals, ensuring that communication remains clear, coordinated, and responsive. The nursery welcomes parental insight and uses this information to tailor support to each child.

14.7 Handling Concerns, Complaints, and Feedback

Parents are encouraged to raise any concerns or queries regarding the nursery's food provision, hygiene, allergy management, or feeding routines. Concerns are addressed promptly and respectfully in accordance with the nursery's Complaints Policy. Staff document the concern, the response provided, and any actions taken to ensure ongoing transparency and improvement.

Feedback from parents is highly valued and contributes to ongoing evaluation and refinement of menus, feeding routines, and educational cooking experiences.

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Effective communication with families ensures that children's dietary, medical, and cultural needs are met with accuracy, sensitivity, and consistency. Through daily digital updates, collaborative planning, proactive sharing of information, and a commitment to openness, Little Lambs Nursery fosters strong partnerships with parents and carers. These communication systems promote trust, transparency, and shared responsibility, ensuring that each child receives safe, appropriate, and nurturing food experiences aligned with their individual needs and family context.

15. Policy Review

Little Lambs Nursery is committed to maintaining policies that are accurate, up to date, and fully aligned with statutory requirements, best practice guidance, and the operational realities of the setting. This Food Hygiene & Allergy Management Policy is reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains fully compliant with the EYFS Statutory Framework (2025), food safety legislation, Environmental Health expectations, and the nursery's internal quality assurance standards.

The review process is systematic, reflective, and informed by evidence gathered from day-to-day practice, staff training, incident reports, audit outcomes, and feedback from parents, children, and external professionals. Through continuous evaluation, the nursery ensures that this policy evolves in response to emerging risks, changes in legislation, updated national guidelines, and developments in early years practice.

15.1 Review Frequency

This policy is reviewed in full at least once every twelve months. However, interim reviews take place sooner if:

- Relevant legislation or statutory guidance changes
- Environmental Health Officers issue updated requirements
- Ofsted releases new inspection frameworks or compliance expectations
- Significant incidents occur, including allergic reactions, contamination events, or repeated near misses
- The nursery makes operational changes, particularly those relating to meal provision, catering arrangements, infant feeding equipment, or farm-related hygiene controls

The Nursery Manager remains responsible for ensuring that this policy is reviewed promptly whenever such changes arise.

15.2 Responsibility for Reviewing the Policy

The Nursery Manager leads the review of this policy, working closely with senior staff, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, kitchen or catering staff, and external advisers where necessary. The review considers:

- Staff compliance with established procedures
- Outcomes from internal audits, temperature logs, cleaning records, and allergen checks
- Training updates and any emerging competency needs
- Parent feedback regarding menus, dietary management, communication, or feeding routines
- Inspection feedback from Ofsted or Environmental Health

Staff are consulted during the review to gather professional insight from those directly involved in food preparation, mealtime supervision, infant feeding, and allergy management.

15.3 Updating and Communicating Changes

Following each review, the Nursery Manager updates the policy to reflect any changes required. Once approved, staff are notified promptly, and any amendments are discussed at team meetings, supervision sessions, or in dedicated training workshops. Staff must read and acknowledge any updated versions and follow revised procedures immediately.

Where policy changes affect parents—such as updates to allergy management procedures, infant feeding instructions, or menu-related changes—these are communicated clearly through Famly, email, or printed updates. If appropriate, parents may be asked to re-confirm dietary information or resubmit medical documentation.

The updated policy is made available to parents on request and is accessible as part of the nursery's policy suite.

15.4 Record Keeping and Version Control

Version control is maintained to ensure full transparency regarding when and why changes have been made. Each version of the policy includes:

- The date of revision
- A summary of key updates
- The name and role of the staff member leading the review
- Confirmation that the Manager has approved the final document

Archived versions are retained securely in line with statutory guidance and may be reviewed during inspections or internal audits.

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Regular review and revision of this policy ensure that Little Lambs Nursery maintains the highest standards of food safety, allergy management, and nutritional care. Through evidence-based decision making, ongoing staff development, and collaboration with families and external agencies, the nursery ensures that this policy remains robust, responsive, and reflective of best practice within the early years sector. By embedding continuous improvement into policy management, Little Lambs Nursery provides children with a consistently safe, healthy, and nurturing environment at mealtimes and throughout their daily experience.

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