



The Oak Partnership

EY Reception Nutrition Policy

We are committed to safeguarding and ensuring the health, safety and well-being of all pupils in accordance with safeguarding procedures and guidance for staff outlined in the schools' Health and Safety, Child Protection, Security and Safeguarding policies.

EY Reception Nutrition Policy

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Policy Statement

At TOP Schools, we are committed to promoting children's health and wellbeing through a balanced and nutritious diet. In line with the latest Department for Education (DfE) guidance, *'Example menus for early years' settings in England'* (updated January 2024), and the Healthy Early Years guidance, we aim to provide a healthy food environment that supports children's physical development and lifelong healthy eating habits.

Nut-Free Reception

We are a strictly nut-free setting.

- No nuts or nut-based products are permitted on the premises.
- Parents and carers must ensure that packed lunches and any food brought from home are free from nuts, including hidden ingredients like peanut butter, nut oils, and chocolate spreads.
- This policy helps protect children with severe nut allergies and ensures the safety of all children and staff.

Aims

- To provide a nutritious, balanced diet for all children in our care.
- To promote positive attitudes towards healthy food choices.
- To support children's oral hygiene habits from an early age.
- To reduce the risk of choking and ensure food is safely prepared.
- To protect children with allergies through safe practices.
- To work in partnership with parents and carers to support children's health and nutrition.

Meals and Snacks Provided by the School

We offer optional Breakfast and Snack sessions at an additional cost. All food options are planned to ensure they:

- Meet government recommendations on early years' nutrition.
- Include a balance of fruits, vegetables, wholegrains, proteins, and dairy.
- Minimise processed foods high in fat, sugar, and salt.
- Are portioned appropriately for the children's ages.

Examples:

- **Breakfast:** Wholegrain cereals, porridge, fresh fruit, toast with low-sugar spreads, milk, or water.
- **Snacks:** Sandwiches with healthy fillings, vegetable sticks, hummus, yoghurts, fresh fruit platters.

All meals offered are freshly prepared, low in salt and sugar, and promote hydration through the regular availability of water.

Packed Lunches from Home

We encourage parents/carers to follow our healthy eating guidelines for packed lunches:

Recommended foods:

- Sandwiches/wraps with protein-based fillings (e.g., turkey, egg, hummus, cheese).
- Fresh fruit (e.g., sliced apple, banana, berries).
- Fresh vegetables (e.g., cucumber sticks, cherry tomatoes halved).
- Yoghurt (plain or low-sugar).
- Water or milk (no fizzy drinks or high-sugar juices).

Foods to avoid:

- Chocolate bars and sweets.
- Crisps (opt for plain rice cakes or vegetable sticks instead).
- Fizzy or sugary drinks.
- Foods high in salt, fat, or sugar.
- Any food containing nuts or nut traces.

Choking Prevention

We are committed to reducing the risk of choking as per guidance from the Food Standards Agency and DfE Early Years Nutrition documents.

High-risk foods for choking include:

- Whole grapes
- Cherry tomatoes
- Hard raw vegetables (e.g., carrots)
- Large chunks of meat or cheese
- Popcorn
- Nuts
- Hard sweets

Safe preparation methods:

- Grapes and cherry tomatoes must be sliced lengthways into quarters.
- Carrots and similar hard vegetables must be cooked until soft or grated finely.
- Meat should be served in small, manageable pieces.
- Cheese should be grated or cut into thin strips.
- No nuts are allowed on-site due to allergy and choking risks.

Staff are trained annually in paediatric first aid, including choking procedures.

Oral Hygiene

We recognise the importance of establishing good oral hygiene habits from an early age.

We support children's oral health by:

- Offering tooth-friendly snacks and avoiding sugary foods and drinks.
- Encouraging children to drink water regularly to rinse their mouths.
- Teaching children about healthy food choices that protect teeth.
- Working with parents to share information about good brushing habits at home.
- Sharing NHS-approved oral health resources with parents/carers.

Where possible, we participate in local authority oral health promotion schemes (e.g., 'Smile 4 Life').

Special Dietary Requirements and Allergy Management

We are highly aware of the serious nature of allergies and intolerances.

Procedures we follow include:

- Gathering full allergy information at registration and updating it regularly.
- Creating an Individual Health Care Plan for every child with a diagnosed allergy, in collaboration with parents/carers and relevant healthcare professionals.
- Training staff in allergy awareness, food handling, and use of emergency medication such as Epipens.
- Labelling all food prepared in school with allergen information.
- Checking all packed lunches for potential allergens each day.
- Ensuring strict no-nut policies to protect children with severe allergies.
- Prompt action planning for any allergic reactions (as outlined in our First Aid and Medical Policy).

Drinks and Hydration

- Fresh water is available to children at all times.
- Milk is offered at snack times.
- Sugary drinks are not permitted.

Partnership with Parents/Carers

We recognise that parents and carers play a vital role in supporting children's healthy eating and wellbeing. We will:

- Share our menus termly.
- Offer tips and support on nutrition, oral health, and allergy awareness through newsletters and workshops.
- Communicate any concerns about a child's eating habits sensitively and promptly.