EYFS Food policy template

The DfE Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition guidance (2025) states that it is good practice to have a food and nutrition policy in place. The policy will help you share your approach to food provision with parents and/or carers.

Not every aspect of this template will be relevant to you due to the varying different EYFS settings and different types of food provision (e.g. setting provides food, food provided by parents or a mixture of both).

This should be seen as a guide where you take and complete what is relevant for your setting.

1. **How the policy is developed**

When developing the policy have you consulted with parents/carers? Do children have the opportunity to be consulted around the food provided in the setting? Have all staff been consulted on the development of the policy?

1. **Setting approach to food and health eating**

Is your priority to have a culture around balanced and healthy food?

Do you take an approach focused on being in line with the EYFS guidance?

1. **Food and drink provision**

List when children are provided with food. Meals and snacks – what time are the typically provided. If food is provided by the setting, what kind of a meal is it? (Do they get cooked food at lunch and tea or is one of them a cold meal?).

This helps parents understand what food their child is getting and when so that they are able to balance the food they provide at home.

What access do children have to drink? Is there fresh drinking water available at all time? Are any other drinks provided at certain times?

1. **Baby feeding guidance**

If you have babies in your setting, how do you approach breast or formula feeding and weaning? Following NHS advice and EYFS guidance?

If you are producing a safer food policy, this should be included in there – so you can signpost to that. If you do not have a safer food policy this should be included in this policy.

1. **The mealtime environment**

How do you promote the social aspect of mealtimes? Do all the children sit together or in groups?

As part of the safer eating policy a member of staff should be sat with the children whilst they eat – include this and highlight both the social and safety benefits of this. (e.g. choking, allergies etc.)

1. **Celebrations and special occasions**

It is common, that for birthdays and other special occasions, parents bring cake or sweets for the child to share with the other children. This can be complicated in terms of allergies but also contradict the setting approach to healthy eating.

DfE guidance recommends that it should be suggested to parents that they bring non-edible options to celebrate such as bubbles or stickers. The guidance does also suggest food options such as fruit platters, but these would need to be defined clearly by you as a setting as to what is allowed.

Some settings have adapted ways to celebrate birthdays without involving cake – are there ways you celebrate in your setting?

It’s important to communicate these practices with parents and/or carers to ensure they are informed and involved in supporting healthy eating habits within the setting.

1. **Policy on food brought in from home**

This section will depend on whether your setting provides food for most children or whether all food is brought in by the parents. Even if you don’t currently have any children bringing food into the setting, it is still recommended that you cover this section in your policy, in case of changes or exceptions that may arise in the future.

Having a packed lunch policy can be beneficial to promote expectations for the food brought in to the setting by parents.

What expectations are you setting for parents around refrigeration and reheating food brought in from home? (Neither of these are requirements that you must provide – it is up to your discretion as a setting).

This also links back to the previous section around celebrations and special occasions which can be linked in.

How do you encourage parents to ensure food brought in from home is kept safe and fresh?

1. **Policy on commercial baby food and drink**

What is your stance on commercial baby food and drink – do you provide it in your setting? Are you happy with parents bringing it in?

The EYFS guidance states that where possible, you should prepare food during weaning from scratch and not provide pre-made foods for shops such as puree pouches

1. **Management of food allergies and dietary needs**

If you are developing a safer eating policy this should be included there, and you can signpost to it in this policy.

If you don’t have a safer eating policy, you should include this here.

What policies and procedures do you have in place for food allergies for example: communication with parents, procedure in the event of an allergic reaction, food handling and storing?

1. **Provision for cultural and dietary preferences**

For food provided by the setting, how do you adapt menus to meet these preferences?

How do you ensure the menu is suitable for every child in the setting? (Substitutions, different menus etc.).

How are cultural and dietary preferences communicated and stored in the setting, so that all staff are aware?

1. **Food safety and hygiene**

What policies and procedures do you follow to ensure food safety and hygiene?

What training do staff complete and which staff receive this training?

1. **Learning about food**

Developing lifelong positive eating habits goes beyond just providing healthy food options for the children. What opportunities do you include in the setting to teach children about food further?

Examples of this could include:

* Taking children to a shop so they can see how food is purchased
* Growing fruit/vegetable plants with children so they can see how food is produced
* Preparation and serving so they can see the food process

1. **Cooking with children**

Cooking with children is a great way to introduce them to new foods and develop their understanding of how the food they eat is made. It can also help develop their fine motor skills.

What opportunities do children have in your setting to take part in cooking? How does this align with your approach to food? (Instead of just making cakes and other similar sweet items, do they have the opportunity to try cooking savoury and healthy items?)

1. **Sustainability**

How do you promote food sustainability in your setting? For example:

* Do you provide seasonal menus to encourage a reduction in food miles?
* Is food brought locally to reduce food miles and support local?
* Is food that is not eaten composted or recycled through food waste schemes?
* Are their practices within the setting that promote the reduction of food waste?