Beechoak Farm Montessori Pre-school

Promoting health, safety and hygiene

3.11 Food Safety & Nutrition

Policy statement

We provide and serve food for children on the following basis:

Snacks.

Meals.

We are registered with the Environmental Health Department and ensure that the highest standards of food nutrition, purchase, storage, preparation and serving are met.

Nutrition

- We request that parents inform the manager of any dietary needs, including allergies at registration. This information will be rechecked with the parent on admission to Beechoak Farm.
- Should the child already be attending Beechoak Farm before the onset of the allergy, or change to dietary needs we ask parents to inform us as soon as possible.
- Children with dietary requirements will be added to the' banned food' list which will be circulated to all staff.
- We implement systems to ensure that children only receive food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and parent's wishes.
- Menus are rotated, vegetarian options are always available on days when meat is being offered.
- Menus are displayed for the information of parents.
- We provide nutritionally sound meals and snacks which promote health and reduce the risk of obesity and heart disease that may begin in childhood.
- We follow the main advice on dietary guidelines and the legal requirements for identifying food allergens when planning menus based on the four food groups:
  - meat, fish, and protein alternatives
  - milk and dairy products
  - cereals and grains
  - fresh fruit and vegetables.
- Following dietary guidelines to promote health also means taking account of guidelines to reduce risk of disease caused by unhealthy eating.
- We provide meals from different cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.
- We take care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products.

- We see snack and mealtimes as a social occasion for children and staff, encouraging them to gain confidence and independence through choice making, self-service and feeding themselves.
- We provide children with utensils that are appropriate for their ages and stages of development.
- We have fresh water available for children at all times, they are encouraged to ask for this when they require it.
- Children arriving early in the morning, and/or staying late, will be provided with an appropriate meal or snack.
- We inform parents who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in our setting.
- We give parents who provide food for their children information about suitable containers for food and encourage the contents to be healthy.
- We discourage food swapping to protect those with allergies.

General

- The person responsible for food preparation understands the information laid out in Safer Food Better Business.
- All our staff who are involved in the preparation and handling of food have received training in food hygiene.
- The cook has undertaken the Food Allergy Online Training.
- Kelly Theobald and Julie Quegan are the people responsible for food preparation and carries out daily opening and closing checks to ensure that high standards are met, e.g. temperatures and dates are checked regularly, waste is disposed of daily etc

Purchasing and storing food

- Food is delivered by reputable suppliers and cooked on the premises.
- Parents are requested not to bring in food, unless preorganised with the manager.
- Bulk buy is avoided where food may go out of date before use.
- All opened dried food stuffs are stored in airtight containers.
- Dried packaged food is not decanted from packaging into large bins or containers as this prevents monitoring of sell by/use by dates and allergen information.
- Food is regularly checked for sell by/use by dates and any expired items are discarded.
- Bottles and jars are cleaned before returning to the cupboards.
- Items are not stored on the floor; floors are kept clear so they can be easily swept.
- Perishable foods such as dairy produce, meat and fish are to be used the next/same day. Soft fruit and easily perishable vegetables are kept in the fridge at 1- 5 Celsius.
- Packaged frozen food should be used by use by dates.

- Food left over should not be frozen.
- Freezer containers should be labelled, dated and used within 1-3 months.
- Fridge and freezer thermometers should be in place. Recommended temperatures for fridge 37 degrees Fahrenheit (3 degrees Celsius), and freezers 0 degrees Fahrenheit (-18 degrees Celsius). Temperatures must be checked and recorded daily to ensure correct temperatures are being maintained.
- Freezers are defrosted every 3 months or according to the manufacturer's instructions if required.
- Meat/fish is stored on lower shelves and in drip-free dishes.
- Fruit and vegetables stored in the fridge are washed thoroughly before refrigeration to reduce risk of pests and E.coli contamination.
- Staff's own food or drink should be kept in a separate designated fridge; in the staff room.
- Items in fridges must be regularly checked to ensure they are not past use by dates.

Preparation of food

- Food handlers must check the content of food/packets to ensure they do not contain allergens.
- Food allergens must be identified on the menus and displayed for parents.
- Food handlers wash hands and cover any cuts or abrasions before handling food.
- Separate boards and knives are used for chopping food, usually colour coded.
- Raw and cooked foods are prepared separately.
- Meat and fish should be washed and patted dry with paper towels. This does not include chicken which must not be washed because of the risk of campylobacter.
- All vegetables and fruit are washed before preparing.
- Food left out is covered, for example when cooling down.
- Frozen meat, fish and prepared foods are thawed properly before cooking.
- Meat and fish are cooked thoroughly; a food probe is to be used to check temperature of roasted meat or baked meat products.
- Where a microwave is used, food is cooked according to manufacturer's instructions. Microwaved food is left to stand for a few minutes before serving.
- A food probe is used to check temperature of food, including where heated in a microwave; it is checked in a number of places to avoid 'hot spots'.
- Food is cooked in time for serving and is not prepared in advance of serving times.

- Potatoes and vegetables are peeled when needed, not in advance and left in water.
- Food cooked for vegetarians does not come into contact with meat or fish or products.
- Food cooked and prepared for children with specific dietary needs is cooked in separate pans and served separately.
- Food prepared for children with dietary needs and preferences is clearly labelled and every effort is made to prevent cross-contamination.
- Raw eggs are not to be given in any form, such as mousse or mayonnaise.

Serving Food

- Food is served for children in separate covered containers for each table.
- Staff risk assess the likelihood of children with dietary restrictions accessing the food of other children and must take appropriate action to prevent this from happening, for example:
  - check the list of children's dietary requirements displayed in the dining room
  - Ensuring they have the correct coloured plate
- Children with allergies/food preferences are not made to feel 'singled out' by the methods used to manage their allergy/food preference.
- Food served to children with identified allergies is checked by the key person/ back up key person to ensure that the meal (and its ingredients) does not contain any of the allergens for that child.
- All staff hold a paediatric first aid certificate and are trained and competent to deal with choking should an event arise.
- The child's key person/ back up key person remains present throughout the child's mealtime. Children are within sight and hearing of at least one adult at all times whilst eating. Adults sit with children during mealtimes and are alert to any possible signs of choking or allergic reaction. Adults working with children are aware that choking events can be completely silent.
- Any episodes of choking that requires intervention will be recorded. We will share details of where and how the child choked with parents and/ or carers. These records would be reviewed for trends/ common features and addressed to reduce the risk of choking.
- Food is taken from the kitchen to the dining rooms on a trolley, not carried across rooms.
- Tables are cleaned before and after.
- Members of staff serving food wash their hands and cover any cuts with a blue plaster.

E.coli prevention

Staff who are preparing and handling food, especially food that is not pre-prepared for consumption e.g. fruit and vegetables grown on the premises, must be aware of the potential spread of E.coli and must clean and store food in accordance with the E.coli 0157 guidance, available at:

- If we are informed that an adult or child if suffering from food poisoning we will asked it to be confirmed by their GP. If it is confirmed and it seems possible that the source of the outbreak is within the setting the manager will report it to the Environmental Health Department. All members of staff at Beechoak Farm will comply with any investigation.
- We follow the 48 hour rule of absence from work if anyone has vomiting or diarrhoea.
- We notify Ofsted as soon as reasonably practicable of any confirmed cases of food poisoning affecting two or more children looked after on the premises, and always within 14 days of the incident.

This policy was adopted by staff at Beechoak Farm Montessori preschool.

Held on 2nd December 2025

Date to be reviewed December 2026

Signed on behalf of Beechoak Farm Montessori by

Charlotte Muggleton & Hayley Majeika

Proprietor Manager