

Healthy Eating Policy

Procedure Version	Version 14
Related Policy & Forms	Allergy Policy, Hand Washing Policy, Active Supervision Policy, Partnership with Parents & Families Policy
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Date Reviewed	October 2022
Responsible for Implementation	All Staff
Staff Involved	Head of Catering, Chefs in each centre, Management & EYE's
Date for Next Review	January 2024
Person responsible for review	Policy & Procedure review team

Part 1 Policy

Regulation 22- Food and Drink states early years services must ensure that all children attending the service receive a nutritious and varied diet, which takes their individual needs and preferences into consideration. At Park Academy Childcare we offer a comprehensive daily menu. Our weekly menu plan provides children with a variety of foods. Meals are nutritious, well balanced and varied. All meals are prepared and served by trained chefs in strict accordance with the HACCP Food Safety System. We cater for children with different preferences and needs with regards to allergies, requirements, and religious preferences. Our menu is changed daily and works on a three-week rotation. We promote a positive attitude towards food and nutrition and our meat is traceable to its source.

Part 2 Procedures

- All meals are prepared and served by trained chefs in strict accordance with the HACCP Food Safety System and served no more than 3 hours apart.





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- Food and portion sizes are appropriate to the ages, development and needs of the children. Our serving portions are in line with the recommendations from Safe Food Ireland.
- All main meals will consist of protein, carbohydrates, dairy, vegetables and iron. The chefs will follow the recommended guidelines from the 'Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Preschool Services'. If changes are made to the menu on a particular day for any reason this will be communicated to parents/ guardians on drop off or collection.
- Staff involved in food handling and serving are trained in basic food hygiene.
- Ingredients are purchased fresh where possible and from reputable, traceable suppliers.
- Children have access to fresh drinking water throughout the day. Drinking water provided for children under the age of one will be boiled and cooled before consumption.
- Healthy snacks are provided between meals to all children ensuring that children are not hungry throughout the day.
- All dairy items are of the full fat variety.
- Foods are free of added salt and reduced sugar.
- Weekly menus are displayed on our notice boards.
- Special dietary requirements or cultural preferences may be catered for and all staff members are aware of these requirements through the allergy and preference lists, which are updated on a monthly basis.
- Children are encouraged to try a variety of food tastes and textures.
- Staff sit with the children during mealtimes and promote the development of social interactions and encourage good eating practices. Staff will supervise all mealtimes along with water breaks.
- Parents are encouraged to offer suggestions for menu improvement.
- It is prohibited to send in sweets, crisps or fizzy drinks.
- Parents will be notified if there are concerns relating to their child's eating and if they have not eaten their meals for the day. This will be done in person and through the app. A Guidance Support Plan will be developed if necessary.
- In the event of a child not eating a meal an alternative option must be offered to the child. The kitchen is stocked with different foods that can be offered to the children in this occurrence. If a child is offered an alternative, this should be done after the main mealtime.
- Healthy eating suggestions will be given out to ECCE parents to support them to give their children healthy food options. Parents/Guardians will be informed if the food they are sending into the service for their child is not appropriate in line with this policy.



Food Allergies and Food Intolerances (including coeliac disease):

Staff must be made aware if any of the children have any allergies or intolerances including but not limited to:

- Peanuts and tree nuts
- Wheat (gluten)
- Sesame seeds
- Fish and shellfish
- Dairy products
- Eggs
- Soya

Any of the 14 legislated food allergens used in the service food will be noted on the menu board to inform Parents/Guardians.

Food Allergy Prevention Measures:

Care will be taken to prevent accidental consumption of foods to which a child may be allergic or intolerant. Park Academy Childcare will (where possible) exclude food products if a child has a severe allergy.

- A child-specific written allergy/intolerance list will be available. A chart will be kept in each room, main kitchen and office with the name/photo of the child and the allergy type.
- When preparing food for the food allergic/intolerant child, great care will be taken to prevent any contamination with the food allergen they have to avoid.
- Parents/Guardians will be asked to provide up-to-date emergency and relieving medication (e.g., adrenaline auto injectors such as EpiPen/Anapen/Jext) that will be appropriately stored and always available.
- Staff will be trained in their use and what to do in the event of a severe allergic reaction. All care elements will apply when the allergic/intolerant child is taken on any excursion from the early childcare setting.



Bottle and Breast Feeding

- Parents will make the decision with regards to whether their child is breast fed or bottle fed, when their child is ready to move to cows' milk and when their child will have dietary changes made. We encourage Parents and EYEs to collaborate when making decisions regarding the child.
- Infants will be held upright for bottle feeding; bottles will never be propped up. Bottle feeding will be seen as a time to build warm, nurturing relationships between the baby and adult.
- Mothers will be provided with a comfortable place to support breastfeeding.
- Formula feeds for infants will be provided by parents and ready to use. Staff will not make up formula feeds. This is in line with the FSAI's Bottle Feeding Safely guide available at [HPM00481.pdf \(healthpromotion.ie\)](#).
- Breast milk and formula bottles will be labelled and stored in a fridge.
- Bottles will be warmed using a bottle warmer or by standing the feed in warm water for no more than 15 minutes. Microwaves will not be used.

Storage and Preparation of Food

- It is the intention of Park Academy Childcare that all food is prepared and cooked to the highest standards. We use the FSAI Safe Catering book to guide us.
- Codes of practice are in place in the kitchens, for example the use of colour codes for cleaning cloths and separate colour coded chopping boards.
- Everything is done to eliminate the risk of cross contamination, for example keeping different food types separate.
- Dry non chilled food is removed from any excess external wrapping or packaging and stored appropriately above the ground on shelves or in a designated cupboard.
- Any open and partially unused food is to be sealed with a clip or wrapped in cling film and the date of opening to be clearly marked.



- Chilled food is stored in the appropriate area of the fridge. Raw meat and eggs are stored on the lowest part of the fridge and ready to eat foods are stored on higher shelves. The fridge is kept at a suitable temperature of between 0 and 5 degrees Celsius.
- Frozen food or food to be frozen is stored in the freezer. The freezer is kept at a suitable temperature of no higher than -18 degrees Celsius.
- All food storage areas are cleaned and sanitized regularly. Freezers are defrosted regularly.

Preparation of Fruit and Snack

Procedure on preparing fruit and snack:

- When preparing fruit and snack for the children the allergy list must be adhered to and the age group of the children must be taken into consideration.
- All skin must be removed from apples and oranges for the children under 2 years of age. If you feel that any child over this age is not able to eat the fruit with the skin on it, please remove before giving it to the child.
- Grapes must be cut in half lengthways and not given to the children whole as they can be swallowed easily without being chewed first.
- All fruit/food must be sliced so as the children can hold it and chew it themselves rather than chopped into small pieces.
- Snacks must be age appropriate, if staff feel that a child has difficulty eating a certain type of food, please speak with the parent and chef.

Birthday Cakes

- Our chefs will provide birthday cakes for each child that are suitable for all allergies.
- The Team Leader of the child's room will inform the chef of all birthdays at the beginning of each month.
- If a child has an allergy, this will also be noted, and the chef will be made aware.
- The chef will provide the cake to the room and the children will decorate it.
- Parents are not permitted to bring in any food for parties, the children will bake their own treats.



Food Going Home

- It is the policy of Park Academy Childcare not to send food home with the children. This is due to the strict guidelines and policies set up by HACCP and HSE in relation to good food and hygiene practices. If a parent arrives during mealtimes, they will be invited to wait in the reception area to allow their child time to finish their meal in their classroom.

Internal Calibration of Probes

Internal Calibration of Probes is carried out by the catering manager. To check the accuracy of a temperature probe: (Reference 3.4, 3.4.3 NSAI Hygiene in the catering sector, Irish Standard I.S. 340:2007)

- Prepare a mixture of ice slush.
- Immerse the probes in the mixture.
- Take the readings when stabilised.
- The reading should be between -0.5 - + 0.5 degrees Celsius.
- Immerse the probe in boiling water.
- Take the reading when stabilised.
- The reading should be between +99.5 - +100.5 degrees Celsius.
- These checks will identify any drift in the thermometer at the two ends of the scale. An accuracy check should also be carried out in the event that someone suspects that a reading is not correct or if the temperature probe has been damaged in any way. Food temperature probes should be calibrated every 6 months. A record of this is to be kept in the "Safe Catering" folder. The main kitchen food temperature probe is calibrated externally by an approved calibration laboratory.
- In the event that the accuracy checks identify that the temperature probe is no longer correct, it shall be removed from use and replaced by a calibrated probe.

Delivering Food to the Rooms

- All food prepared by the chef must be delivered to the rooms by the chef. When the food arrives to the room, the time must be recorded on the Daily Food Temperature Chart by the chef and witnessed by a staff member of that room.



- The chef will not enter the room, they will be greeted at the door by a staff member where temperatures will be checked, and documentation signed. The staff member will take the delivery container from the trolley to the kitchenette. The staff member will sanitize the delivery container and return it to the trolley. The food must be probed, and temperature recorded on the Food Temperature Check Sheet.
- The food probe must be cleaned by a sterile wipe after probing.
- If the temperature reads over 60 degrees Celsius then it is too hot to serve to the children and must be cooled down.
- Food should be served to the children between 50-60 degrees Celsius.
- Record the temperature of the food at the time of service.
- If a baby is asleep when dinner/tea is served the meal will be hot held in the kitchen, in line with food safety guidelines.
- When probing the food, the temperature **MUST ALWAYS** be witnessed. Food must be consumed within 75 minutes of delivery to the room.

Transportation of food between centres

The following steps are to be completed each time a food delivery is made between centres.

- Once the food is ready for collection the chef and the person responsible for delivering the food liaise to organise collection of the food, the food is placed in an insulated box by the chef.
- The chef will ensure that all items of food are at the appropriate temperature of above 64 degrees, and are in sealed containers, which are then placed in insulated boxes, and that all food safety paperwork is filled in and included with the delivery.
- The chef will leave the insulated box at the front door of the creche. The delivery person can then take it to the destination.
- Once at the destination the person delivering the food will contact the creche to inform them that the food is ready for collection from the designated point or deliver the food to each room (BSQ).
- Clean boxes and containers from previous deliveries are collected and returned at this time.



- Any additional items required from the kitchen are to be ordered in advance and are included in the delivery.





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