



Food and Drink Policy

Maple Tree Nursery & Pre-School is committed to providing healthy, nutritious, balanced and tasty food and drinks for all children during their time at nursery. The management and staff will make every effort to ensure that food and drink is safely prepared and sensitive to the dietary, religious and cultural requirements of all the children.

Before a child is admitted to our nursery, we will obtain information about the child's dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies that the child has and any special health requirements. Maple Tree Nursery & Pre-School records act on any information from parents and carers about a child's dietary needs.

As part of a child's settling in period, Maple Tree Nursery & Pre-School requires that the parents and carers complete the Admissions Form, including information about any special dietary requirements or allergies the child suffers from, along with their food and drink preferences. The management and staff will ensure that food and drink offered to children takes account of this information so as to safeguard their health and meet as far as possible the individual child's particular needs and food preferences.

The management and staff are mindful of their responsibilities and obligations under the Food Safety Act 1990. Maple Tree Nursery & Pre-School is registered with the local authority to provide food. All staff who either handle or prepare food have up to date Food Handling Certificates (Food Hygiene) and are fully trained in food storage, preparation, and cooking and food safety.

Ingredients and Preparation

When preparing food and drink, our staff will be mindful of the provisions of the hygiene policy so as to ensure that the safety of staff and children is paramount. In addition to these provisions, staff will be careful to ensure both the safety of themselves and children when using sharp or dangerous equipment in food and drink preparation is out of reach for young children.

Maple Tree Nursery & Pre-School ensure that food provided for children agrees with the most recent nutritional guidelines. It is not enough to assume that food provided is 'healthy'. We ensure that children are getting the essential nutrients they need to grow, and none of the excesses in salt, saturated fat and sugar. Maple Tree Nursery & Pre-School aim to make sure that the best ingredients are used. Where possible the nursery will use delicious food items that are fresh, locally sourced, and seasonal.

Our staff are trained to understand the specific dietary requirements of children at different ages, and to help children learn and understand what food is good for them.

Healthy Eating

Maple Tree Nursery & Pre-School recognises the importance of healthy eating and a balanced and nutritious diet. Because of this, our nursery will endeavour to make a variety of foods available including; meat, vegetarian and vegan options, plenty of fruit and low fat and low sugary food.

Sandwiches will either be made using either brown or white bread, depending on a child's preference. Each child's dietary requirements are ascertained before the child starts attending our nursery. If the child has specific dietary requirements these are discussed with the parents/carers and the management, menus will be prepared accordingly for the individual child or where we cannot provide sufficient meals for an individual child. Parents/carers will be requested to provide their child with a packed lunch.

Any specific allergies or requirements will be displayed on a list on the staff notice board. It is the key person's responsibility to ensure these lists are kept up-to-date. Food served does not contain nuts, to protect children who may be allergic to nuts.

Maple Tree Nursery & Pre-School will not provide sweets for children and will avoid excessive amounts of fatty or sugary foods. Our nursery will provide a choice of non-sugary drinks and make sure that fresh drinking water is available at all times.

No child will ever be forced to eat or drink something against their will and the withholding or granting of food and drink will never be used as either a punishment or reward.



Food for Life Award

Maple Tree Nursery will be taking part in the Food for Life Early Years Award. This is a great way to demonstrate that our nursery is giving every child in our care the best possible start to their food journey. The award will help us to ensure that we are providing tasty, nutritious meals in our nursery, that creates great social skills and food knowledge to every child. It will encourage good food habits for life through practical cooking and growing activities and food-based learning for staff, children and parents/carers. The award has been developed and commissioned by Walsall Local Authority Early Years Dept.

BEING AWARDED WILL HELP US TO:

1. Demonstrate we're giving children the best possible start
2. Show parents that healthy food and healthy behaviours are important to every child.
3. Be a nursery of good food practice; through meeting wider guidelines around early years nutrition.
4. Provide evidence for Ofsted that you are meeting the Common Inspection Framework requirement to support children to keep themselves healthy and more.

Packed Lunch

Should parents wish to provide a packed lunch for their child, they will be responsible for ensuring the contents are appropriate and safe for them to eat. We will not take responsibility for any food provided by parents, should an allergic reaction occur.

We are a vegetarian nursery who are proud to be part of 'Food for Life'. We also have a lot of children with serious allergies on site, as such, we have strict guidelines around approved foods to ensure everyone is kept safe.

We follow guidance from our 'Food for Life' team and also the Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance, please see the link below.

[Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance](#)

It's important to start your child on a healthy eating journey from the moment they are born, this will ensure they grow up as strong and healthy as they can possibly be, and allow them to make healthy choices for themselves as they grow older.

Mealtimes

Maple Tree Nursery & Pre-School realises that mealtimes should be a happy, social occasion for both children and staff, and we aim to ensure that children's knowledge, experience and relationships with food are always positive.

Care is taken to ensure that food is well presented, is varied, and features different colours and textures to appeal to children and expand their plates. We want mealtimes to be fun, and provide tablecloths, use real crockery with older children and allow more time for eating. This helps to mark the occasion as different from other uses of the table, and to make the experience a happy one. Children and adults will always wash their hands before eating and then sit together in small groups.

Everything needed for the meal is within reach of staff so that movement of staff is kept to a minimum during the meal. Staff will, where possible eat with their key children, to set a good examples of table manners and discussion, and for the adult and child's enjoyment and social interaction.

Older children will be encouraged to help lay the table and take turns to be waiters and waitresses for the day, serving bowls of food will be put on the tables so that the older children can help themselves and make choices, this all helps to develop hand to eye co-ordination and encourages independence and helps children to make decisions regarding quantities.

Learning with food

Food can be the basis of so many fun activities in nurseries, not just cooking. At Maple Tree Nursery & Pre-School we have many food centred activities, which are a good way of introducing children to new types of food before they are presented to them. Food plays a part in counting and maths, science, dance, art and many more activities.

Children are educated about healthy eating, and children love to learn about the origins of the food that they eat. Children gain a sense of nature and learn about where food comes from; learning that food is grown in the ground rather than simply bought in plastic packets from the supermarket.

Cultural and Religious Diversity

Maple Tree Nursery & Pre-School and its staff are committed to embracing the cultural and religious diversity of the families who use our services. The nursery staff will work with parents/carers to ensure that any particular dietary requirements are met.

Our nursery is also keen to help introduce children to different religious and cultural festivals and events through different types of food, drink, cooking and baking sessions.

Parental Involvement and Feedback

Maple Tree Nursery & Pre-School realise that parental and family involvement is key to making sure that children have healthy and happy lifestyles. We display menus and listen to parent's views regarding menus in our parent questionnaires. Maple Tree Nursery & Pre-School actively welcomes parents' feedback as they are intricately involved in the eating lives of their children, where possible menus or individual meals can be adapted.

This policy has been reviewed and adopted by management in **March 2026**. This policy is due for review **March 2027**.



Hygiene Policy

Our setting recognises the importance of maintaining the highest possible standards of hygiene in and around the premises to minimise the risks posed to children, staff and other visitors.

The management and staff are committed to taking all practicable steps to prevent and control the spread of infectious germs, and to uphold high standards of personal hygiene in order to minimise the risk of catching or spreading infections.

Personal Hygiene

In all circumstances, staff will adhere to the following examples of good personal hygiene:

- Maintaining their own personal hygiene routines daily.
- Use of deodorants to minimise body odour.
- Ensuring that uniform/work wear is clean, ironed and presentable.
- Washing hands before and after handling food or drink.
- Washing hands after using the toilet.
- Encouraging children to adopt these same routines.
- Covering cuts and abrasions with suitable plasters while at the premises.
- Keeping long hair tied back.
- Taking any other steps that are likely to minimise the spread of infections.

Hygiene in the setting

The management and all staff will be vigilant to any potential threats to good hygiene in the setting. To this end, a generally clean and tidy environment will always be maintained. More specifically, the designated staff (domestic staff **Kate**) will ensure that toilets are cleaned daily and that there is always an adequate supply of soap and hand drying facilities for both staff and children. Staff will also be vigilant to any sharp or unusual objects, such as glass etc, which may be on or around the premises are removed immediately.

Dealing with Spillages

Spillages of substances likely to result in the spread of infections will be dealt with rapidly and carefully. Blood, vomit, urine and faeces will be cleaned up immediately and disposed of safely and hygienically. Staff will wear disposable plastic gloves and an apron while using cleaning agents or disinfectant solution and wash their hands thoroughly afterwards (good handwashing routine). Children will be kept clear while such spillages and substances are being dealt with.

First Aid and Hygiene

Further to the provisions set out in the Health, Illness and Emergency policy, All staff are Paediatric First trained as good practice, any new staff are usually booked onto training within the first three months of joining our team. First Aider's will be mindful of the need to observe the highest standards hygiene when administering any treatment to children. As such, they will use disposable gloves to protect themselves. In such cases where disposable gloves maybe, unavailable staff must wash their

hands thoroughly both before and after giving first aid or use anti-bacterial hand cleaner e.g. if on outings with the children. The staff will ensure that any cuts, wounds or skin damage are covered by coloured plasters or disposable gloves.

Kitchen Hygiene

All areas where food and drink are stored, prepared and eaten are prone to the spread of infections. Therefore, our staff are particularly careful to observe high standards of hygiene in such instances. To this end the following steps will be taken:

- Waste will be disposed of safely and all bins will be kept covered.
- Food storage facilities will be regularly and thoroughly cleaned.
- Kitchen equipment will be thoroughly cleaned after every use.
- Staff and children will wash and dry their hands thoroughly before coming into contact with food.
- If cooking is done as an activity, all surfaces and equipment involved will be thoroughly cleaned before and after the session.

Additionally, staff will be aware of the provisions set out in the Food and Drink policy when handling, preparing, cooking and serving food or drink at the setting.

Animals

Nursery pets will only be allowed onto the premises, by arrangement with the management team.

No animal will be allowed onto the premises without the prior knowledge and permission of the nursery manager/deputy e.g. guide dogs. Children are strongly discouraged from bringing pets or other animals to the setting, and parents/carers are asked to help enforce this rule. If for any reason an animal does come onto the premises, the site manager and management team will be immediately informed.

This policy has been reviewed and adopted by management in **March 2026**. This policy is due for review **March 2027**.