



LSF Healthy Food Guidance For Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS 2026)

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1. Guidance Statement

Loughborough Schools Foundation is committed to promoting the health and welfare of children in our care. We recognise that early years (0-5 years) are a crucial time for establishing positive eating habits, supporting healthy growth and development and reducing health inequalities. In line with the EYFS requirement that “where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, these must be healthy, balanced and nutritious”, we aim to provide and promote food and drink which meets this standard, guided by the DfE’s September 2026 nutrition guidance.

We aim to ensure that:

- meals, snacks and drinks provided by LSF follow current guidance unless there is a good reason not to: see exemptions (section 10).
- Staff, parents, and carers are informed about, and actively support, this guidance through clear communication with parents and comprehensive staff training.
- all catering and EYFS staff support children’s health, oral health, enjoyment of food, developing independence and positive attitudes to eating.

2. The Legislation

From September 2026, EYFS nutrition guidance (England) is included as a new requirement in the safeguarding and welfare requirements of EYFS children. This means education providers must take this guidance into account and should follow it unless there is good reason not to. The EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements are given legal force by Regulations made under section 39(1)(b) of the Childcare Act 2006.

3. Our Aims

The LSF community aims to:

- Provide nutritious, balanced meals and snacks that support children’s growth, development and overall well-being.
- Ensure children are offered a wide variety of foods, flavours and textures to support healthy eating habits for life.
- Promote appropriate portion sizes, aligned with each child’s age and developmental stage.
- Encourage children to drink plenty of fluids (water and milk) and reduce sugary drinks/snacks.
- Meet the needs of children with allergies, intolerances, specific dietary requirements, cultural or faith-based diets and children with additional support needs.
- Seek to work in partnership with parents and carers to support healthy eating at home and in the snacks and packed lunch they provide.
- Be cost-effective and sustainable in our food provision, promoting local and seasonal produce where possible.

4. Scope

These guidelines cover:

- All meals, snacks and drinks provided **directly** by LSF to our EYFS pupils, including food and drink provided for special occasions, Sports activities and outings.
- It does not cover food and drink provided by parents or carers for their child at school, e.g. packed lunches and snacks from home (see section 5.2)
 - Note: The Nursery provides all foods and snacks for each child and does not permit food or drink brought in by parents or carers.

5. Food & Drink Provision

5.1 Meals and Snacks

- LSF will ensure that all foods offered contribute to each child’s nutritional and energy needs, without being excessive.

- Menus will reflect the four main food groups as set out in the guidance for children aged 1-5 years: e.g., starchy foods, fruit & vegetables, dairy / dairy alternatives, protein sources.
- Portion sizes will be age-appropriate and adjusted according to each child's appetite and developmental stage.
- LSF will limit foods high in sugar, salt and saturated fat. The "traffic-light" framework in the guidance will be used as a reference.
- LSF will use wholegrain and less refined starchy foods where appropriate.
- Snacks provided by LSF will include fruits, vegetables, plain dairy or whole-grain items limiting, but not eradicating, sweets, cakes or sugar-rich foods.
- Water will be freely available to all children throughout the day; milk will be offered at appropriate times. Sugary drinks will be avoided unless for specific dietary or medical reasons.
- LSF will follow safe weaning guidance for children aged 0-12 months within LSF Nursery, ensuring graded textures and progression as children develop.

5.2 Packed Lunches & Food from Home (excluding the Nursery)

- Parents and carers will be provided with guidance on healthy lunch boxes and snacks; what to include, what to limit.
- LSF reserves the right to ask parents and carers to adjust food brought in if it does not align with this policy or is not safe (e.g., high sugar/salt, allergen issues).
- Birthday or celebration treats: LSF does not permit parents and carers to send in any sweet treats to share with the class.

5.3 Menu Planning and Review

- We will plan menus on a 3-weekly basis to ensure variety, balance, seasonality and cost-effectiveness.
- Menus will be displayed for parents and carers on the Schools' website, in the weekly newsletter and locally within the School environs.
- LSF Catering Managers and Nursery Manager will review their respective menus at least once per term and monitor children's preferences, wastage, portion sizes, cost and nutritional balance: menus will be adjusted based on the information gathered.
- Staff and caterers will receive training, or briefing, on nutrition guidance and its practical application.

6. Allergies, Intolerances & Special Diets

- LSF Medical and Admissions teams will keep up-to-date information on all children's allergies, intolerances, cultural or religious dietary needs or additional support needs: this information will be shared, appropriately, with the Catering Managers, Support Manager, Nursery Manager and relevant staff.
- At initial admission, and at Key Stage changes, both the Medical Team and the Catering Team will assess if an individual diet can still be safely managed within the catering department. Removal from LSF Lunch and/or Wrap Around care meals will be used only in extreme cases, usually associated with, but not exclusive to, a pupil with multiple, complicated dietary restrictions.
- LSF will follow safe food handling, storage and preparation procedures to avoid cross-contamination within our kitchens, dining rooms, classrooms and play areas.

7. Oral Health

- LSF recognise that good nutrition supports good oral health. We will limit sugary snacks and drinks, promote water and milk, and encourage tooth-friendly eating practices.
- LSF will work with parents, carers and children to promote positive oral health messages and integrate these into our curriculum and daily routines.

8. Involvement of parents, carers & staff

- LSF will involve children (as appropriate) in food choices through our School Councils. We will encourage taste-tests, support growing and cooking activities and include discussions about healthy eating within the curriculum and classroom to build positive food attitudes.
- Parents and carers will be provided with information about what constitutes healthy eating for young children and we will encourage consistency between home, Nursery and School.
- Staff will have access to training and resources to enable them to implement this guidance confidently and effectively.

9. Supervision & Curriculum based activities

- LSF aim to ensure EYFS children are supervised while eating, providing appropriate staffing ratios and awareness of choking risks for all EYFS staff.
- LSF aim to ensure curriculum based food activities (cooking, tasting, growing) will be planned with risk assessments in place and with hygiene and allergy considerations built in, allowing children with special diets to be supported and have access to the same range of activities (with adaptations) as their peers, wherever possible.

10.Exemptions: Special occasions

- On special occasions, celebrations and outings (including Forest School), LSF will allow exceptions to the guidelines listed within this document. Parents and Carers will be given prior notification of the special event and will have the option to provide an alternative snack for their child.
- Outings: Packed lunches or snacks provided for Sport Day and physical activities will likewise be adapted to offer the children a nutritious option whilst ensuring appropriate energy levels for the activity they are engaged in.

11.Monitoring, Reviewing and Governance

- The Head of Catering, Commercial & Services is responsible for ensuring this guidance is implemented, monitored and reviewed.
- LSF will keep records of menu planning cycles, food waste, preferences, allergies/special diets, staff training and review as appropriate throughout the academic year.
- LSF will update the EYFS Healthy Food guidelines in line with recommended changes to government guidance, UK legislation and local authority advice.

12.Implementation

- This guidance will be included in the LSF Nursery and Early Years staff induction and training programme.
- This guidance will be shared with all staff via the relevant school dashboard and parents and carers will be made aware of its contents on the Schools' website, following an initial introduction through the weekly newsletter.
- The Catering Managers and Nursery Manager will ensure the Catering staff are supported with menu planning training, appropriate portion sizes and healthy snack ideas.
- The Medical and Admissions Teams will provide up-dated allergy and special diet checklists, on a termly basis or as a child's requirements change.
- LSF will communicate with new parents and carers as part of admissions, ensuring their understanding of the requirements for food from home and special day exemptions as well as discussion on children with multiple or complex dietary restrictions.

13. References & attachments

- Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance (DfE, April 2025) – full guidance for children aged 0-5 years. [dera.ioe.ac.uk+1](https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/11455/1/early-years-nutrition-guidance-2025.pdf)
- “Help for Early Years Providers – Nutrition” online resource from DfE. help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk

Local authority updates on the changes to EYFS nutrition from September 2025.

Attachments

1. The Eatwell Guide - NHS
 - <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-guidelines-and-food-labels/the-eatwell-guide/>
2. Food labels - NHS
 - <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-guidelines-and-food-labels/how-to-read-food-labels/>
3. Fairfield Packed Lunch Policy
 - https://loughboroughschools.sharepoint.com/sites/LSFCatering-JOYSSTUFF/Shared%20Documents/-%20Joy%20Johnstone/Policies_Compliant/Healthy%20Food/EYFS%20guideline%20policy%202025/2026%20FFD%20Healthy%20Packed%20Lunch%20policy.pdf
4. Fairfield Kindergarten & Early Years weekly menu cycle
5. LSF Allergen, Intolerance & religious requirement policy (Catering) 2026
 - [C:\Users\lesjohnj\OneDrive - The Loughborough Schools Foundation\Joy Johnstone\Policies_Compliant\Allergen policy\LSF Food Allergen, intolerance and religious requirement policy \(catering\) v4.pdf](C:\Users\lesjohnj\OneDrive - The Loughborough Schools Foundation\Joy Johnstone\Policies_Compliant\Allergen policy\LSF Food Allergen, intolerance and religious requirement policy (catering) v4.pdf)
6. Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance
 - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a5f8e4fb00f3323bf1a23a1/EYFS_group_and_school_based_from_September_2026.pdf