

Essex Wildlife Trust

Nature Nursery: Food Hygiene and Preparation Policy and Procedure

A policy describes what we do and how we do it as an organisation. It is a set of agreed principles which set out a course of action adopted by our staff and volunteers. It will often include acceptable methods, behaviours, and an approved procedure. It is usually internal, although some organisational policies are expected to be publicly accessible.

Version Control

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When review is completed, please send to: businesssupport@essexwt.org.uk

Version	Date	Changes made by	Reason for change
2	13/11/2022	Jen Burlingham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update to new company format - Update to include accurate job titles within the organisational structure of SLT, OLT, Nature Nursery Structure and Safeguarding responsibilities - Updated where appropriate to refer to any new company system requirements
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarification of the areas of the site used for preparation and eating - Clarification of the source, preparation methods and provision of food - Inclusion of ability to adapt and change suppliers as needed - Confirmation of details on storage of packed lunches supplied by parents - Inclusion of additional details on Supper Club meals and menu - Inclusion of methods for growing food onsite and foraging - Details added regarding requirements for dates of food to be used by, storage methods and storage longevity - Inclusion of details on cooking activities performed as part of curriculum
3	14/11/2023	J Burlingham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update EYFS document reference

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The health and well-being of our children in Nature Nursery is of paramount importance and we have a duty to ensure that we provide safe and nutritional food in our setting. Healthy eating and physical activity are vital for proper growth and development in childhood. Research has shown a balanced, nutritious diet impacts on children’s ability to learn. We will encourage children to eat well and establish healthy eating patterns that will help set the foundations for their future health and well-being.
- 1.2. As part of our ethos within the Nature Nursery, we also want to encourage the idea of ‘plough to plant to plate’ and therefore aim to, where possible, grow and use fruits and vegetables grown on site to prepare food items available.
- 1.3. The Nature Nursery food preparation area consists of a commercial grade kitchen with processing and storage facilities. Food is consumed within the outdoor Nursery areas – around the fire circles of Badgers Garden or the forest, within the outdoor shelter (Sunrise Café) or the Yurt.

2. Scope

2.1. This policy applies to preparation and serving of food items, and incorporates all food hygiene rules. We are registered with the Food Standards Agency and we agree to comply to their legislation around food hygiene and food preparation procedures.

3. Purpose of Policy

3.1. The purpose of this food hygiene policy is to provide a framework that minimises and eliminates the risk of food becoming contaminated and causing illness amongst children.

4. Policy Statement

- 4.1. Our staff have responsibility for food preparation and therefore we understand the principles of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) as it applies to our Nature Nursery. This is set out in Safer Food, Better Business for Caterers (Food Standards Agency 2020). The basis for this is risk assessment of the purchase, storage, preparation and serving of food to prevent growth of bacteria and food contamination. In addition, this will link to the collection and growth of food items from the Nature Nursery site.
- 4.2. We will maintain the highest possible food hygiene standards with regard to the growth, purchase, storage, preparation and serving of food.
- 4.3. We are registered as a food provider with the local authority Environmental Health Department. All our staff who are involved in the preparation and handling of food have received at a minimum Level 2 training in food hygiene. All our staff follow the guidelines of Safer Food, Better Business.

5. Overall Procedure

- 5.1 We will provide and/or serve food for children on the following basis:
 - Healthy snacks e.g. fruit
 - Supper club e.g. a prepared meal specifically designed to fulfil requirements of children staying on site beyond the core hours (see section 6 below)
 - Food prepared as part of an educational activity
- 5.2 Parents will provide healthy and nutritious and low packaged packed lunches. Guidance is provided regularly to parents on the contents of the lunches in terms of allergen content, portion size and preparation methods e.g. ensuring grapes and tomatoes are cut into bite size pieces.
- 5.3 The Nursery Manager or nominated staff member is responsible for food preparation and serving. Daily opening and closing checks are carried out on the kitchen to ensure standards are met consistently, in addition to weekly and monthly checks, with management sign off (See Safer Food, Better Business).
- 5.4 We use reliable suppliers for the food we purchase, and these details are recorded within the records held. Where possible suppliers will also follow sustainable practice, have a solid ethical background and ideally follow organic methods. Suppliers will be regularly monitored and could be dynamic based on the season, demand and availability.
- 5.5 All food is stored at correct temperatures and is checked to ensure it is in-date and not subject to contamination by pests, rodents or mould.
- 5.6 Packed lunches are received by the Nursery team when the child arrives on site – they are then stored in a cool place/box/fridge as appropriate until meal times. Warm food prepared at home and provided in temperature-controlled flasks will be stored at room temperature until use.
- 5.7 All food preparation areas are cleaned before and after use.
- 5.8 There are separate facilities for handwashing and for washing-up within the kitchen. There are separate handwashing facilities available for the children whilst on site.
- 5.9 All surfaces used within the kitchen area are clean and non-porous.
- 5.10 All utensils, crockery etc. are cleaned daily and stored in sealed plastic boxes.
- 5.11 Waste food is disposed of daily in the composting bins where appropriate.
- 5.12 Cleaning materials and other dangerous materials are stored out of children's reach, within specific cabinets.
- 5.13 Children do not have unsupervised access to the kitchen.
- 5.14 When food is prepared, appropriate clothing, such as aprons and gloves, are worn at all times.
- 5.15 When food is received on site, all items are checked for expiry/best before/use by dates and quality.
- 5.16 All foods are stored so that those with the longest shelf life are stored behind one another.
- 5.17 All purchased foods are checked at the time of use to ensure it is within date.
- 5.18 Purchased food items which have been opened are labelled with the date opened and date for disposal (in accordance with the instructions on the packaging).
- 5.19 Before food prepared on site is served, temperatures of the foods are recorded.

6. Supper Club Meals and Menu

- 6.1 A menu for supper club meals will be prepared to plan in advance those for preparation and serving on site.
- 6.2 Meals are designed to be nutritious, balanced, vegetarian and consider all allergens (see Section 7). They are designed to use ethically and sustainably sourced ingredients where possible, including organic produce if appropriate and available, or ingredients grown on site (see Section 9).
- 6.3 Meal preparation may be part of activities designed for completion by the children with support from staff, as part of the educational plans and EYFS curriculum.
- 6.4 The menu will be available to view for parents and carers as appropriate, and will be dynamic where necessary, responding to seasonal availability, along with any cultural or celebratory events.

7. Allergens

- 7.1 Appropriate medical records for each child are kept and updated regularly regarding allergies, including those present in food.
- 7.2 Relevant information is available and displayed in the food preparation area to ensure staff can easily check requirements for the children in the setting on the relevant days. This information is also shared with parents as appropriate, to ensure food provided from home is suitable for the lunch time meal when all children are present.
- 7.3 The food products purchased and the food items prepared on site are designed specifically to be low allergen content.
- 7.4 Safer Food preparation rules are followed to ensure no cross-contamination occurs, including use of specific equipment if applicable.

8. Specific procedure – reporting of food poisoning

- 8.1 Food poisoning can occur for a number of reasons; not all cases of sickness and/or diarrhoea are as a result of food poisoning and therefore not all cases are reportable.
- 8.2 Where children and/or adults have been diagnosed by a GP or hospital doctor to be suffering from food poisoning and where it seems possible that the source of the outbreak is within the Nature Nursery, the Manager or nominated Deputy will contact the Environmental Health Department to report the outbreak and will comply with any investigation procedures forthcoming.
- 8.3 We will inform Ofsted as soon as reasonably practical of any confirmed cases of food poisoning affecting two or more children looked after on the nursery premises, and always within 14 days of the incident.

9. Specific procedure - on site growing and foraging activities

- 9.1 Within the Nature Nursery, we aim to engage the children with the natural process of growth of food items, incorporating 'plough to plant to plate', to ensure they understand and can explore the origin and use of food items such as fruits and vegetables.
- 9.2 This may also on occasion include the use of foraged items from the Nature Nursery or surrounding Essex Wildlife Trust site, e.g. blackberries.
- 9.3 Use of any of the food items foraged, grown or harvested will follow procedures for Safer Foods and Food Hygiene in terms of washing and storage. Food items not used on the day of collection will be washed, prepared if necessary, labelled and stored in separate containers as appropriate e.g. within the commercial grade refrigerator or freezer, with an allocated use by date, dependent on the nature of the food item.
 - 9.3.1 Soft fruits e.g. berries; refrigerated for 7 days, frozen for 6 months
 - 9.3.2 Apples and pears; refrigerated for 8 weeks, frozen (prepared) for 12 months
 - 9.3.3 Stoned fruit e.g. plums; refrigerated for 5 weeks, frozen (prepared) for 12 months
 - 9.3.4 Tomatoes; refrigerated for 4 days, frozen (prepared) for 12 months
 - 9.3.5 Brassicas e.g. broccoli, cauliflower; refrigerated for 4 weeks, frozen for 12 months
 - 9.3.6 Root vegetables e.g. carrots, beetroot; refrigerated for 6 weeks, frozen (prepared) for 12 months
 - 9.3.7 Onions; refrigerated for 8 months, frozen (prepared) for 12 months
 - 9.3.8 Potatoes (cooked); refrigerated for 4 days, frozen for 12 months
 - 9.3.9 Salad leaves; refrigerated for 3 weeks
 - 9.3.10 Storage conditions for any food type not included here will be researched and recorded
- 9.4 The food items grown within the polytunnel or raised beds areas on site will be grown in commercially available appropriately graded, peat free, compost, and not in the existing site soil structure. All growing procedures will follow organic principles wherever possible. Seeds, seedlings and plants will either be purchased or donated and will be used within expiry dates where provided. Plants will be watered using the on-site water supply or rain water gathered in water butts on site.

10. Specific procedure - cooking activities

10.1 Cooking and food preparation activities can form an important part of the EYFS curriculum. When children take part in cooking and preparation activities, they:

- are supervised at all times;
- understand the importance of hand-washing and simple hygiene rules;
- are kept away from hot surfaces and hot water;
- do not have unsupervised access to electrical equipment, such as blenders, etc.

10.2 Cooking activities could include use of campfire cooking or the on-site pizza oven, and will follow all appropriate risk assessments in place.

11. Appendices

This policy is to be read in conjunction with wider Essex Wildlife Trust Policies and Procedures.

Legal framework

11.1 Regulation (EC) 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Hygiene of Foodstuffs

11.2 EYFS - Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (up to date version available via Government website)

Further guidance

11.3 Safer Food Better Business (Food Standards Agency 2020)

11.4 Risk Assessments for relevant equipment and activities

11.5 Most recent EHO inspection report

11.6 Most recent Safer Food Scores report

11.7 Pest Control contract

11.8 Daily opening/closing charts

11.9 Delivery temperature checks

11.10 COSHH sheets

11.11 Accident and Incident Procedure

11.12 First Aid Policy

11.13 Health and Safety Policy

11.14 Sickness and Allergies Policy and Procedure

11.15 Zoonotic Disease Policy and Procedure