



Stepping Stones Nursery

Dietary (including allergy protocol) Policy

At Stepping Stones Day Nursery we believe that mealtimes should be happy, social occasions for children and staff alike. We promote shared, enjoyable positive interactions at these times.

We are committed to offering children healthy, nutritious and balanced meals and snacks, which meet individual needs and requirements.

We ensure that:

- A balanced and healthy breakfast, midday meal, tea and two daily snacks are provided for children at nursery. The number of meals varies depending on a child's sessions
- We use **Zebedees** (an outside children's catering company) who provide us with our lunch and teas every day. Please visit <https://zebedees.co.uk/> for more details.
- We provide nutritious food at all snack and mealtimes, avoiding large quantities of fat, sugar, salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings
- Only milk and water are provided as drinks to promote oral health. Fresh drinking water is always available and accessible. It is frequently offered to children and babies, and intake is monitored. In hot weather staff will encourage children to drink more water to keep them hydrated
- All staff are aware of children with food allergies or intolerances and individual dietary requirements are respected. We gather information from parents regarding their children's dietary needs, including any special dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies that a child has and any special health requirements, before a child starts or joins the nursery. Where appropriate, we will carry out a risk assessment in the case of allergies and work alongside parents to put into place an individual dietary plan for their child. These will be reviewed regularly.
- We give careful consideration to seating to avoid cross contamination of food from child to child. Where appropriate, age/stage discussions will also take place with all children about allergies and potential risks to make them aware of the dangers of sharing certain foods
- Staff show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. They do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child, or make a child feel singled out because of her/his diet or allergy
- Staff set a good example and eat with the children and show good table manners. Meal and snack times are organised so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate in small groups. During meals and snack times children are encouraged to use their manners and conversation is encouraged.
- Staff use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink, and feeding themselves
- Staff support children to make healthy choices and understand the need for healthy eating

- Where possible provide foods from the diet of each of the children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.
- Cultural differences in eating habits are respected
- Any child who shows signs of distress at being faced with a meal he/she does not like will have his/her food removed without any fuss. If a child does not finish his/her first course, he/she will still be given a helping of dessert
- Children not on special diets are encouraged to eat a small piece of everything, however this should never be forced. If a child eats a portion of their meal e.g. just pasta, they should be allowed more if requested and there is still some on offer.
- Children who refuse to eat at the mealtime are offered food later in the day, during snack. This could include a more filling snack e.g. crackers or breadsticks.
- Children are given time to eat at their own pace and not rushed
- Quantities offered take account of the ages of the children being catered for in line with recommended portion sizes for babies and young children
- We promote positive attitudes to healthy eating through play opportunities and discussions
- The nursery provides parents with daily records of feeding routines for all children. Parents will receive an update on meals through their **iconnect parentzone app** which indicates if children have eaten all snacks and meals provided during their sessions.
- No child is ever left alone when eating/drinking to minimise the risk of choking
- Children will always be within sight and hearing of a member of staff while eating and where possible, an adult will sit facing children while they eat, to minimise risks from choking and allergic reactions. In addition a member of staff with a full and valid paediatric first aid certificate will be in the room at all times.
- We will sometimes celebrate special occasions such as Christmas and preschool graduation with the occasional treat of foods such as cake, sweets or biscuits. These will be given at mealtimes to prevent tooth decay and not spoil the child's appetite.
- All staff who prepare and handle food are competent to do so and receive training in food hygiene which is updated every three years
- In the very unlikely event of any food poisoning affecting two or more children on the premises, whether or not this may arise from food offered at the nursery, we will inform Ofsted as soon as reasonably practical and in all cases within 14 days. We will also inform the relevant health agencies and follow any advice given.

Packed Lunches

The nursery recognises that families may have need to provide a packed lunch/tea for their child. Parents are responsible for ensuring that food is as healthy as possible and are asked to fully comply with this policy. Practitioners and staff on duty in the rooms are encouraged to express any concerns they may have about any children consistently bringing unsuitable options in their packed lunches. Staff will follow these concerns up with the parents and monitor the food. If unsuitable options continue to be provided, further steps may be necessary, to ensure this policy is upheld.

NHS guidelines suggest that a balanced lunchbox should contain something from the following groups:

- A starch food such as bread, pasta or rice
- A protein source such a meat, fish, eggs or beans
- A source of calcium such as yogurt, cheese or milk
- Fresh vegetables or salad
- Fruit

Please visit <https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes/> for packed lunch ideas and further guidance.

As a nursery we request that only water or milk should be provided as a drink. Any other drinks which are sent in will be returned to you at the end of your child's session.

We are a **nut free** nursery to protect any children with allergies and therefore request that you check that your child's lunchbox **DOES NOT** contain anything that contain nuts or nut butters.

We request that lunchboxes should not include:

- Snacks such as crisps (instead include savoury crackers or breadsticks)
- Confectionary such as chocolate bars and especially sweets.
- High sugar biscuits or cakes
- Processed meat products e.g. sausage rolls, sausages

Children's lunch boxes will be reviewed prior to giving the contents to the children to manage any risks from potential allergens or choking hazards. We reserve the right to return these sorts of food to parents as a last resort.

Parents must be mindful of any foods which may pose a choking risk e.g. popcorn, pieces of sausage, chunks of cheese and refrain from packing these. Any small round fruits like grapes, cherries, berries and cherry tomatoes must be cut into quarters to reduce the risk of choking. More information on how to serve food safely can be found here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/start-for-life/baby/weaning/safe-weaning/preparing-food-safely/>

Fridge space is limited at nursery, therefore parents are advised to bring lunches/teas in insulated bags with freezer blocks where possible, to avoid the food spoiling. There are several ways parents can keep packed lunches cold:

- Freezer blocks
- Gel packs
- Water frozen in a leak proof container
- Ice cubes in leak proof container.
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Where possible please can parents use easy to open packaging or containers to promote children's independence. Please can all food be checked for use by dates.

Please ensure all lunchboxes, containers and bags are clearly marked with your child's name.

We do not provide reheating services for children's packed lunches.

All food for the day must be brought in on a daily basis to ensure freshness and manage storage space.

Children that have packed lunches will sit with their peers at a table in their rooms and will be encouraged by staff in the same way to eat what has been provided for them. Staff will not throw away any uneaten items, so that parents are aware of what their child has consumed whilst at nursery.

It is important to respect children who have SEND needs or sensory differences around food especially those who potentially or are diagnosed with a food allergy. We should acknowledge neurodiversity and sensory differences that affect food choices and tolerance of fruit and vegetables. This may mean that their food from home looks different to others. It is important these safe foods are respected within setting to ensure they can eat what is nutritionally balanced for them.

Please see Zebede's website for example menus <https://zebedees.co.uk/our-food>

Allergy protocol for Stepping Stones Nursery

This protocol can be used by anyone caring for a child who may be at risk of allergic symptoms or Anaphylaxis. The protocol is to ensure that everyone caring for the child is aware of their allergies, symptoms and to promote better understanding of the child's needs and medical requirements. This should help to allow for better management of symptoms and recognition of how to deal with emergency situations if they arise. It should also allow for effective communication between parents, childcare organisations and medical professionals which should help both the allergic child, and anyone involved in their care.

Allergy information for all children is located on their registration pack, on the wall inside their room and the kitchen with a photo attached as well as a written copy in our zebedeas folder. All children with allergies also have a placemat which is used every session they attend. Kitchen staff will ask daily how many children are in as well as any dietary needs daily. This are written on the board in the kitchen and changed every day. Families also fill out a dietary form. This is checked termly unless there is a change. Families sign to inform us if a dietary need has changed or is no longer needed.

All members of staff:

- If you are preparing food you **MUST** check allergy information against the child on the paperwork displayed (on wall & in 'lunch folder')
- If you are giving food to a child you **MUST** check allergy information against the child on paperwork displayed (on wall & in 'lunch folder')

Before giving ANY food to a child CHECK they are able to eat it.

Medication

The Medication often prescribed for a child at risk of anaphylaxis is Epinephrine. (Commonly known as Adrenaline) This may be injectable epinephrine (The EpiPen or Jext). It is important that the parent explains what medication his or her child has been prescribed, what symptoms may occur and when and how to use the emergency pack. ALL staff will need to know where the medication is stored. This should be out of reach of children but readily accessible. It should be clearly labelled with the child's name and instructions for use. Responsibility for ensuring the medication is "In Date" rests with the parent.

Allergic Reactions

- These reactions can be mild, moderate, or severe and in some cases life threatening – this is known as Anaphylaxis.
- Prompt treatment is necessary and follow up by medical staff may be required.
- It is essential each child follows their own individual protocol and that this is updated if any changes occur.
- It is important that strict attention is paid to any allergic triggers which could cause an allergic reaction and risk of encountering these allergic triggers is minimised. (These are detailed below in precautionary measures).
- Emergency medication must be always accessible, and a plan of action should be drawn up to ensure everyone knows what to do in such an event to ensure safety of the child.
- It is important that children with allergies are treated sympathetically but also that they can be included in as many activities with precautionary measures in place which do not place the child at risk. Therefore, allowing them to attend nursery and feel they can be included in a supportive environment.

Symptoms of allergic reactions:

- **Ear/Nose/Throat Symptoms:** runny or blocked nose, itchy nose, sneezing, painful sinuses, headaches, postnasal drip, loss of sense of smell/taste, sore throat/swollen larynx (voice box), itchy mouth and/or throat and blocked ears.
- **Eye Symptoms:** watery, itchy, prickly, red, swollen eyes. Allergic 'shiners' (dark areas under the eyes due to blocked sinuses).

- **Airway Symptoms:** wheezy breathing, difficulty in breathing and or coughing (especially at night-time).
- **Digestion:** swollen lips, tongue, itchy tongue, stomach-ache, feeling sick, vomiting, constipation and or diarrhoea.
- **Skin:** Urticaria –wheals or hives-bumpy, itchy raised areas and or rashes. Eczema – cracked, dry, weepy, or broken skin. Red cheeks. Angioedema –painful swelling of the deep layers of the skin.

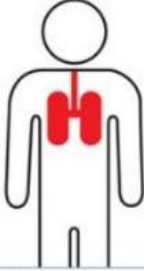
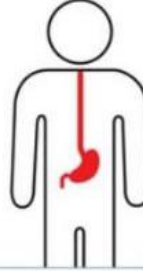
Symptoms of Severe Reaction/ Anaphylaxis:

These could include any of the above together with:

- Difficulty in swallowing or speaking.
- Difficulty in breathing –severe asthma
- Swelling of the throat and mouth
- Hives anywhere on the body or generalized flushing of the skin
- Abdominal cramps, nausea, and vomiting
- Sudden feeling of weakness (drop in blood pressure)
- Alterations in heart rate (fast Pulse)
- Sense of Impending doom (anxiety/panic)
- Collapse and unconsciousness

If you are in any doubt about the severity of any symptoms always seek urgent medical attention

(Call 999 for an ambulance and state Anaphylaxis. The first line treatment of anaphylaxis is Adrenaline (epinephrine) given by injection.)

				
SKIN	RESPIRATORY	GASTROINTESTINAL	CARDIOVASCULAR	NEUROLOGICAL
hives, swelling, itching, warmth, redness	coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, chest pain or tightness, throat tightness, trouble swallowing, hoarse voice, nasal congestion or hay fever-like symptoms, (sneezing or runny or itchy nose; red, itchy or watery eyes)	nausea, stomach pain or cramps, vomiting, diarrhea	dizziness/ lightheadedness, pale/blue colour, weak pulse, fainting, shock, loss of consciousness	anxiety, feeling of "impending doom" (feeling that something really bad is about to happen), headache
				OTHER
				uterine cramps

www.allergysupportcentre.ca

Allergy information

Allergy information
Name of child
Age of child
Date of birth
Address
Parents name and contact numbers
Additional contacts
GP contact details
Allergy to...
This means _____ MUST avoid ALL substances which contain or may contain _____
Additional information (i.e., asthma, eczema, and other health conditions)the usual symptoms are:
Does need/carry emergency medication? Please detail below.
Is this an inhaler?
Is this antihistamine medicine or tablets?
Is this an EpiPen or Jext?

Where is this kept?	
Doescarry an emergency kit on them?	
Note – 2 EpiPens should be always kept on the premises. All medication should be clearly labelled in the original container as dispensed by the pharmacist, expiry dates and instructions for use should be clearly stated. Name of medication: Details of use : Expiry date:	
<u>Mild symptoms which may require antihistamines and/or inhalers</u> (for example, rash, headache, vomiting, itchy tongue & swelling)	My Child's Particular symptoms are:
<u>Moderate to severe which may require inhalers and Adrenaline.</u> (An immediate administration of adrenaline into the upper outer thigh as shown in the training session may be required and /or an inhaler may be necessary) (for example, difficulty in breathing, facial swelling, cough and choking, wheezing, pallor, blue lips, collapse fainting, unconsciousness- this is known as ANAPHYLAXIS and is an extreme emergency)	My Child's particular symptoms are:

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It is important that anyone caring for.....is aware of these symptoms and uses the appropriate agreed protocol to deal with these symptoms or if in any doubt seeks urgent medical advice as soon as possible. (Please telephone an ambulance in cases of severe allergic reactions as these are medical emergencies).

Following any symptoms please administer prescribed medication for.....as outlined above.

ALWAYS:

1. Assess the child's condition – Note symptoms and how they are feeling. Notify another member of staff and if symptoms of anaphylaxis are present call an ambulance (999). Make sure person who calls ambulance confirms this has been carried out and someone is available to meet and tell the ambulance crew your exact location.
2. Decide if the reaction is mild, moderate, or severe. If mild or moderate – give antihistamine/ inhaler as prescribed but **MONITOR THE CHILD CONTINUOUSLY**. This is to make sure the symptoms do not progress to a 'biphasic' secondary reaction- see below for details*. (If a mild reaction occurs the parents of the child should be informed of their allergic reaction by telephone with a follow up form including time of any medication given).
3. If there are any symptoms of Anaphylaxis or the breathing is compromised, or the child appears faint or 'floppy' then Adrenaline (EpiPen or Jext) should be given. An ambulance should have already been called). This should be administered into the muscle of the upper outer thigh (as shown in training) and the child should be monitored.

NOTE THE TIME GIVEN.

MONITOR THE CHILD CONTINUOUSLY.

Another dose of Adrenaline may be necessary if the child's' condition has not improved or deteriorates within 5-10 minutes.

4. Stay with the child, do not move the child (Let the child adopt the position they are most comfortable in), if they are feeling faint or floppy then encourage them to lie with legs raised and head turned to one side (in case of vomiting) or sitting still (if breathing difficulties).
5. Keep calm and keep the child calm.
6. Wait for ambulance, when the ambulance arrives the adult in charge of..... should tell the ambulance crew what has happened and give all used medications to the ambulance crew for safe disposal, stating times of given medication.
7. It is normal practice for anyone who has been given adrenaline to go to hospital for further monitoring therefore the accompanying adult should take any relevant medical information with them about..... If the situation happens whilst at nursery parents will be contacted by somebody after the ambulance has been called and should arrange to meet at the hospital (unless they are near the area of the child). Permission to use emergency medication will already have been obtained and given by signing of this protocol.
8. Following each allergic reaction the parents should be notified so they are able to continue to monitor the child's condition and make a GP appointment or follow up at the hospital if necessary.
9. Parents will replace any further necessary medications.

*This is because a secondary phase reaction could occur (after the initial reaction has been treated and resolved) these symptoms can be either mild symptoms or more serious symptoms and Parents/ Carers need to be aware of this possibility, ensuring they have adequate follow up medication and this is why monitoring in hospital is essential.

Remember if you are unsure about any of your child's symptoms then take them to hospital for a check-up.

Precautionary Measures

1. should avoid all products containing
Staff in their room will try to avoid any accidental exposure during the day.
..... needs reminding by their parents that they must not swap or share any food items with other children.

2. EpiPen must always be present in the room at Nursery. Prior discussion for any trips or offsite activities will include safe storage and handling of medications and ensuring this protocol accompanies the child at any times they are off site.
3. The 'No sharing' rule will be emphasized to all children within the room during these times. For younger children they will be sat in their own strappy high chair to prevent sharing of food.

Be aware of the following:

- Information should be given by the Manager about allergy and all staff should be informed. Staff should always try to avoid as far as possible any triggers. All reactions should be reported to the parents via a responsible staff member.
- Nursery activities such as cookery/science (staff need to be aware of potential triggers and minimise the risk of exposure) and off site/ trips and visits – make sure your child takes medication and the staff are aware.
- Provide safe 'treats' for your child so they are included at nursery in various occasions.
- Advise your child regularly of the 'NO SHARING' policy.
- Encourage your child to report to a member of room staff if they are not feeling well.
- A written record of medications/treatments given should be kept by staff and as far as possible a copy given/ sent to the parent.

Consent & Agreement signed by Parents

I agree to the staff taking responsibility and administering medication in the event of an allergic reaction taking place.

Parents/carers.....Date

Follow up form

Record sheet allergic information

To be filled out if any symptoms of allergy occur. This is to be sent to parents via child or given to the parents when child is collected.

Name of child:

Age of child:

Allergy:

Date of allergic reaction:

Time:

Symptoms:

Treatment given & Time:

Given by (signature)

Monitoring of symptoms:

Parents contacted Yes / No

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
<i>October 2025</i>	<i>Emma Keller</i>	<i>October 2026</i>