

Bow Lane Pre-school

The Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements: Health

The provider must promote the good health of the children, take necessary steps to prevent the spread of infection, and take appropriate action when they are ill.

Promoting health and hygiene

6.7 Babies and toddlers feeding

Policy statement

Feeding and mealtimes are key times in the day for being close and to promote security, as well as for exploration and learning. Bow Lane Pre-School understands the importance of a healthy balanced diet for young children. At each meal/snack time all staff members are responsible for checking that the food provided meets all requirements for each child.

A Unique Child	Positive Relationships	Enabling Environments	Learning and Development
1.4 Health and well-being	2.1 Respecting each other 2.2 Parents as partners 2.4 Key person	3.2 Supporting every child 3.4 The wider context	4.4 Personal, social and emotional development

Bottle fed babies

- Babies' hands are washed prior to being given their bottle.
- Babies are fed by a familiar adult.
- Bottles are warmed and ready in time; babies should not be left hungry and crying while bottles are being prepared.
- The adult sits in a comfortable chair, or on cushions to feed the baby; the adult needs to be relaxed and calm.
- Babies should be held close so that eye contact can be made. Key persons are responsive to their communication gestures during feeding, talking quietly to them, stroking or holding their hands.

Policies & Procedures for the EYFS 2025/26 (Early Years Alliance 2025)

- Babies are winded after feeding, nappies are changed, and the baby is settled to sleep or play.
- Other key children may want to be close to their carer when a baby is being fed. This may allay any anxiety or feelings of jealousy, especially for toddlers.
- Planning for feeding times should be done to try to avoid overlap so that one-to-one attention can be given. If this cannot be avoided the feeding times should be arranged so that the adult can comfortably be with both babies at the same time. Unless in extreme circumstances, feeding should not be regarded as a shared task; unfamiliar carers should not take over feeding times just to 'get it done'.
- Babies will want to hold their own bottles, but they are never left propped up with a bottle to feed themselves.

Toddler mealtimes

- For the most part, older babies and toddlers who are feeding themselves have their meals inclusive of the wider setting alongside the other age groups of the setting.
- Whilst eating, there should always be a member of staff in the room with a valid Paediatric First Aid certificate.
- **A member of staff should always be in sight and hearing of children when eating and sat facing them wherever possible so they can ensure that children are eating in a way to prevent choking and so they can prevent food sharing and be aware of any unexpected allergic reactions.**
- Staff who are eating with the children must role-model hygiene, healthy eating and best practice at all times, for example not drinking cans of fizzy drinks in front of the children.
- Staff arrange the table before toddlers sit down; there should be no waiting time.
- Babies' and toddlers' hands are wiped/washed clean before their meal.
- Staff serve their children from their lunch boxes provided daily from parents; they ask their children what they want; they do not put food on plates if the toddler indicates that they do not want it. Toddlers can get very upset if their detested food is put in front of them; they do not understand 'try a little bit' in the way an older child does.
- Babies and toddlers are not discouraged from eating with their fingers; this exploration of their food with their hands is the beginning of self-feeding. When they have finished, they may wish to 'play' further with any remaining food. It is fine for them to get a bit messy; they, and their table can be cleaned afterwards.
- Babies and toddlers are given time to eat at their own pace and are not hurried to fit in with adults' tasks and breaks.

- Mealtimes are relaxed opportunities for social interaction of babies and toddlers with their group and the adults who care for them. It is a time of sensory learning and learning skills, as well as for the fundamental satisfaction of being fed.
- To protect children with food allergies or specific dietary requirements, children are discouraged from sharing and swapping their food with one another.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of	Bow Lane Pre-school	name of setting
Held on	5 th April 2026	(date)
Date to be reviewed	6th September 2026	(date)
Signed on behalf of Bow lane Pre-school		
Name of signatory	Zoe Pearson	
Role of signatory	Owner	