Ladybird Playgroup Thriplow CIO – Food and Drink Policy
School Lane, Thriplow, Royston, Herts, SG8 7RH
CIO Charity Number 1162435
Tel: 01763 208055 Email: ladybirdplaygroupthriplow@gmail.com Web: www.ladybird-playgroup.co.uk

This policy was updated in September 2026 and will be reviewed annually.

Food and Drink Policy

Statement of intent

The Ladybird Playgroup Thriplow CIO regards snack and meal times as an important part of the setting's session/day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating.

Aim

At snack and meal times, we aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs and the full requirements of Ofsted's Care Standards on Food and Drink (Standard 8).

Children's hands are washed prior to being given food or drink.

Procedures

- Before a child starts to attend the Ladybird Playgroup Thriplow CIO, we find out their dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies, from their parents/carers.
- We record information about each child's dietary needs in her/his registration record and parents/carers sign the record to signify that it is correct.
- We regularly consult with parents/carers to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs, including any allergies, are up-to-date.
- All parents/carers will be made aware of which of the fourteen Food Allergens may be present in the snacks we offer at Ladybirds. These will be displayed on the noticeboard in the foyer of the playgroup.
- Parents/carers must notify Ladybirds staff if their child is allergic to one of these allergens and complete an Allergy Form.
- Allergy forms are kept in the kitchen for quick reference by adults. They are signed by parents/carers to signify they are up-to-date and current.
- We display current information about individual dietary needs so that all staff and volunteers are fully informed about them.
- At snacktime, all staff are responsible for checking that the food and drink being provided meets all the requirements for each child.
- Parents/carers are informed of the daily snack.

- We provide nutritious food at snack, avoiding large quantities of fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- We include foods from the diet of each of the children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones where appropriate.
- We take care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products and we are especially vigilant when we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts.
- We ensure that the diet of children with disabilities and special educational needs are appropriate to the individual child and assist them where needed to take part in meals as a social occasion with other children.
- Through discussion with parents/carers and research reading by staff, we obtain information about the dietary rules of the religious groups to which children and their parents/carers belong, and of vegetarians and vegans, and about food allergies. We take account of this information in the provision of food and drinks.
- We require staff to show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. Staff 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.
- We organise snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate.
- We use snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.
- We provide children with utensils that are appropriate for their ages and stages of development and which take account of the eating practices in their cultures.
- We have fresh drinking water constantly available for the children. We inform the children about how to obtain the water and that they can ask for water at any time during the session/day.
- We inform parents/carers who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available at the Ladybird Playgroup Thriplow CIO.
- We advise parents/carers to refrain from bringing in foods containing nuts, for example in birthday treats or packed lunches.
- In order to protect children with food allergies, we have rules about children sharing and swapping their food with one another.

- We inform parents of our policy on healthy eating.

- We discourage packed lunch contents that consist largely of crisps, processed foods, sweet drinks and sweet products such as cakes or biscuits. We reserve the right to return this food to the parent as a last resort.

Packed lunches

We encourage parents to:

- include an ice pack to keep food cool where the contents are perishable;
- provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk-based deserts, such as yoghurt or crème fraîche.

We will inform parents of whether we have facilities to microwave cooked food brought from home.

We discourage:

- sweet drinks – we can provide children with water;
- crisps, processed foods, sweet products such as cakes or biscuits.

Legal framework

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

Further guidance

- Safer Food, Better Business (Food Standards Agency 2011)
- Nutritional Guidance for the Under Fives (Pre-school Learning Alliance 2009)
- The Early Years Essential Cookbook (Pre-school Learning Alliance 2009)
- Healthy and Active Lifestyles for the Early Years (Pre-school Learning Alliance 2012)

This policy was adopted at a meeting of the Ladybird Playgroup Thriplow CIO	
Held on (date)	
Signed on behalf of the Ladybird Playgroup Committee	

Role of signatory (e.g. chairperson etc.)	
Signed by Playgroup Leader/Deputy	
Name of Playgroup Leader/Deputy	