



Tormead Family

Early Years Food Policy

This policy applies to EYFS

Tormead Limited ("Tormead") includes two schools:

- Tormead School, which includes the Prep and Senior Schools ("Tormead")
- Rydes Hill, which includes the Nursery and Pre Prep ("Rydes Hill")

Referred to in this policy as "Tormead" or "the School".

Statement of intent

At Tormead, we understand that the early years are a crucial time in a child's development and are aware that what children eat and drink and the habits they develop during this phase can impact their future health.

We value the importance of the EYFS in providing children with a nutritious, balanced diet that will encourage them to make healthy, informed choices. We work collaboratively with parents to promote healthy eating, identify health issues and highlight the risks of unhealthy eating practices.

We believe that food can be used in a variety of educational ways. Children are encouraged to celebrate holidays, religious festivals, special events and the various foods associated with these events and are encouraged to experiment with unfamiliar foods.

We meet all statutory food safety and nutrition requirements for educational settings in England and aim to maintain these standards across all meals provided.

Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Board is responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring that this policy does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture or religion.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy, as outlined in the setting's Complaints Policy.
- Ensuring the setting uses reliable suppliers for the food purchased.
- Informing parents who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in the setting.

The EYFS Lead at Tormead Prep is the Head of Pre-Prep and the EYFS Lead at Rydes Hill is the Head.

The EYFS Lead is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy.
- Ensuring all staff members are trained in basic food safety and hygiene.
- Ensuring allergy action plans are completed where necessary, updated, and accessible to all staff.
- Ensuring parents are given adequate notice of any changes to meals, food choices or any other aspect of food provision.
- Ensuring that at least one member of staff with a valid paediatric first aid certificate is in the room when children are eating.

The Catering Manager is responsible for:

- Reviewing menus and mealtimes to ensure children's needs are being met.
- Adequate notice given to the school where there are changes to meal plans.
- Ensuring equipment is suitable for its use and providing separate facilities for handwashing and for washing up in the kitchen area.
- Ensuring food is prepared in accordance with choking prevention guidance.

Early years staff are responsible for:

- Sitting with children while they eat, where required, and being advocates of healthy eating.
- Monitor children to prevent them from sharing or swapping their food.
- Treating all children equally, taking account of the eating practices in their cultures.
- Remaining alert to signs of choking or allergic reactions.
- Responding immediately to incidents in line with first aid training and allergy action plans.
- Ensuring children are seated safely and that mealtime distractions are minimised.

- Recording details of any choking or allergy-related incidents and sharing them with parents and the EYFS lead.

The class teacher or Key Person is responsible for:

- Checking allergy and dietary information before serving food.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing the setting with information on their child's dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies.
- Providing specialist food for their child, where they may have an allergy, intolerance or medical need.
- Giving consent for the setting to give pre-made up milk to their child.

Food and drink served

All meals will include a variety of foods from the four main food groups. Menus are designed by the catering team. In EYFS, healthy and well-balanced snacks are provided by the catering team instead of parents.

Snacks are provided by the parents and the School recommends healthy snacks and provides information about choking risk.

Portion sizes will be based upon the recommended intake for the age group of the children concerned.

Menus will reflect the diversity of the community, with a variety of flavours and textures.

Where children are sleeping during mealtimes, their meal will be covered, stored correctly and served when the child awakens.

Fridges and store cupboards will be cleaned regularly to ensure they are clean. Food stored in the fridge will be kept at 5°C or lower and, where necessary, reheated until piping hot throughout. Food will be stored in sealed plastic containers, and tin cans will never be stored in the fridge.

Menus will rotate on a three-week cycle and meal suggestions from parents are welcomed during the planning of these menus.

Fresh drinking water will be available and accessible at all times, at a height suitable for the children to reach unaided and children will be encouraged to drink regularly. Their bottles (if used) will be also kept at an accessible height for the children.

For Nursery children, food that needs to be reheated will be microwaved (covered) and stirred thoroughly before a food probe is inserted to check the temperature which should be over 75°C. A record of this will be listed on the Food Temperature Form.

Milk in the Nursery

Milk will be served with either the morning or afternoon snack (children attending part-time will always be offered milk with their snack).

Milk or water will be the only drinks offered to children by the setting.

Fresh and frozen breast milk, provided by parents, will be used within 24 hours and have the expressed date on the container. Fresh and frozen breast milk will be heated in warm water, not in the microwave, and tested before being given to children. Breast milk will be discarded after one hour of being heated.

Powdered milk will be made up according to the manufacturers' instructions and discarded within one hour of being made.

Nutrition

Staff will encourage children to eat a balanced diet which contains a wide variety of foods and planning meals that include a variety of food and drinks from the four main food groups every day.

In doing so the setting will follow the DfE's advice regarding:

- The food and drink that should be provided, limited or avoided.
- Portion sizes
- Eating environment

The eating environment will be comfortable and relaxed. Children will be given plenty of time to feed themselves and hold feeding utensils.

Children will be provided with utensils that are appropriate for their age and stage of development.

Staff will sit with children while they eat and encourage interaction at each table. Children will be observed to ensure they are drinking and eating enough, and staff will be aware of the behaviour that may suggest a child is thirsty or hungry.

Children will be encouraged to develop good eating skills and table manners.

Meals times will be used to help children develop independence, through making food choices, serving food and drink, and feeding themselves.

Babies aged 6-12 months

When a child is ready for the introduction of solid foods, early years staff will collaborate with parents and agree on when and how they want to start weaning. Staff will follow advice from the following:

- NHS Start for Life - [how to start weaning](#)
- The Food Standards Agency - [Food safety advice on choking hazards in settings](#)
- DfE - [nutritional guidance](#); [the solid food road map](#); [food safety in early years setting](#)

Wherever possible, staff will prepare food from scratch and not provide pre-made foods from shops, such as puree pouches, so as to introduce babies to a range of appropriate flavours and textures.

Staff will avoid certain foods, in line with the DfE's nutritional guidance and NHS advice on [foods to avoid giving babies and young children](#).

Celebrations and special occasions

The School welcomes gestures to celebrate children's birthdays or special events but any cakes or treats must be nut free and provided along with a full ingredients list (whether shop bought or homemade).

Allergies and special requirements

The setting understands that food allergies can be life threatening conditions for some children and will ensure they are taken very seriously.

As part of the setting's ongoing CPD for early years practitioners, staff will be trained to understand:

- The common allergens in food.

- The symptoms of an allergic reaction and the steps to take should anaphylaxis or anaphylactic shock occur.

Parents will be expected to make the setting aware of any allergies or intolerances their child has and the actions that need to be taken if a reaction occurs.

A protocol will be established and made accessible to all staff to ensure everyone is aware of a child's allergies and symptoms.

Where it is suspected that a child has an allergy, the setting will encourage the child's parents to seek advice and diagnosis from their doctor.

The setting will seek to ensure children with allergies are not exposed to foods that trigger allergies. Appropriate alternatives will be identified to ensure the child still eats a balanced diet.

All staff will be instructed, where necessary, to ensure they understand how to identify which allergens are present in every meal and snack provided.

All food that is pre-packed for direct sale (PPDS) will have the name of the food and the full ingredients list, with allergens emphasised, e.g. in bold, italics or a different colour, clearly displayed.

All preparation of food containing common allergens, e.g. nuts, will be kept separate from other food preparation.

There will be a set of kitchen utensils that are only for use with the food and drink of the children at risk of allergic reactions. There will also be a set of kitchen utensils with a designated colour. These utensils will be used only for food items that contain bread and wheat related products.

Food items containing nuts, bread and wheat will be stored separately.

Learning activities which involve the use of food will be planned in accordance with children's individual healthcare plans (IHPs), taking into account any known allergies of the children involved.

Foods containing gluten will not be given to children under the age of six months.

Eating habits

All children will be supported to manage their own personal needs as far as possible, including understanding the importance of healthy food choices.

Children will be regularly exposed to new foods in order to increase their liking for, and consumption of, a variety of new foods (providing these foods meet their specific dietary requirements).

Favourite foods will not be used as a reward to encourage children to eat foods they do not like.

The setting is aware that some children will have allergies or different dietary requirements; this will be taken into account when encouraging children to try new foods.

Before a child is admitted, the setting will obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies – this information will be recorded and acted upon as appropriate.

Children will never be forced to finish everything on their plate. Small servings will be given, with the opportunity to have second helpings if the first serving is finished.

Food safety and hygiene

Food will be stored, prepared and presented in a safe and hygienic environment which is adequately equipped to provide healthy meals, snacks and drinks for children.

Where necessary, suitable equipment for the sterilisation of babies' food will be available.

Children will be taught basic hygiene, such as not eating food that has fallen on the floor and washing their hands before eating and after using the toilet.

All staff will receive training in food hygiene before preparing or handling food.

All staff involved in preparing food for young children, or helping them eat, will be aware of the requirements of the Food Safety Act 1990.

Communication

Staff will work alongside parents to ensure that children are provided with healthy, balanced and nutritious food in the setting and at home.

Each child's key person will be responsible for communicating with parents about the setting's approach to food provision and children's food intake across the day.

Parents of children in Nursery will receive a daily written record of feeding routines via Famly

Parents will be provided with information on the routine meals and snacks that their children are given.

Menus will be published on the School's website and included in the Rydes Hill newsletter.

The setting will agree with parents on the methods used to manage fussy eating, ensuring they are consistent with those used at home.

Parents will be encouraged to attend events to celebrate special and cultural occasions.

Meeting the needs of all children

Wherever possible, the setting will endeavour to cater for the cultural and dietary needs of all children in its care.

The setting is aware that children with special dietary requirements may need specific foods excluded or included; however, it will not exclude foods from a child's diet without a valid reason as this may lead to unnecessary restrictions in their diet. In meeting the needs of all children, the setting will take into account the following dietary requirements:

- Food allergies
- Food intolerances
- Vegetarianism
- Veganism or eating a plant-based diet
- Pescetarianism
- Religious preferences, for example:
 - Only eating halal foods.
 - Avoiding pork or beef.
 - Keeping kosher.
 - Eating specific foods only on certain days.

The setting will create a safe and inclusive environment for all children to eat, and children with special dietary requirements will be included in mealtimes with other children as far as possible.

A child will only need to eat their meal separately to other children where a risk assessment concludes that a significant risk remains despite adequate training and supervision of meals and snacks times.

Staff will have ongoing discussions with parents about their child's dietary needs and encourage parents to assist the setting by sharing guidance from healthcare professionals.

The setting will seek professional advice for menu planning when needed.

Safer eating

The setting will follow robust procedures to ensure that all children eat safely and that risks of choking, allergic reactions, and cross-contamination are minimised.

A member of staff holding a full paediatric first aid certificate will always be present in the room when children are eating.

Before a child starts at the setting, information about any special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies, intolerances, or health needs will be obtained from parents or carers, clearly documented, and shared with all staff involved in food preparation and service.

The setting will work in partnership with parents, carers, and where appropriate, health professionals to create and maintain up-to-date allergy action plans. All staff will be made aware of these plans and will receive guidance on recognising allergy symptoms, understanding the difference between allergies and intolerances, and administering the correct treatment for allergic reactions and anaphylaxis. Staff will remain alert to the possibility of children developing new allergies, particularly during the weaning process.

Food will be prepared in a way that is appropriate to each child's developmental stage, with parents and carers consulted to ensure that textures and portion sizes are suitable. Children will be supported to progress safely at a pace appropriate for them, without assumptions made based solely on age.

Food will always be prepared following national guidance to reduce the risk of choking, including cutting food into suitable sizes and avoiding high-risk items. Children will be seated securely in a highchair or appropriately sized low chair – as appropriate for their age and needs – during mealtimes, and distractions will be minimised wherever possible.

Children will always be within sight and hearing of staff while eating, and staff will sit facing the children where possible to monitor eating, prevent food sharing, and respond quickly to choking or allergic reactions.

Any choking incidents that require intervention will be recorded in detail, shared with parents or carers, and reviewed regularly to identify patterns and implement measures to further reduce risk. At Rydes Hill, the Head and Nursery Manager review the choking log regularly to identify if there are any trends or common features of incidents that could be addressed to reduce the risk of choking. Appropriate action should be taken to address any identified concerns.

Legal framework and other policies

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Public Health England (2024) 'Example menus for early years settings in England'
- DfE (2023) 'School food in England'

- DfE (2013) 'The school food plan'
- 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage' (2025)
- Food Safety Act 1990
- The Requirements for School Food Regulations 2014
- The Food Information (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2019 (also known as Natasha's Law)
- DfE (2025) 'Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Complaints Policy
- EYFS Handbook