



The Cottage Nursery

Physical Activity and Nutrition Policy

Updated: April 2026

The Cottage Nursery Commitment:

At The Cottage Nursery, we are committed to ensuring that every child is nurtured in an environment that gives them the tools to grow to their full potential. We understand that a healthy lifestyle is an essential part of a child's development and helps to give children the best possible start in life. Having a healthy balanced diet and regular physical activity can not only benefit children's physical health, but also benefit their cognitive thinking, their wellbeing, co-ordination and their personal, social and emotional development. That is why we are committed to encouraging children's autonomy when it comes to their body by providing diverse learning opportunities and activities that allow children to learn about how their body works and how to look after them. We do this using a whole setting approach that allows us to promote physical activity and nutrition to all children, families and staff who attend our setting.

Our physical Activity and Nutrition Policy is implemented in line with the following pieces of legislation and guidance:

- Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (2025)
- Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance (2025)
- The NHS Eatwell Guide (2025)
- Physical Activity Guidelines for the Early Years (2019)
- WHO Guidelines on Physical Activity, Sedentary Behaviour and Sleep (2019)
- UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines

Physical activity and sedentary behaviour

We follow the guidelines set out by the Chief Medical Officer and the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework regarding how much physical activity children under five should take part in:

Children who are not yet walking:

Physical activity is encouraged to all young babies in our setting with the aim to help strengthen babies' neck, shoulders, back and core muscles in order to help them become confident movers ready for their next milestones. Our practitioners support this development through a range of floor-based activities, water play and musical movement, encouraging different types of movement for babies both on their backs and tummies. Babies who are not yet walking will be moved into different positions and areas of the room to give them wider learning opportunities. Our Cubs room also has a range of equipment that can be used for babies to pull themselves up or push along.

Children who are walking:

Children should be physically active for at least three hours throughout the day with sixty minutes of moderate to vigorous activity for children above three years old. Our practitioners support this by providing a range of opportunities for movement throughout the day. This includes opportunities to run, jump and climb as well as adult-led activities such as yoga, dancing and exercise games. Children also have access to climbing frames and balance bikes to help support balance and co-ordination. We also offer weekly sports classes (TA Sports Stars) to our Panthers and Lions children to encourage vigorous physical movement as well as developing their co-ordination, gross motor skills and listening and attention skills. Children who are able to walk are not carried by our practitioners to further encourage independence.

Outdoor play:

Our practitioners ensure that all children have access to outdoor play at least twice a day to encourage children to run, climb and exercise. Both our Panthers and Lions rooms have free-flow gardens attached to their room which children have access to throughout the day. Whilst outside, our practitioners encourage children to engage in a wide range of gross motor activities to give them a variety of movement including running games, ball games and the use of bikes and scooters.

Sedentary behaviour and rest:

Sedentary behaviour refers to low movement time that usually involves a sit-down activity or screen time. Whilst screen time is not used at The Cottage Nursery; sedentary behaviour can occur when children are engaged in adult-led activities or play. We recognise that sedentary behaviour and rest is important for children and is managed by practitioners through scheduled movement breaks, active group time activities and outdoor play. Children also have access to a range of sensory resources in each room to support them if movement is needed throughout focused activities. All of our classrooms have accessible quiet areas of the rooms (such as cosy book corners and calm corners) to give children a comfortable place to rest should they need to. Naps are also offered to all children who need them in line with our Sleep Policy.

Nutrition and Food Provision:Balanced diet:

At The Cottage Nursery, we provide children with a healthy, balanced and nutritious diet, not only to benefit children's physical health and wellbeing, but also to give children the tools to develop healthy eating habits from a young age. We provide breakfast, lunch, tea and snacks which feature foods from each food group to provide a balanced diet.

Menus are planned and updated each term in line with The Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance and Eatwell Guidance. Our menus reflect cultural diversity and features vegetarian and fish dishes. All meals have low levels of sugar, salt and fat and a wide range of fruit and vegetables to make them as nutritious as possible. We also ensure that children

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receive their five portions of fruit and vegetables throughout the day. Our practitioners inform parents about what their child has eaten throughout the day during handover at collection times. Our termly menu is displayed outside of each classroom and can also be viewed on our website.

Breakfast:

Breakfast is provided from 8am to 8:45am. Children are able to choose from cereal, toast and fruit. Children are also able to choose between milk and water to drink. Our practitioners ensure that food is served and prepared in an age-appropriate way with an adequate portion size. We ensure that our breakfasts are as healthy as possible by providing cereals that are low in sugar and brown bread.

Lunch:

Lunch is provided to children who stay beyond 12pm. This meal includes a cooked meal from our menu and a healthy dessert. Our menu features a wide range of dishes, including vegetarian and fish dishes. All dishes are adapted for children with allergies or intolerances as needed. Meals are provided in line with the Eatwell guidance to ensure appropriate portions. We provide a second course after lunch consisting of fruit and low-fat yoghurt.

Tea:

A light tea is provided to children who stay beyond 4:30pm. This consist of a portion of fruit and vegetables and a carbohydrate. Examples of this can include cheese on toast, boiled egg, jacket potato, wraps, cheese and crackers, soup, sandwiches.

Snacks:

Snacks are provided to children in the morning and afternoon session. This snack will consist of a whole piece of fruit in the morning and a piece of fruit and carbohydrate in the afternoon. Children are able to choose which fruit they would like to eat, and this is prepared and served to children in an age and stage appropriate way. A choice of milk and water is also provided at this time.

Hydration:

Fresh drinking water is accessible to all children throughout the day. Parents are asked to bring in a suitable water bottle for their child each day. The water bottles are kept at children's height throughout the day, both inside and outside, so they are able to access their water at any time. Our practitioners encourage children to drink water at regular intervals of the day and ensure that all bottles are kept full. Children under the age of six months will be given boiled water to drink.

At The Cottage Nursery, we recognise that fruit juice is high in sugar and can contribute to tooth decay. That is why children are not offered juice at nursery and we do not accept water bottles with juice.

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Children are encouraged to drink milk to promote healthy teeth and bones. Milk is provided to all children through The Welfare Food Scheme and is given to children at morning and afternoon snack times. Children under the age of two will be provided with full fat milk and children over two years old are provided semi-skimmed milk. For children with dairy intolerances, an option of oat milk or soya milk is provided as an alternative.

Weaning:

The Cottage Nursery is committed to embedding healthy eating habits from an early age. This is why we work closely with our parents when their child begins weaning. We recognise the NHS advice to begin weaning at around six months old and will work with parents to begin this process. Our practitioners have on-going discussions with parents and carers throughout the whole weaning process and work with parents to help their child to move onto the next stage of weaning at a pace that is suitable for the individual child. We provide weaning children with a variety of nutritious foods and ensure that it is prepared in a suitable way for that child's needs and at a texture that they are familiar with.

Further information and advice about weaning for parents can be found on our Parent Information Board outside of the Cubs room.

Mealtimes and eating environment:

At The Cottage Nursery, we are committed to promoting positive and healthy attitudes towards food for all children. We recognise that mealtimes are an opportunity for happy, social interactions between children, their peers and staff. Our practitioners always sit with the children during mealtimes and often eat with them to promote socialisation and safe, healthy eating habits. Our practitioners also use these interactions as opportunities to teach children about healthy habits and how these impact our bodies.

We encourage children to develop autonomy and independence during mealtimes by giving them opportunities to choose their food and supporting their abilities to drink from open cups and use cutlery at a level that is appropriate to their age and stage of development.

Special celebrations:

We understand that parents and children often like to celebrate their birthdays or cultural celebration by sharing treats with their peers. Whilst we accept treats from parents for these celebrations, we encourage parents to provide a healthy treat. Parents are asked to adhere to our 'nut free' policy and must provide an ingredients list for any food they provide. These treats will not be consumed at nursery and will be given to parents upon collection. Our practitioners ensure that allergens are taken into account and will provide an alternative to children with dietary needs if necessary.

Healthy eating curriculum implementation:

At The Cottage Nursery, we believe that it is important that all children learn the skills to look after their body and live a healthy lifestyle. We believe that it is essential that children have the opportunity to learn these skills at an early age to help them thrive in the future. That is why healthy eating is embedded into our nursery curriculum. We promote healthy eating through a range of exciting activities such as having healthy food in our home corners and setting up elaborate shopping role play areas. We also often take children to the local shop to buy ingredients for cooking activities and encourage children to try a range of different foods. The children are also involved in growing vegetables in our vegetable patches. Our practitioners often create stimulating activities that help children learn about what foods are healthy or unhealthy and model healthy eating habits through interactions.

Food safety

Allergies and intolerances:

The Cottage Nursery is a nut free setting. This is made clear to all staff, parents and visitors with displays around the nursery.

All allergies and intolerances are obtained from parents before their children begin at our setting and are recorded on the child's registration form. Parents are also required to record the symptoms of the allergy/intolerance, and the treatment needed should their child be exposed to their allergen. If an allergy requires medical treatment such as antihistamine or an epi pen, our practitioners will work with parents to gather further information and create an action plan. All staff will be made aware of this, and the medication will be stored and administered in line with our medication policy.

Children with allergies and intolerances will be given alternatives to the planned menu where necessary. All food for allergens will be prepared separately as required. Once prepared, it will be served on a red plate, covered and clearly labelled with the child's red placemat. All children with dietary needs are given a red placemat at every mealtime which clearly states their dietary needs and ensures that they are given the correct meal.

Dietary preferences:

At The Cottage Nursery, we respect and adhere to all dietary needs such as veganism, vegetarianism and religious values. All dietary preferences are obtained from parents before children begin at our setting and are recorded on their registration form. Children with dietary preferences are provided with an alternative meal to the planned menu where necessary. All food for dietary preferences is prepared separately when needed. Once prepared, it is served on a red plate, covered and clearly labelled with the child's red placemat. All children with dietary preferences are given a red placemat at every mealtime which clearly states their dietary needs and ensures that they are given the correct meal.

Supervision:

All children are supervised at every mealtime to prevent choking and cross contamination. Our practitioners ensure that there is a staff member sat at each table during mealtimes, making sure to face the children as they eat to ensure that every child is in sight and hearing of a member of staff. Our practitioners use this as an opportunity to model and teach safe eating habits to the children.

Choking:

Our Food Supervisor and practitioners prepare and serve food in a way that prevents choking and is age and stage appropriate for each child, following the guidance on Food Safety - Help for early years providers (GOV.UK - <https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/food-safety>)

All practitioners are first aid trained and are aware of the procedures to follow in the event of a choking incident for babies, young children and adults. Each room is also equipped with a LifeVac. All staff are trained to use this if usual first aid choking procedures have not worked. In the event of a choking incident, practitioners will record all details of the incident, including where and how the child choked and what they choked on in our accident book. This is reported to the nursery managers and parents are made aware of the incident.

Oral Hygiene

The Cottage Nursery recognises the importance of supporting good oral health for our children and families to avoid tooth decay and promote healthy smiles. We promote good oral hygiene practices in the following ways:

- We have information about good oral hygiene practices on our Parent Information Board, as well as tips and advice about how to access a dentist, healthy food habits and how to encourage children to brush their teeth.
- We provide children with healthy and nutritional meals and snacks with low sugar and fat content.
- We provide children with fresh drinking water at all times. We do not allow juice in children's bottles.
- Milk is also available to children at snack times in line with their age and dietary needs.
- Dummies are discouraged at nursery and are only used at sleep times by parent request.
- Healthy teeth and eating habits are promoted by our practitioners during mealtime discussions with children and regularly planned activities.
- Each room has a Bedtime Bear which the children take in turns to take home. Each Bedtime Bear goes home with a toothbrush and some extra information on how to include toothbrushing in bedtime routines.

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Oral health also forms part of our curriculum and is promoted to all ages. We provide activities to help children extend their understanding of how to brush their teeth and why this is important. These activities include a dentist role play, sharing experiences of visiting the dentist, tooth brushing activities and teaching the children about healthy and unhealthy food choices and how this impacts our teeth. Our practitioners also read books about oral health, providing children with an understanding of oral hygiene routines and reassurance about going to the dentist.

Our practitioners receive regular Oral Health Training. Practitioners raise any concerns about a child's oral health with our Designated Safeguarding Leads in line with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Staff Training

To support our commitment to supporting healthy lifestyles, all our practitioners receive regular training on healthy lifestyles, food safety and oral hygiene.

PANCo:

Our Physical Activity and Nutrition Co-ordinator is Hannah Wood. The PANCo supports our commitment to healthy lifestyles for children, families and staff by assessing and monitoring the setting's compliance with current legal standards and national guidelines as well as sharing best practice and information about physical activity and nutrition to all.

Due to our commitment to promoting physical activity and nutrition to all, we currently hold The NDNA Start Life Well Gold Award. For more information on this, please visit: <https://ndna.org.uk/start-life-well/>

Food Hygiene:

In line with the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, all staff who prepare and handle food receive Food Hygiene Training. This is renewed every three years. The following practitioners hold a Food Hygiene Certificate:

- Ali Enevoldsen
- Clare Olden
- Zoe Howes
- Naomi Lucas
- Lauren Boulter

Additionally, staff also receive Food Allergy and Intolerance Training from the Food Standards Agency.

Our Food Supervisor is Ali Enevoldsen. The Food Supervisor takes the lead for food provision in our setting and creates our nutritious menus. They prepare all food and follow food practices in line with the requirements from The Food Standards Agency.

First Aid Training:

Every member of staff at The Cottage Nursery receives First Aid Training. This is updated every three years. This training includes choking and allergic reaction practices as well as Epi Pen training. We also have LifeVacs in every classroom. All staff are trained to use this when usual first aid procedures have not worked during a choking incident.

This policy was reviewed in April 2026
Signed on behalf of The Cottage Nursery:

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This policy has been reviewed on:

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