



## Food Policy

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Rocket Productions Pre-Preps take an approach to food that applies and informs the snacks we provide to the children as well as the lunch that children bring into nursery from home. We are committed to offering children healthy and nutritious snacks which meet individual needs and requirements, and we will ensure that fresh drinking water is always available and accessible.

## OUR GOOD FOOD FOUNDATIONS

We believe that all children should enjoy and look forward to food rather than see it as a box to tick, we love sticky fingers and plates licked clean. We think that choosing and preparing food and mealtimes are crucial opportunities to bond with family & friends. Ultimately, these times help us form a lifelong and healthy relationship with food.

Our Pre-Preps have a responsibility to help develop 'food confidence' in our children. We aim to teach our children not only about healthy eating but eating consciously, sustainably, with enjoyment and having respect for where our food comes from.

We encourage all families to steer away from ultra-processed foods with as natural an ingredient list as possible. We also ask you not to bring in sweets as our focus on oral health includes preventing tooth decay. To help achieve and support our *Good Food Foundations*, we kindly ask that the following foods are not brought into the Pre-Prep (for Birthdays and Celebrations please read the appropriate section):

1. Sweets or lollipops
2. Chocolate or chocolate-coated foods
3. Crisps
4. Juice (from fresh fruit or concentrate), fizzy drinks
5. MSG
6. GMO ingredients
7. Palm oil
8. **Any foods listed under "Allergies" section or as asked by your class teacher**

## Breakfast

We all know the saying "breakfast is the most important meal of the day". Well, we would argue that every meal is important, but Breakfast definitely sets us up for the day ahead. We all know how much better we perform when hunger isn't knocking, and our children are no different. Whether it is porridge, mezze or fruit platter, we encourage you to drop your children off at nursery having enjoyed a good breakfast, it will make for a smoother day all round. Please ensure they have finished eating before coming in the Pre-Prep.

## Lunch

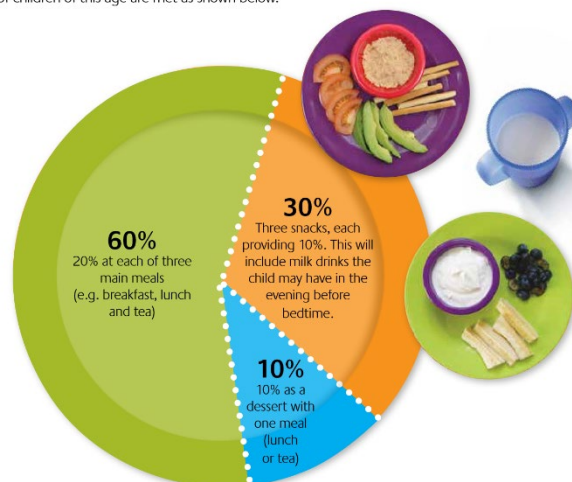
We ask that those children staying at nursery for lunch carry their meal in a bag or container that is wipeable and clearly labelled with their name. Any food brought into our schools should comply with our **Good Food Foundations** set out above and the **Allergies** restrictions listed below.

No packed lunches supplied by parents will be heated up by us.

We have partnered with [Mary van der Westhuizen](#), who is a wonderful and very knowledgeable Nutritional Therapist, to help us write this policy. Mary has also come up with some very tasty and helpful homemade Lunch ideas - leftover lunches, 5 minute lunches, batch cook lunches and back of the cupboard lunches that are sure to go down a treat and might just help you out when the Ocado order hasn't arrived! You can find these in the Parents' Portal.

## Energy and nutrient needs of 1-4 year olds

In general it is suggested that the energy and nutrient needs of children of this age are met as shown below.



## Snacks

Rocket will provide children with a snack during their school day. We will work hard to provide children with healthy, delicious, and seasonal food that they look forward to eating and often preparing. Each snack will meet the *Good Food Foundations* set out above.

Staff will ensure they use snack time as an opportunity to introduce children to new produce and flavours and to develop our Rocket Practical Skills. Teachers will model and encourage children to choose and prepare their own snack with support. Please see our Snack and Mealtime Routine for more information.

## A note on snacks provided at our Rocket Pre-Preps

At Rocket Productions, we are foodies, and we know that applies to a lot of our families too!

We have partnered with [PIKT](#) to supply all our fruit and vegetables. PIKT is a company for the future. They are a [B Corporation](#) (balancing profit and purpose), 100% plastic free, Soil Association certified organic and have committed to being NetZero by 2030. We bonded over a shared love of organic food, sustainability, targeting food waste and treating suppliers, farmers and our environment well. [Mary van der Westhuizen](#), whom some of you may already have met at one of our past coffee mornings, is a wonderful and very knowledgeable Nutritional Therapist who helped steer our food approach. Mary lent us her professional and personal (mum of 3) expertise in feeding children successfully, engaging with food and building food confidence from an early age.

Snacks are on us and the children will be fully immersed in the process. From choosing their seasonal fruits and veggies to safely chopping up and preparing their food options. See our termly 3-week



menu on the Parent's portal and also displayed on the classroom's door, all allergens and alternatives are highlighted.

Our teachers are always on hand at pick up time and will let you know if your child has not eaten much so please do ask them. The idea behind each of these snack suggestions is to provide one food that most children like alongside one food that might be more niche so that children always have something that they like or are accustomed to in addition to something that might break new ground. Trying new food in a nursery setting is a brilliant way to introduce children to new foods; if they see their peers and teachers trying a food then they are more likely to give it a go themselves. Remember, we encourage our children to be brave and that comes to food to!

**Please note that if your child has a particular allergy there will always be an item included in their snack that they can eat.** For instance, seasonal fruit will always be available. However, if you feel that due to his/her allergies your child needs a supplementary item please send those from home and let your Office Guru know first so they can check for any allergens and work with the Health & Safety coordinator and teachers on how to manage snack times.

Sustainability is important to us so we have redoubled our efforts to reduce the food wastage at our schools. Smoothies are a great way to use up left-over fruit & vegetables for the week, the rainbow of colours is always a hit with the children too, not to mention being jam packed with vitamins!

More information from the government on food safety and menus:

Foods to avoid giving babies and young children: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/weaning-and-feeding/foods-to-avoid-giving-babies-and-young-children/>

What to feed young children: [What to feed young children - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/weaning-and-feeding/foods-to-avoid-giving-babies-and-young-children/)

Baby and toddler meal ideas: [Baby and toddler meal ideas - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/weaning-and-feeding/foods-to-avoid-giving-babies-and-young-children/)

Eat better, start better: [Eat-Better-Start-Better1.pdf \(foundationyears.org.uk\)](https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/Eat-Better-Start-Better1.pdf)

Example menus for early years settings in England: [Example menus for early years settings in England: part 1 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101444/Example_menus_for_early_years_settings_in_England_part_1.pdf)

Example menus for early years settings in England part-2: [Example menus for early years settings in England: part 2 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101444/Example_menus_for_early_years_settings_in_England_part_2.pdf)

## Allergies & dietary requirements

### What not to bring

**All our Pre-Preps are nut-free and sesame-free environments.**

We ask that your child does not bring in anything, e.g. for their lunch, that contains nuts or sesame seeds/sesame oil. Examples of these are peanuts and tree nuts such as almonds, walnuts, pecans, pistachios, macadamia nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, Brazil nuts, pine nuts, lychee nuts, acorns.

We have learnt that just having a blanket ban is not enough to keep children safe, therefore awareness and training as well as communication with parents is the best way to reduce any risks.

### What are food allergies

Food allergies are when the body's immune system reacts unusually to a specific food because it mistakenly perceives it as a threat. In children, common food allergies are to milk, eggs, peanuts, nuts, fish and shellfish. Symptoms can include itching in the mouth, throat or ears, a raised itchy red rash (hives), swelling of the face, around the eyes, lips, tongue and roof of the mouth and vomiting. In the most serious cases, a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis, which can include breathing difficulties, light headedness and feeling like you are going to faint) can be life-threatening.

It is important that children with suspected food allergies see their GP for referral to an allergy clinic for a formal diagnosis and to know what foods to avoid. Children with severe allergies may be given a device known as an auto-injector pen (e.g. epi-pen) containing a dose of adrenaline to be used in emergencies, the details of which should be included as part of an allergy management plan and in the Pre-Prep's Health Plan.

Food intolerances are different from food allergies. Symptoms tend to appear more slowly, often several hours after eating the food. Symptoms can often include diarrhoea, bloating and stomach cramps. Unlike food allergies, food intolerances are not life-threatening.

At Rocket Pre-Preps, individual dietary requirements are respected, and teachers will always support and nurture children's understanding of sensitive subjects.

All food prepared for a child with a specific allergy will be prepared in an area where there is no chance of contamination and served on equipment that has not been in contact with this specific food type, hence the importance to be kept up to date of any allergies or dietary requirements your child may have. All staff receive full paediatric first aid training every two years which includes how to respond to an anaphylactic shock. (see our Allergies and Allergic Reactions for more information).





After careful review we now have in place an 'snack and mealtimes routine' to ensure the safety of the children in our care. We also now carry out a two-point check during both the ordering and delivery stages as well as a two-point pre-morning check to ensure facilities are clean, food is clearly labelled and stored correctly to avoid cross contamination and alert of any allergens. Teachers also ensure every morning that food is suitable and in good condition and safe for all children (e.g. checking against the list of allergens, dietary requirement, health requirements).

## What to do if you child has an allergy or dietary requirements.

We obtain information from parents regarding their children's dietary needs, including any special dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies as well as any special health requirements when they first join in. If your child develops any allergies or any other dietary/medical reasons which may affect his or her eating at any time during the academic year, please inform your Pre-Prep Office in writing, by email, with full details. This is so the Pre-Prep's snacks can be adjusted accordingly or so we can ask other parents to avoid bringing in certain products for lunch to ensure the safety of all children in our care.

The Office Guru will always ask you to come in and record this information in a Health Plan. This form will include:

- details of their special dietary requirements/allergies, and a clear list of the foods which can and can't be eaten.
- how meals and snacks will be provided
- precautions to take during activities involving food e.g. baking activities, messy play...
- actions (clear steps) to take in the event of an emergency (e.g. allergic reaction), including names, dose and administration of prescribed medication, and the staff trained to administer it.
- Whether teacher will need additional training to manage these requirements

Parents will then need to discuss this plan with the class teachers (key person) in person and sign the form. We will review the form every term in person to ensure teachers understand the procedures to follow and that any changes or updates are also discussed.

Both the Office Guru and the Health & Safety coordinator will ensure this information is easily available for all staff, for example by displaying details and photos of children with special dietary requirements in the kitchen and classrooms (this is kept confidential to the Pre-Prep staff).

## Birthdays and celebrations

We are a festive bunch at Rocket and love to celebrate birthdays and national or religious days which hold special importance for our children. Children are invited to bring in treats (e.g. birthday cake) **(no nuts/no sesame)** to share with their class to celebrate these special occasions. Children will get the chance to celebrate, however treats will not be consumed in the classroom. Treats will be handed out at the end of the day for parents to chose whether to give these to their own child.



This helps reducing the risk of any intolerances and allergic reactions as well as preventing tooth decay and ensuring the child's appetite has not been spoiled before their snack, lunch or tea.

Treats must be shop bought with a clear list of ingredients, treats must be handed to the Office Guru so they can cross-check for any allergies. Unfortunately, we cannot accept homemade treats for the whole classroom at present due to risk of cross-contamination.

No cooking activities will form part of parent partnership activities. We will ensure that children continue to have opportunities to try new flavours or be able to cook and bake themselves as part of our curriculum, however as part of a planned and risk assessed teacher-led activity.

## Mealtimes at our Rocket Pre-Preps

- 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 and conversations are encouraged. During meals and snack times children are encouraged to use their table manners and to say 'please' and 'thank you'.
- Staff use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink, and feeding themselves (Rocket Practical Skills)
- Staff support children to make healthy choices and to understand about eating consciously, sustainably, with enjoyment and having respect for where our food comes from.
- Cultural differences in eating habits are respected and often explored as a class
- Children are given time to eat at their own pace and not rushed
- Withholding food will never be used as a form of punishment or coercion and food will not be used as an incentive for good behaviour
- We promote positive attitudes to healthy eating through play opportunities and discussions.
- No child will be left alone when eating/drinking to minimise the risk of choking. Teachers will always supervise children.
- We understand that high standards of food hygiene are critical. All staff who prepare and handle food are competent to do so and receive training in food safety & hygiene.
- Children also understand the importance of good hygiene and are taught to wash their hands correctly before snack and lunch time and during (if necessary) with soap and running water (see washing hand routine on our 'Snack and mealtime routine')
- We follow our Snack and Mealtime routine to ensure all staff are aware of any checks (e.g. allergies) and hazards and understand their responsibility in caring for and keeping children safe.

More information on healthy eating and ideas

<https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes>

<https://family.co/blog/management/healthy-eating-early-years/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes>



<https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/subsites/citylivinglocalife/gogolborne/eathappy/5adayyourway/eattherainbowrecipes.aspx>

[https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/articles/what\\_makes\\_a\\_great\\_packed\\_lunch](https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/articles/what_makes_a_great_packed_lunch)

<https://www.firststepsnutrition.org/>

<https://www.firststepsnutrition.org/eating-well-early-years>

## For staff

Staff must be sure that any food brought from home also meets this Food Policy. Staff food will be always labelled and safely stored away from children's or Pre-Prep purchased food. Staff must not eat any produce that contains any allergens or can pose a risk to children.

Staff will be asked to provide, with consent, any allergies or health requirements so the Pre-Prep can ensure the safety of our staff too.

Staff handling and preparing food will complete a Level 2 Food safety & Hygiene course.

Promoting and supporting healthy eating in early years settings: [CFT-Early-Years-Promoting-Supporting-Healthy-Eating-FINAL.pdf \(foundationyears.org.uk\)](#)

Catering for special dietary requirements, A guide for early years settings in England:  
<http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2015/11/CFT-Early-Years-Special-diets-Factsheet-FINAL.pdf>

Food Safety EYFS: [Food safety - Help for early years providers - GOV.UK \(education.gov.uk\)](#)

## Food safety

The EYFS framework (2021) requires providers to take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well. We gather information from parents regarding their children's dietary needs, including any special dietary requirements and food allergies and put in a Health Plan. This Health plan is discussed and signed by both teachers and parents and reviewed every term. A list with photos of the children and their allergies, dietary requirements and any health requirements is always displayed in the kitchen, where only staff can access, and each classroom has a copy.

Our Kitchen areas are suitable facilities for the hygienic preparation of food for children and to avoid cross contamination. At present we only provide snacks and we encourage children to help in preparing this. We refer to the 'Early years food choking hazards' to avoid any choking hazard when preparing or handling food. Children understand how to use cutlery safely and pour their own drinks. Good hygiene and high levels of cleanliness is always observed, and children understand the importance of washing hands.

Effective provision includes planning for and reflecting on physical care events such as dressing, washing, feeding, resting, and toileting. Respectful caregiving requires thoughtful organisation and

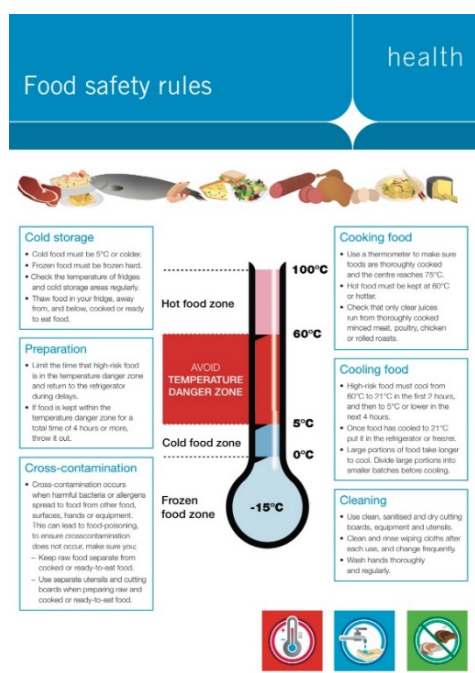


respectful interactions. We ask staff to take their time and focus on the child and their individual needs. All staff must ensure that children are adequately supervised whilst eating.

We now have an 'snack and mealtimes routine' to reflect the above and to ensure the safety of the children in our care. We also now carry out a two-point check during both the ordering and delivery stages as well as a two-point pre-morning check to ensure facilities are clean, food is clearly labelled and stored correctly to avoid cross contamination and alert of any allergens. Teachers also ensure every morning that food is suitable and in good condition and safe for all children (e.g. checking against the list of allergens, dietary requirement, health requirements).

We aim for all staff who prepare food to complete a Level 2 in Food & Hygiene and best practices and procedures will be reviewed termly. Please visit the following link for more information on food safety: <https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/safeguarding-and-welfare/food-safety>

Please see the following posters displayed on the classrooms and kitchen areas to ensure staff are reminded of good practices such as avoiding cross contamination and avoiding choking hazards.



### Early years food choking hazards

Below is a table of advice on key foods for care givers who are involved with preparing and serving food for babies and young children (under 5 years old)



Vegetable and fruits	Advice
Pips or stones in fruit	Always check beforehand and remove hard pips or stones from fruit.
Small fruits	Cut small round fruits like grapes, cherries, berries, strawberries and cherry tomatoes, into small pieces: cut lengthways and then again cut them in halves (quarters).
Large fruits and firm fruits	Cut large fruits like melon and firm fruits like apple into slices instead of small chunks. For very young children, consider grating or mashing firm fruits, or softening them up by steaming or simmering.
Vegetables	Cut vegetables like carrots, cucumber and celery into narrow batons. For very young children consider grating or mashing. Firm vegetables and legumes like butter beans, chickpeas and tofu, or softening them up by steaming or simmering.
Skin on fruit and vegetables	Consider removing the skin from fruit and vegetables, especially for very young children. Peeled fruit and vegetables can be swallowed more easily.
Cooking fruit and vegetables	Consider softening firm fruit and vegetables (such as carrots, broccoli, yam and apples) by steaming or simmering until soft. Serve cut into slices or narrow batons.
Meat and fish	Advice
Sausages and hot dogs	Cut sausages and hot dogs into short strips. Cut them in half and then lengthways or as thinly as possible. Peeling the skin off the sausages helps them to be swallowed more easily.
Meat or fish	Remove bones from meat and fish. Cut meat into strips as thinly as possible. Remove skin and fat from meat and fish, it will help the food pass smoothly down the throat.
Cheese	Advice
Grate or cut cheese	Grate or cut cheese into short strips. Cut lumps of cheese as narrow as possible.
Nuts and seeds	Advice
Chop or flake whole nuts	Chop or flake whole nuts, peanuts and seeds. Whole nuts should not be given to children under five years old.
Bread	Advice
White bread and other breads	White bread can form a ball shape with a dough-like texture at the back of a child's throat. If not chewed properly, brown bread or toasted white bread are good alternatives. Cut bread, chapatis, naan bread and other breads into narrow strips.
Snacks and other foods	Advice
Popcorn	Do not give babies and young children popcorn.
Chewing gum and marshmallows	Do not give babies and young children chewing gum or marshmallows.
Peanut butter	Do not give babies and young children peanut butter on its own, only use as a spread.
Jelly cubes	Do not give babies and young children raw jelly cubes.
Boiled sweets and ice cubes	Do not give babies and young children boiled, hard, gooey, sticky or cough sweets, or ice cubes.
Raisins and other dried fruits	Do not give babies under the age of 1 whole raisins or dried fruits. Cut them into small pieces.

Make sure food is prepared appropriately for children under 5 years old, see: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/food-poisoning/>  
It is also advisable that care givers are familiar with how to respond to a choking incident, see: How to stop a child from choking: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby-first-aid-and-safety/first-aid-how-to-stop-a-child-from-choking/> and How to resuscitate a child: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby-first-aid-and-safety/first-aid-how-to-resuscitate-a-child/>

## Cooking activities and play

At Rocket we love providing children with first-hand experiences using real objects and we also love supporting children's development through sensory activities and exposing them to baking and cooking as part of our Rocket Practical life skills.

Some common resources teachers might use for sensory or messy play include playdough, cornflour, dried pasta and rice. These are risk assessed (no choking hazards or allergens are used) and children are modelled how to use it and always supervised by an adult.

All cooking activities, including any after school cooking clubs will carry out a risk assessment and products will need to be approved and purchased by the office only following our two-point check.