



Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Health

Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, they must be healthy, balanced and nutritious.

6.6 Food Hygiene

Policy statement

Impact Montessori is committed to maintaining high standards of food hygiene and food safety in the purchase, storage, preparation, cooking, serving and disposal of food and drinks provided to children.

We provide and/or serve food to children in the following ways:

- snacks;
- packed lunches provided by parents/carers; and
- food prepared as part of the setting's activities, where appropriate.

Where food and drinks are provided by the setting, they will be healthy, balanced and nutritious and will take account of children's individual dietary requirements, food allergies, cultural and religious requirements and any relevant health needs.

Fresh drinking water is available and accessible to children throughout the day.

Before a child starts at the setting, we obtain information from parents/carers about the child's dietary requirements, food allergies, preferences and any relevant health requirements. This information is recorded, communicated to relevant staff and regularly reviewed.

We comply with applicable food-safety legislation and local authority Environmental Health requirements. Where registration as a food business is required, Impact Montessori will maintain the appropriate registration with the relevant local authority.

Food safety management

- We operate appropriate food-safety management procedures based on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles.
- We use the Food Standards Agency's **Safer Food, Better Business (SFBB)** guidance and associated records where appropriate to the type and scale of food preparation undertaken at the setting. GOV.UK+1
- The manager or nominated food-safety lead is responsible for ensuring that food-safety procedures are implemented, monitored and reviewed.
- Food-safety procedures will be reviewed whenever there is a significant change to our food preparation, equipment, suppliers, premises or working practices.
- All staff involved in preparing or handling food will receive appropriate food-hygiene training and will understand the food-safety procedures relevant to their role.
- Staff must report immediately to the manager any concern about food safety, contamination, equipment, temperatures, pests, illness or other circumstances that could make food unsafe.

- Staff who are experiencing symptoms of gastrointestinal illness must not handle food where doing so could put children at risk and must comply with the setting's sickness and exclusion procedures.

Purchasing food

- We use reputable and reliable suppliers.
- Food is checked on delivery for:
 - use-by dates;
 - damage to packaging;
 - appropriate temperature where applicable;
 - signs of contamination or deterioration; and
 - evidence that chilled and frozen food has been maintained appropriately.
- Food past its **use-by date** will not be used.
- We follow manufacturers' storage instructions and relevant food-safety guidance.
- We take appropriate steps to prevent cross-contamination between raw and ready-to-eat foods.

Storage of food

- Chilled and frozen foods are stored at appropriate temperatures.
- Refrigerators are maintained at **5°C or below**, unless a specific food manufacturer's instruction requires a different temperature. The Food Standards Agency recommends checking refrigerator temperatures regularly and states that food requiring refrigeration should be kept at 8°C or below. GOV.UK
- Fridge temperatures are checked regularly and recorded in accordance with our food-safety management procedures.
- Frozen food is stored in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Food is stored in clean, suitable containers and protected from contamination.
- Raw and ready-to-eat foods are stored separately and, where appropriate, covered and clearly identified.
- Food is stored away from cleaning chemicals and other hazardous substances.
- Dry foods are stored in clean, dry areas and protected from pests.
- Food is checked regularly for signs of deterioration, mould, pests or contamination.
- Stock is rotated appropriately so that food is used within its safe shelf life.

Packed lunches

Where children bring packed lunches from home:

- Parents/carers will be provided with information about suitable, healthy and safe packed lunches.
- Parents/carers will be asked to inform the setting of any food allergies, intolerances, dietary requirements or health needs.
- Chilled foods should be provided in an insulated lunch bag or cool bag with a suitable ice pack where necessary.
- On arrival, packed lunches requiring refrigeration will be stored appropriately and promptly.
- Food that requires chilling must not be left at room temperature for prolonged periods.
- Where food is transported without refrigeration, it should be kept cold using an appropriate cool bag and ice pack. If chilled food cannot be kept cold, it should be consumed as soon as possible and within a maximum of four hours. GOV.UK
- The setting will not knowingly serve food that is unsafe, spoiled, contaminated or beyond its use-by date.
- Leftover food from children's packed lunches will normally be disposed of at the end of the relevant session unless there is a safe and agreed arrangement for its return to the child's parent/carer.
- Staff will follow the setting's procedures for managing food allergies and anaphylaxis.

Food preparation and serving

- Food preparation areas are cleaned and disinfected appropriately before and after use.
- Food-contact surfaces are clean, suitable and maintained in good condition.
- Separate and appropriate facilities are provided for handwashing and washing food equipment.
- Staff wash their hands thoroughly before handling food and after activities that could cause contamination.
- Staff use appropriate protective clothing where required.
- Utensils, crockery and food-preparation equipment are clean and stored hygienically.
- Appropriate measures are taken to prevent cross-contamination, including contamination from allergens.
- Food is prepared, cooked, cooled, reheated and served in accordance with safe food-handling procedures.
- Food is served at an appropriate temperature for children and checked before serving where necessary to prevent burns or scalds.
- Hot food and drinks are handled carefully and kept away from children where they could cause injury.
- Waste food is disposed of safely and regularly.
- Cleaning materials, chemicals and other hazardous substances are stored securely and away from children's access.
- Children do not have unsupervised access to food-preparation areas or kitchens.

Food allergies and dietary requirements

- We obtain and record information about each child's food allergies, intolerances, dietary requirements and relevant health conditions before the child starts.
- Allergy information is clearly communicated to staff who need to know.
- Where a child has a diagnosed food allergy, we follow the child's individual healthcare plan or allergy management arrangements where applicable.
- Staff take reasonable steps to prevent accidental exposure to known allergens.
- Food labels and ingredients are checked where necessary before food is given to a child with a known allergy or dietary restriction.
- We take account of religious, cultural, ethical and medically required dietary needs.
- Staff will never make assumptions about whether food is suitable for an individual child.
- Where there is uncertainty about whether a food is suitable, it will not be given to the child until the matter has been clarified.
- Emergency medication, including adrenaline auto-injectors where prescribed, will be managed in accordance with the child's healthcare plan and the setting's medication procedures.

Children taking part in food preparation and cooking

Cooking and food-preparation activities may provide valuable opportunities for children to develop independence, communication, mathematical skills and understanding of healthy food.

When children participate in food preparation:

- activities are appropriately risk assessed;
- children are supervised at all times;
- children wash their hands before handling food;
- staff teach and model appropriate food-hygiene practices;
- ingredients are checked for known allergens and dietary restrictions;
- children are protected from hot surfaces, boiling water, sharp utensils and other hazards;
- age- and developmentally appropriate equipment is used;
- electrical equipment is used only under appropriate adult supervision;
- children are never left unsupervised with cooking equipment or potentially hazardous food-preparation equipment; and
- food prepared by children is handled, cooked and stored safely before being eaten.

Cleaning and equipment

- Food-preparation areas and equipment are cleaned using appropriate methods and products.
- Cleaning products and chemicals are securely stored away from children.
- Cloths, sponges and other cleaning materials used for food preparation are maintained hygienically and replaced as necessary.
- Waste is stored and disposed of in a manner that prevents contamination and discourages pests.
- The kitchen and food-preparation areas are monitored for signs of pests.
- Any evidence of pest infestation is reported immediately to the manager and appropriate action is taken.

Staff illness and food handling

Staff must inform the manager if they have symptoms of vomiting, diarrhoea or another illness that could present a food-safety risk.

Staff with infectious gastrointestinal symptoms will not handle food where doing so could risk contamination and will follow the setting's sickness and exclusion procedures.

The manager will take appropriate action where there is a suspected risk of food contamination arising from illness.

Food poisoning and suspected outbreaks

Food poisoning can occur for a variety of reasons, and not every case of sickness or diarrhoea is necessarily caused by food poisoning.

If food poisoning is suspected:

- the manager will record the incident and seek appropriate advice;
- appropriate medical advice will be sought for affected children or adults;
- the local authority Environmental Health team will be contacted where required, particularly where there is a suspected outbreak or where the setting may be the source;
- we will cooperate fully with any investigation by Environmental Health or other relevant agencies;
- relevant food, packaging, records and other information will be retained where necessary to support an investigation; and
- appropriate infection-control measures will be implemented.

We will notify Ofsted where required by the EYFS and current Ofsted notification requirements.

In particular, **food poisoning affecting two or more children cared for on the premises must be notified to Ofsted as soon as reasonably practicable and within 14 days at the latest.** Lambeth Council+1

Food-safety records

The setting will maintain appropriate records in accordance with our food-safety management system, which may include:

- fridge and freezer temperature checks;
- cleaning records;
- food-safety checks;
- food delivery checks;
- allergen and dietary information;
- staff food-hygiene training;
- records of incidents and corrective actions; and

- relevant SFBB records.

Records will be kept securely and made available to Environmental Health or other authorised bodies when required.

Responsibilities

The manager has overall responsibility for ensuring that:

- appropriate food-safety arrangements are in place;
- food-handling staff are competent and appropriately trained;
- food-safety records are maintained;
- staff understand and follow the setting's procedures;
- allergy and dietary information is communicated appropriately;
- food-safety incidents are acted upon promptly; and
- required notifications are made.

All staff involved in food handling are responsible for following the setting's food-safety procedures and reporting any food-safety concerns immediately.

Legal and regulatory framework

This policy should be read alongside:

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers, current from 1 September 2026. GOV.UK
- Food Safety Act 1990.
- Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013, as amended.
- Regulation (EC) No. 852/2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs, as retained in UK law and as amended.
- Food Standards Agency guidance, including *Safer Food, Better Business*. GOV.UK
- Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition guidance. GOV.UK
- Relevant local authority Environmental Health requirements.

Further guidance

- Food Standards Agency – *Safer Food, Better Business*.
- Department for Education – *Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition* guidance.
- Local authority Environmental Health food-safety guidance.

Policy approval

This policy was adopted by: Impact Montessori nursery

On: _____

Date to be reviewed: _____

Signed on behalf of the provider: _____

Name of signatory: _____

Role of signatory: _____