Little Disciples Childcare

Food Hygiene Policy

"Caring for children, supporting parents, and sparking imaginations. Where quality, affordability and excitement meet!"

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Owner:	Little Disciples Childcare
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Responsible Individual Signature:	
Responsible Individual Signature:	

Version	Date	Changes Made	Author	Approved By	Next Review Date
1.0	September 2023	Initial Release for Provider changes	S. Gocher	A. Stephens	Annually – September 2024
2.0	October 2024	Policy Review	S. Gocher	A. Stephens	Annually – October 2025
2.1	January 2025	Minor amendments – Pg numbers and Document Control	S. Gocher	A. Stephens	Annually – October 2025
2.2	October 2025	Policy review	S. Gocher	A. Stephens	Annually – October 2026
3.0	October 2026	Updated food safety procedures, allergy management, hygiene controls and outbreak reporting. Clarified responsibilities, record keeping and guidance references.	S. Gocher	A. Stephens	Annually – October 2027

Policy Statement
At Little Disciples Childcare, we are committed to providing a seamless and cohesive approach to childcare across all our services. This policy and procedure apply equally to both our Nursery Plus provision and our Breakfast, Afterschool, and Holiday Club services. This integrated framework ensures consistent standards of care, safety, and quality across all aspects of our provision, fostering a supportive and nurturing environment for every child in our care.

Purpose and scope

Little Disciples Childcare provides food and drink safely and hygienically, taking account of each child's age, allergies, dietary requirements and individual needs.

This policy applies to Nursery Plus, Breakfast Club, Afterschool Club and Holiday Club. It covers food purchased, received, stored, prepared or served by the setting, food brought from home and children's cooking activities.

It must be read alongside our safeguarding, infection prevention and control, medication, individual healthcare, accident and emergency, and inclusion policies.

Responsibilities

The Manager & Responsible Individuals oversee the implementation of this policy and ensures that suitable facilities, equipment, staffing and training are available.

The Manager & Persons in Charge are responsible for:

- Maintaining the setting's food safety management arrangements and food business registration.
- Ensuring that food handlers receive appropriate instruction, supervision and training.
- Checking that food safety records are completed and reviewing any problems.
- Ensuring that children's allergy and dietary information is accurate, accessible to relevant staff and acted upon.
- Taking action when food, equipment or working practices may be unsafe.
- Contacting Environmental Health, Public Health Wales and CIW when required.

The person preparing or serving food completes the relevant checks and follows the setting's documented safe methods.

All staff must report food safety concerns, equipment faults, illness and changes to children's dietary information promptly. The Person in Charge allocates these responsibilities to a suitable deputy during absence.

Food safety management

We maintain a documented food safety management system based on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point principles, using the relevant Food Standards Agency Safer Food Better Business guidance.

Our safe methods reflect the food we provide and the equipment and facilities we use. They are reviewed whenever menus, activities, equipment or working arrangements change, following an incident, or when guidance changes.

Food safety records are kept in the main kitchen. These include opening and closing checks, temperature checks, cleaning records, corrective actions and staff training records.

Staff hygiene and training

Staff must receive appropriate food hygiene instruction and supervision before handling food. Staff responsible for preparing food must have training appropriate to their duties, including allergy awareness. Training and refresher needs are reviewed and recorded.

Staff handling food must:

- Wash and dry their hands thoroughly before preparing or serving food and after using the toilet, handling waste or raw food, cleaning, or any activity that could contaminate their hands.
- Use the designated handwashing facilities, with running water, liquid soap and hygienic hand-drying facilities.
- Wear clean clothing and suitable protective clothing where needed.
- Keep hair secured and cover cuts with a suitable waterproof dressing.
- Avoid touching ready-to-eat food unnecessarily.
- Follow the setting's arrangements for jewellery, nails and personal items.

Gloves, where used, do not replace handwashing and must be changed between tasks.

Staff must report vomiting, diarrhoea, infected wounds or other illness that could affect food safety before starting work, or immediately if symptoms develop at work.

Staff with vomiting or diarrhoea must not handle food and must normally remain away from the setting until at least 48 hours after their last episode. Longer exclusion or additional precautions may be required following public health advice.

Purchasing and receiving food

We purchase food from reputable suppliers and check deliveries and shopping before use.

Checks include packaging condition, use-by dates, storage instructions, signs of contamination and temperature where relevant. Chilled and frozen food is put into suitable storage promptly.

Unsafe food, damaged packaging or food that does not meet our requirements is rejected or separated from usable food and dealt with safely. Relevant supplier and purchase information is retained to support traceability.

Food storage and temperature control

Food is stored according to its labelling and our documented safe methods.

We:

- Keep chilled food at 8°C or below and operate refrigerators at a target of 5°C or below.
- Keep frozen food frozen and follow the manufacturer's storage instructions.
- Check and record refrigerator temperatures at the start of each operating day and more often where our risk assessment requires.
- Check freezer temperatures where freezers are used.
- Keep raw food separate from, and below, ready-to-eat food.
- Cover and label opened or prepared food, including the opening or preparation date and the date by which it must be used.
- Follow use-by dates and instructions about use after opening.
- Rotate stock and avoid overfilling refrigerators.

If a temperature check is outside the agreed limit, staff inform the Person in Charge immediately. Affected food is assessed using our food safety procedures, including the temperature reached and the likely time involved. Food is moved to safe storage where appropriate, and food whose safety cannot be established is discarded.

The fault, decision and corrective action are recorded. Staff must not assume food is safe because it looks or smells normal.

Food preparation and serving

Food preparation takes place in a clean, designated area. Activities that could contaminate food must not take place in that area while food is being prepared.

Staff follow safe methods to prevent contamination between raw food, ready-to-eat food, equipment and surfaces. Separate equipment is used where required, and equipment is cleaned and disinfected appropriately between tasks.

Fruit and vegetables are washed where necessary. Food is protected from contamination and kept outside temperature-controlled storage for the shortest practicable time.

Where food is cooked, reheated, cooled or held hot, staff follow documented time and temperature controls appropriate to the food. These procedures include how temperatures are checked, any records required and what to do if a limit is not met.

Food is served at a temperature suitable for children to eat safely. Children are supervised while eating, and food is prepared and presented to reduce age-related choking risks.

Food allergies and individual dietary requirements

We obtain written information about each child's allergies, intolerances, medical dietary needs and religious or cultural dietary requirements before providing food.

Parents and carers are asked to notify us promptly of changes. Staff also check information with families regularly and whenever a concern or change is identified.

Where a child has a food allergy or a condition requiring a specific response, we agree an individual healthcare or dietary plan with the parent or carer, obtaining professional advice where appropriate.

The plan records:

- The foods or ingredients to avoid.
- Measures needed to prevent exposure and cross-contact.
- The child's symptoms and required response.
- Prescribed emergency medication and its location, where applicable.
- Staff training requirements and emergency contacts.

Relevant staff, including temporary and cover staff, must understand the child's requirements before preparing or serving food.

Staff check ingredient information whenever food is purchased or used, including when a familiar product changes or a substitution is supplied. We maintain accurate allergen information for the food we provide and make it available to parents and carers.

We prevent allergen cross-contact through suitable storage, preparation, cleaning and serving arrangements. Before serving, staff check that each child receives food suitable for their recorded needs.

Children must not share food where this could put another child at risk. We do not describe food or the setting as allergen-free unless that assurance can be substantiated.

If a reaction is suspected, staff follow the child's emergency plan and the setting's emergency procedures immediately. They summon emergency medical help when required, administer prescribed medication in accordance with the plan and staff training, and inform the parent or carer. Emergency action must not be delayed while trying to contact a parent.

Food brought from home

Parents and carers providing packed lunches or other food are given clear information about storage, labelling, dietary restrictions and any arrangements needed to protect children with allergies.

Food containers must be clearly labelled with the child's name. Food requiring refrigeration is placed in the refrigerator promptly on arrival and stored to prevent contamination.

Staff check that food is suitable for the child and raise concerns about damaged packaging, unsafe storage, choking risks or allergen exposure with the Person in Charge.

Food considered unsafe is not served. Staff contact the parent or carer and arrange a suitable alternative, taking account of the child's dietary requirements.

Food brought in for celebrations or activities must be agreed with the setting in advance so that ingredients, allergens and storage arrangements can be checked.

Cleaning and premises

We follow a documented cleaning schedule stating what must be cleaned, how, how often and by whom.

Food preparation surfaces and equipment are cleaned and disinfected as appropriate before and after use and between tasks that could cause contamination. Cleaning products are suitable for their intended purpose and used according to the manufacturer's instructions, including dilution and contact time.

Handwashing facilities are separate from washing-up facilities. Utensils and crockery are cleaned, dried and stored hygienically.

Cleaning chemicals are stored securely away from food and out of children's reach. Waste is removed regularly and stored in suitable containers. Staff report signs of pests immediately, protect food from contamination and arrange appropriate action.

Children taking part in cooking

Cooking activities are planned and supervised according to children's ages, abilities and individual needs.

Before an activity, staff check ingredients against allergy and dietary records and assess risks from equipment, heat, food handling and choking.

Children are supported to wash their hands and follow simple hygiene rules. They do not have unsupervised access to kitchens, hot surfaces, hot liquids, sharp utensils or electrical equipment.

Children who are unwell must not take part in food preparation where this could create an infection risk.

Healthy eating and drinking

Fresh drinking water is available throughout the session, and children are supported to access it.

We provide food and snacks appropriate to the length of the session and children's needs, taking account of current Welsh Government food and nutrition guidance.

Mealtimes are calm, sociable and appropriately supervised. Suitable seating, utensils and sufficient time are provided. Children are encouraged to explore foods and develop independence, but are never forced to eat or denied food as a punishment.

Suspected food poisoning and outbreaks

Staff report suspected food poisoning or linked cases of vomiting or diarrhoea to the Person in Charge immediately. We do not wait for a confirmed diagnosis before seeking advice about a suspected outbreak.

The Person in Charge will:

- Arrange appropriate care for affected children and contact parents or carers.
- Seek advice promptly from Public Health Wales and Environmental Health as appropriate.
- Stop using any food suspected of being unsafe.
- Secure relevant food, packaging, menus, supplier details and records, and follow advice about retaining samples or disposing of food.
- Introduce the recommended infection prevention, cleaning and exclusion measures.
- Record symptoms, relevant dates, people affected, advice received and actions taken.
- Make any required CIW notification promptly through CIW Online, within the applicable statutory timescale.
- Cooperate with investigations and review the setting's procedures afterwards.

Current contact details and notification instructions are kept in [location] and are accessible to the Person in Charge and deputy.

Monitoring and review

The Person in Charge reviews completed checks, incidents, corrective actions and staff training to ensure that this policy is followed.

This policy is reviewed at least annually and sooner following an incident, a significant change in provision or updated guidance. Changes are communicated to staff and to parents and carers where relevant.

Supporting guidance includes the current Welsh Government National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare, Welsh Government food and nutrition guidance for childcare settings, Food Standards Agency guidance and Public Health Wales infection prevention and control guidance.