



# AUTUMN COTTAGE CHILDCARE

# HEALTH - HYGIENE POLICY

*Issued: April 2026*

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## ABOUT THIS POLICY

This Policy is one of three that details how Autumn Cottage (AC) manages health and wellbeing of its children and staff. This document covers the management of:

- General Setting Hygiene – Cleaning etc.
- Hygiene Education – Handwashing, Dental etc.
- Food & Kitchen Hygiene.

Health - Wellbeing, and Health - Medical Conditions and Medicines have their own separate Policies.

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## GENERAL SETTING HYGIENE

AC strives to ensure that it maintains a high standard of hygiene through:

- A daily cleaning routine including:
    - playroom(s), kitchen, and toilets
    - resources and equipment, dressing up clothes
    - furnishings.
  - Good hygiene practices including:
    - cleaning tables between activities
    - checking toilets regularly
    - wearing protective clothing - such as aprons and disposable gloves - as appropriate
    - providing sets of clean clothes
    - providing tissues and wipes.
  - Waste management
    - Paper towels/tissues/nappies etc. are disposed of appropriately.
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## HYGIENE EDUCATION

AC recognises that teaching young children about personal and societal hygiene is an important element in their education. The AC daily routines encourage the children to learn about their personal hygiene.

## NOSE BLOWING & COUGHING

AC assists children with wiping their noses when they have colds and shows them how to blow their own noses. AC also teaches the importance of safely throwing away dirty tissues



to prevent the spread of germs. They are also encouraged to put their hand over their mouths or shield their mouths with their arm when coughing.

### **HANDWASHING**

Good hand hygiene practices for everyone using, visiting, or working at AC have a positive impact on the health, safety and well-being of the children and staff members.

AC staff will assist the children in hand washing, ensuring that they are washing and drying them correctly. This includes:

- Using running water, not stopped-up water.
- Avoiding common containers of water to reduce the spread of germs.
- Using liquid soap.
- Rubbing hands together and cleaning between fingers.
- Ensuring thorough rinsing and drying.

At the same time, AC ensures that children and staff wash their hands where they may have become contaminated, including, but not limited to:

- before and after eating or handling food
- before giving medication
- after toileting or changing a nappy
- after wiping a nose
- after contact with bodily fluids or discharges.

### **DENTAL HYGIENE**

Dental and oral hygiene are vital in a child's development, as lessons learnt at this stage can help ensure good dental health into adulthood. AC help children understand this through:

- 'Ditch the dummy'
- Understanding teeth and why they are important
- What brushing does and demonstrations on how to do it effectively.

### **TOILETING HYGIENE**

*See Intimate Care Policy for nappy changing etc.*

AC understands that toileting is important to a child's development and will ensure a safe and suitable environment for learning about these aspects. AC ensure the toilet area has a high standard of hygiene including hand washing and drying facilities and the disposal of nappies.



## **FOOD AND KITCHEN HYGIENE**

*For Allergy Management, see Health – Medical Conditions & Medicines Policy.*

### **COMPLIANCE**

AC complies with all relevant national and local food safety and hygiene regulations, including:

- Hart District Council
- Hampshire County Council
- Environmental Health Agency.

Periodic inspections are carried out by these bodies.

AC follows the requirements of the Food Standards Agency 'Safer Food/Better Business' publication.

### **STAFF**

For primary food preparation, AC has a dedicated catering staff member trained to the appropriate levels.

At least one other staff member holds a current certificate in Food Hygiene. This will allow cover in the event of the primary catering staff being unavailable. This person also cascades information to all staff members who support the snack bar (see below) and take part in cooking activities.

### **KITCHEN**

- Fridges are kept at the correct temperatures. These are read daily and readings recorded.
- Food cooked on site is probed to ensure it has reached a 'safe' cooking temperature above 75°C.
- Milk is checked to ensure it is in-date and contamination-free.
- Food preparation areas are cleaned before and after use.
- All surfaces are clean and non-porous.
- There are separate facilities for handwashing and for washing up.
- All utensils, crockery etc are clean and stored appropriately.
- Waste food is disposed of daily.

### **CONSUMPTION - GENERAL**

- AC ensure that children receive only food and drink consistent with identified dietary needs and preferences. This may be in accordance with religious requirements or alternative dietary approaches, as agreed with parent/carers.
- Preparation of formula – Bottle information is given during child's registration. The procedure followed at AC is in Appendix 1 at the end of this document.
- For children who drink milk, AC provide semi-skimmed pasteurised milk.
- There is a designated eating area within the setting.
- Food is prepared and cut to meet age appropriate safe food preparation guidelines (See below)



- Foods offered meet statutory healthy eating government guidance

### **CONSUMPTION - SNACK BAR, LUNCH AND TEA**

AC regards the daily 'Snack Bar' and 'Lunch and Tea' times as important parts of a child's day. Eating represents a social time for children and a supporting adult helps children to learn about healthy eating, as AC aim to promote and encourage healthy choices.

Children can choose their Snack Time (within a set timescale), so as not to interrupt their play. Snack Time helps children to develop independence through making choices, serving themselves drinks and feeding themselves.

During Meal Time:

- There is appropriate supervision; children are in sight line of staff and there is a first aid trained staff member present
- Children do not walk about with food and drinks.
- Children bring their own water bottles, and fresh drinking water is available.
- For food allergies, children are not allowed to share or swap their food.

### **Food Provided From Home**

Children usually have all meals and snacks provided onsite by AC however in some exceptional circumstances Parents/Carers may provide food from home for their child's session. Food products from home must be reflective of a healthy balanced diet as per NHS Eatwell guidance.

Food provided should:

- Not have high sugar content or be heavily processed this would include but is not exclusive to chocolate bars, cakes, high sugar fruit bars, raisins and pastries.
- Foods cannot contain Nuts or Peanuts inclusive of products that say 'May Contain'
- Foods brought into the setting should be clearly labelled with all ingredients and state allergens in bold.
- Foods must be texturally age appropriate and pre cut for the child to avoid choking hazards.

Any food products brought in for children that are not deemed suitable by the Manager on duty will not be given to the child and the parent will be informed at the time of this decision.

### **COOKING ACTIVITIES**

When children take part in cooking activities, they:

- are supervised at all times
- are kept away from hot surfaces and hot water
- do not have unsupervised access to electrical equipment
- understand the importance of hand washing and other hygiene rules
- may be introduced to foods from a variety of cultural backgrounds, providing children with some familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.



## FOOD POISONING - REPORTING

Where children and/or adults have been diagnosed by a GP or hospital doctor to be suffering from food poisoning and where the source of the outbreak may be at AC, the Manager will:

- Contact the Environmental Health Department and Public Health England , to report the outbreak and will comply with any investigation.
- If the food poisoning is identified as a notifiable disease under the Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 1988, AC will also report the matter to Ofsted within 14 days.

## Safe Fruit & Vegetable Preparation Guide for Day Nurseries

Age Range: 3 months – 4 years

This guide follows general safety guidance from the NHS and First Steps Nutrition Trust to reduce choking risks in early years settings.

### General Safety Rules (Children Under 5)

- Food should be soft and manageable.
- Avoid hard, round, small foods.
- Cut foods lengthways rather than round where possible.
- Children should sit down while eating.
- Always supervise children during meals.

### Fruit – Safe Preparation Guide

Fruit	Under 2 Years	2–4 Years
Grapes	Quarter lengthways	Cut lengthways
Cherry tomatoes	Quarter lengthways	Halved or quartered
Strawberries	Cut into small pieces	Halved or sliced
Blueberries	Squashed or cut	Whole if soft or halved
Raspberries	Whole (very soft)	Whole
Banana	Small slices or mashed	Sliced
Apple	Thin slices/softened or grated	Thin slices or grated
Pear	Thin slices/softened or grated	Thin slices
Peach / Nectarine	Soft Thin slices	Slices
Melon	Thin slices	slices
Kiwi	Small pieces	Slices
Mango	Soft Thin slices	Slices

### Vegetables – Safe Preparation Guide

Vegetable	Under 2 Years	2–4 Years
Carrots	Thin sticks or soft small cubes	Soft sticks or slices
Cucumber	Thin sticks or small cubes	Sticks
Peppers	Thin strips	Strips



Broccoli	Soft cooked florets	Florets
Cauliflower	Soft cooked florets	Florets
Sweetcorn	Cooked kernels	Kernels
Peas	Slightly mashed	Whole if soft
Green beans	Soft cooked, cut small	Small pieces
Courgette	Soft cooked slices	Slices
Butternut squash	Soft cubes or mash	Soft cubes
Sweet potato	Mash or soft cubes	Soft cubes

### Foods Requiring Extra Care (High Choking Risk)

Food	Safe Preparation
Grapes	Quarter lengthways
Cherry tomatoes	Quarter lengthways
Raw apple	Grate or thin slices
Raw carrot	Cook or grate
Sausages / hot dogs	Cut lengthways then into small pieces
Hard fruit (pear/apple)	Stew or slice thin
Blueberries	Squash or cut
Sugar snap peas	Slice lengthways

### Additional Guidance for Babies (Under 12 Months)

- Food should be soft enough to mash with fingers.
- Cut into finger-length pieces for baby-led weaning.
- No added salt or sugar.

### Good Practice for Nurseries

- Check food is appropriate for the child's developmental stage.
- Ensure children are seated during meals.
- Cut foods appropriately before serving.
- Ensure staff have up-to-date paediatric first aid training.

### Formula Preparation

Bottle feeds are made by the Key Person (whenever practical).

The following requirements apply:

- Use a clean bottle that belongs to the child
- Confirm that the child's formula milk product requirements are correct before preparation
- Check the number of ounces required and add water accordingly.
- wash hands and wear PPE,
- boil the kettle with fresh water and allow it to cool for (at least 10 mins)
- After adding milk powder, replace the lid and shake vigorously ensuring all the powder is dissolved.
- Milk should then be allowed to cool until a suitable temperature for the child.:
  - Milk bottle should be shaken to prevent hot spots that may cause scalding.
  - Check by dripping a small amount onto the preparer's wrist or back of the hand.



Alternatively, Parents may provide accurately measured milk powder in a sterile, lidded, airtight container with a clean/sterilised bottle filled with the corresponding appropriate amount of boiled water. Staff should then prepare the bottle as above.