Food and Drink Policy

Version	5.0
Review Date	October 2026

Policy Statement

Play Inclusion Project believes that eating and preparing food should be an enjoyable and inclusive experience. Mealtimes are valued as an opportunity for social interaction, learning, and promoting independence. Our aim is for all staff, volunteers, children, and young people to enjoy a positive, sociable mealtime experience.

Individual Needs and Dietary Requirements

- Each child or young person's dietary requirements, food allergies, and support needs relating to eating or drinking are recorded on their individual care plan.
- Parents/carers must sign and date the care plan to confirm the information is correct.
- Parents/carers are responsible for informing the Area Manager of any changes to their child's dietary requirements.
- Children are required to bring a packed lunch each day unless otherwise stated in the invitation letter.
- Play Inclusion Project does not have access to refrigeration; parents/carers must consider this when selecting and preparing food.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

Support staff will ensure that each child:

- Washes their hands before eating.
- Collects their own lunch box - if appropriate
- Is kept safe if they have food allergies (staff will check other lunch boxes where relevant).
- Receives appropriate assistance during mealtimes (this may include hand-over-hand feeding, placing small portions of food in front of them, or feeding directly if required).

To protect children with allergies, food swapping or sharing is not permitted.

Staff will eat with the children to encourage social interaction, table manners, and a positive atmosphere.

Updated October 2025
By Joanne Barnes

Staff will model polite behaviour, encouraging children to say “please” and “thank you.”

Staff must not consume hot drinks or hot food (e.g., soup) around children or young people.

Slow eaters will be given adequate time and will never be rushed.

Parents/carers will be informed if their child has not eaten well.

Water will be available to all children throughout the day, and any request for a drink will be met promptly.

Cooking or food-related activities will always respect dietary requirements and allergies.

On days involving eating out, parents/carers must provide money and specify their child’s meal choice if they cannot order independently.

Food Preparation

Only staff holding a valid Food Hygiene Certificate may prepare food.

Food should, wherever possible, be consumed in the room in which it was prepared.

Personal Hygiene and Safety

All staff and young people assisting in food preparation or service must follow these standards:

- Wear appropriate protective clothing at all times.
- Wear sensible footwear (no open sandals).
- False nails, nail extensions, and nail varnish are not permitted.
- Hair must be tied back (regardless of gender) and secured without grips or clips.

Jewellery rules:

- Only one plain wedding band may be worn.
- Small sleeper earrings or studs are acceptable.
- Any other non-removable jewellery must be covered with a blue plaster or blue gloves.

Hands must be washed thoroughly with antibacterial soap:

- Before and after preparing food.
- After using the toilet.
- After handling waste or cleaning.
- After blowing the nose or touching the face, hair, or ears.

Updated October 2025
By Joanne Barnes

Anyone suffering from sickness or diarrhoea must not handle food until they have been symptom-free for 48 hours.

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Updated October 2025
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