

# Blake Laphorn Tarlo Lyons' nursery and childcare news

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## food hygiene in nurseries

**If your setting provides meals for the infants in its care, it will be classed as a food business under food hygiene regulations that came into force in January 2006. Your premises should therefore be registered as a food business with your local authority.**

If you supply food such as meat, fish, dairy products and eggs to other settings (whether your own or belonging to others) your premises might need to be approved rather than registered.

You must also comply with all the other requirements of food hygiene legislation, ensuring that the food preparation areas and the methods you use for preparing the food are hygienic. Hygiene compliance is essential in all catering businesses but especially in nurseries, as young children are particularly vulnerable to food-borne diseases.

The food hygiene regulations set out the basic requirements that must be complied with, and include the following:

- your premises must be kept clean and maintained in good repair and condition
- equipment must be maintained in good order and appropriately cleaned and disinfected
- staff have to follow good personal hygiene practice
- staff must receive adequate instruction and/or training in food hygiene, and must be supervised
- food has to be kept at a safe temperature
- there must be sufficient lighting and ventilation
- adequate arrangements should be in place for the disposal of food waste and other refuse
- all reasonable precautions to prevent pests such as rats, birds, mice, cockroaches and insects gaining entry into food storage and preparation areas must be taken

You must also have a food safety management system based on certain principles. This requires you to look at each step of your food operations – ie delivery – storage – preparation/handling – display – service; identify potential food hazards; and put proper controls into place, many of which will be simple common sense practices, so that food which is produced, stored and served is safe to eat. You must also keep appropriate records to show that your procedures are working properly.

To reduce the risk of food poisoning, the Food Standards Agency recommends the '4Cs' approach to food safety:

- **Chilling** - chill foods in a fridge below 5 degrees centigrade. Freeze foods below minus 18 degrees centigrade.
- **Cooking** - keep hot food above 63 degrees centigrade. Reheat only once to above 82 degrees centigrade. Cook food just before it is to be eaten.
- **Contamination**: raw and cooked foods must be kept apart. Use different clean and disinfected equipment and boards for preparing these foods.
- **Cleaning** - wash your hands properly using hot water and soap. For food equipment and work surfaces use detergents to remove grease. Use disinfectants to reduce bacteria to a safe level.

In addition, you must take particular care over allergens. It is essential that you know if any of the children in your care have allergies. You must also know which of your dishes contain allergens, so you can ensure that these are not served to children who are allergic to the ingredients.

### action points

- Check that you are registered as a food business with your local authority.
- Check whether you need approval rather than registration.
- Make sure you comply with all the general hygiene requirements.
- Make sure you have a food safety management system in place.
- Keep appropriate records.
- Comply with the 4Cs
- Check for allergens



### CONTACT

Mary Chant is a partner in Blake Laphorn Tarlo Lyons' Health and Care group, with a particular expertise in nurseries and childcare provision.

Mary Chant (SOUTHAMPTON)  
[mary.chant@bllaw.co.uk](mailto:mary.chant@bllaw.co.uk)

T: 023 8063 1823  
F: 023 8022 6294

### SOUTHAMPTON

T: 023 8063 1823  
F: 023 8022 6294

### WINCHESTER

T: 01962 844440  
F: 01962 842300

### OXFORD

T: 01865 248607  
F: 01865 728445

### FAREHAM

T: 01489 579990  
F: 01489 579126

### PORTSMOUTH

T: 023 9222 1122  
F: 023 9222 1123

### LONDON

T: 020 7405 2000  
F: 020 7814 9421

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