



EYFS Food Hygiene and Safer Eating Policy

St Anne's Catholic Primary School Nursery and Reception

Policy established	September 2026	Approved by Headteacher	
Approved by Chair of Governors		Review date	September 2027 or on change of guidance from the DfE.
Applies to	EYFS provision	Status	School policy

1. Purpose

St Anne's Catholic Primary School is committed to ensuring that food and drink provided, served or consumed within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is handled safely and that children are supported to eat in a safe, healthy and positive environment.

This policy applies to Nursery and Reception. The school provides snacks within EYFS. At lunchtime, children either bring a packed lunch from home or receive a school dinner supplied through the school's catering arrangements.

The policy reflects the EYFS statutory framework, Department for Education (DfE) nutrition and safer-eating requirements, Food Standards Agency (FSA) food-safety and allergen principles, and the school's duties in relation to allergies and medical conditions.

2. Aims

We aim to:

- provide healthy, balanced and nutritious snacks and promote positive attitudes towards food;
- ensure food is stored, prepared, handled and served hygienically;
- reduce the risks of choking, allergic reaction, contamination and food-borne illness;
- ensure staff understand children's dietary, allergy, intolerance, medical, cultural and religious requirements;
- provide safe arrangements for school dinners and food brought from home;
- ensure children are appropriately supervised whenever they are eating;
- teach and model good hand hygiene and safe eating habits; and
- work closely with parents, carers, catering staff and relevant health professionals.

3. Responsibilities

The Headteacher and EYFS Leader are responsible for ensuring that suitable food-safety, allergy and safer-eating arrangements are in place. Staff who prepare or handle food must be competent to do so and receive appropriate food-hygiene training.

All EYFS staff must know how to access up-to-date information about children's allergies, intolerances, dietary requirements and relevant medical needs. At each snack or mealtime, staff will be clear who is responsible for checking that food is suitable for each child.

The school's catering provider is responsible for food hygiene and allergen controls within its catering operation. EYFS staff remain responsible for ensuring that the correct meal reaches the correct child and that known individual requirements are followed.

4. Information about dietary needs and allergies

Before a child starts in EYFS, the school will obtain information from parents or carers about:

- food allergies and intolerances;
- special dietary requirements or preferences;
- medical conditions that may affect eating or drinking;
- cultural or religious dietary requirements; and
- any professional advice or prescribed emergency treatment.

Parents and carers must inform the school promptly of any change. Information will be kept up to date and shared with staff who need it to keep the child safe.

Children with a diagnosed or suspected significant allergy will be supported in accordance with the school's Allergy Safety Policy and, where required, an Individual Healthcare Plan or allergy action plan.

5. EYFS snacks provided by school

Snacks provided by the EYFS will be selected with reference to current DfE nutrition guidance and will be healthy, balanced and appropriate for young children. Fresh drinking water will be available and accessible throughout the day.

Before serving a snack, staff will:

- check the snack against known allergy, intolerance and dietary information;
- check packaging, ingredient and allergen information where relevant;
- check use-by dates and the condition of food;
- wash hands thoroughly and prepare food on clean surfaces using clean equipment;
- prevent cross-contamination between foods, particularly where allergens are involved;
- prepare food in a form appropriate to the child's age and development to reduce choking risk; and
- ensure any chilled food has been stored safely until required.

Children will not be given food of uncertain ingredients or suitability where this could place them at risk.

6. Food hygiene and infection control

Good hygiene will be maintained whenever food is prepared, served or eaten.

- Staff and children wash and dry their hands before eating or handling food and after using the toilet.
- Food-contact surfaces and equipment are cleaned appropriately before and after use.
- Food is protected from contamination and stored in accordance with packaging instructions and food-safety requirements.
- Perishable foods are kept at safe temperatures and are not left unrefrigerated unnecessarily.
- Separate utensils or other controls are used where necessary to reduce allergen cross-contact.
- Food that is spoiled, contaminated, out of date or otherwise unsafe is discarded.
- Waste is disposed of promptly and food areas are kept clean.
- Staff who are unwell with symptoms that could present a food-safety risk follow the school's infection-control procedures and do not prepare or handle food where this would be unsafe.

7. Packed lunches brought from home

Parents and carers who provide a packed lunch are responsible for the food supplied and should ensure that it is suitable for their child, nutritionally appropriate and packed safely.

Families are asked to:

- use a clean, clearly named lunchbox or bag;
- include foods that are appropriate for the child's age and ability to chew and swallow safely;
- avoid foods prohibited or restricted by the school's allergy-safety arrangements;

- tell the school about any dietary or allergy changes;
- use an insulated lunch bag and ice pack for foods that need to remain chilled where refrigerated storage is not available; and
- follow the school's packed-lunch expectations regarding healthy choices and permitted foods.

Staff will not routinely re-prepare food supplied from home. If staff identify food that appears spoiled, unsafe, presents an obvious choking hazard, conflicts with a known allergy control, or is otherwise unsuitable to serve safely, it will not be given to the child. Staff will provide or seek an appropriate alternative where possible and inform the parent or carer.

Children must not share or swap food from packed lunches.

8. School dinners

School dinners are prepared and served under the school's catering food-safety and allergen-management arrangements. Information about allergies, intolerances and special diets will be communicated to catering staff through the school's agreed procedures.

EYFS staff will take reasonable steps to ensure that:

- the correct meal is provided to the correct child;
- special-diet meals are clearly identified and not substituted without appropriate checks;
- children do not exchange or share food;
- staff know what to do if there is doubt about a meal's suitability; and
- any error, near miss or allergic reaction is reported and reviewed.

If there is uncertainty about whether a school meal is safe for a particular child, it will not be served until its suitability has been confirmed.

9. Allergy safety and cross-contact

The school recognises that even a small amount of an allergen may cause a serious reaction in some children. Allergy controls will therefore be based on individual risk and the school's Allergy Safety Policy rather than relying solely on general statements such as 'allergy-free'.

- Known allergies and action plans are made accessible to relevant staff while protecting confidentiality.
- Staff check food before it is given to a child with an allergy.
- Children are discouraged from touching or sharing other children's food, cups or utensils.
- Tables are cleaned and handwashing is promoted before and after eating.
- Prescribed emergency medication is accessible in accordance with the child's healthcare plan.
- Staff understand the signs of allergic reaction and anaphylaxis and know how to summon emergency help.

Where a child's individual risk assessment requires additional controls, these will be implemented and communicated to relevant staff and families.

10. Safer eating and choking prevention

Children will be seated safely and appropriately for eating. They will be encouraged to eat calmly, take manageable mouthfuls and chew properly. Staff will consider each child's age, development and individual eating needs when food is prepared or offered.

- Food will be cut, prepared or modified where necessary to reduce choking risk.
- Children will not eat while walking, running or playing.
- Children will not be rushed to finish food.
- Staff will remain alert to food that may present a choking risk.
- Children with identified swallowing, oral-motor or feeding difficulties will follow professional advice and individual plans.



Staff supervising EYFS mealtimes and snack times will follow the current EYFS requirements for supervision. When EYFS children are eating, a member of staff with a valid paediatric first-aid certificate will be present in the room.

11. Supervision and mealtime environment

Snack and lunchtimes will be organised to promote safety, dignity, independence and a positive relationship with food.

- Children will be within sight and hearing of staff while eating.
- Staff will actively supervise rather than rely on distant observation.
- Children will be supported to recognise hunger and fullness and will not be forced to eat.
- Food will not be used as a punishment or reward.
- Staff will model good hygiene, safe eating and respectful mealtime behaviour.
- Reasonable time will be allowed for children to eat without unnecessary pressure.

12. Children with SEND, medical or feeding needs

Children who require adaptations because of SEND, medical conditions, sensory needs, swallowing difficulties or feeding plans will be supported through an individualised approach. Advice from parents, carers and relevant health professionals will be followed where appropriate.

Individual plans may include food texture, positioning, specialist equipment, level of assistance, supervision, emergency procedures and foods to avoid. Staff involved in care will receive the information and training needed to implement the plan safely.

13. Food activities and cooking with children

Cooking and food-preparation activities may form part of the EYFS curriculum. Activities will be risk assessed and planned with allergy, hygiene, cross-contamination and choking risks in mind.

- Ingredients will be checked before the activity.
- Children's dietary and allergy information will be reviewed.
- Children and adults will wash hands before handling food.
- Equipment and work surfaces will be clean and suitable.
- Children will be closely supervised and given age-appropriate tasks.
- Any food intended to be eaten will be prepared and stored safely.

14. Celebrations and food brought in for sharing

Food brought into school for birthdays, celebrations or sharing will only be accepted in accordance with school arrangements. Staff must be able to establish that food is suitable for the children who may receive it, including allergen considerations.

Home-prepared food for communal sharing may be restricted where ingredients, allergen information, preparation or storage cannot be verified. Families should check with EYFS staff before bringing food intended for other children.

15. Food poisoning, incidents and near misses

Suspected food poisoning, significant allergic reactions, choking incidents and food-safety near misses will be responded to promptly and recorded under the school's relevant procedures.

The school will seek medical assistance where required, inform parents or carers, preserve relevant information or packaging where useful, and notify relevant authorities where there is a legal requirement to do so.

Incidents and near misses will be reviewed so that lessons can be learned and controls strengthened.

16. Staff training

Staff who prepare or handle food will receive appropriate food-hygiene training. Relevant EYFS staff will also receive information and training appropriate to their role on:

- allergy awareness and the school's allergy procedures;
- recognising and responding to anaphylaxis;
- safer eating and choking prevention;
- paediatric first aid;
- individual children's dietary and medical requirements; and
- recording and reporting food-safety incidents and near misses.

17. Working with parents and carers

The school will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote safe and healthy eating. Families are expected to provide accurate and current information about allergies, intolerances, medical conditions and dietary requirements.

Where concerns arise about the nutritional content, safety or suitability of a child's packed lunch, staff will address these sensitively and constructively with the family, taking account of individual needs, equality considerations and access to appropriate food.

18. Monitoring and review

The EYFS Leader will monitor the implementation of this policy, including snack provision, safer-eating practice, allergy controls and arrangements for packed lunches and school dinners.

This policy will be reviewed in line with the school's policy cycle and sooner following a significant incident or near miss, a change in catering or snack arrangements, or significant changes to EYFS, DfE, FSA or allergy-safety guidance.

Related school policies

- Allergy Safety Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- EYFS Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Packed Lunch / Healthy Eating guidance, where applicable
- Educational Visits Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Parental Involvement and Information Sharing Policy

Key national guidance

- Department for Education: Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers.
- Department for Education: Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance.
- Department for Education: Help for Early Years Providers - Nutrition.
- Department for Education: Allergy safety in schools statutory guidance.
- Food Standards Agency: food hygiene and allergen guidance for schools, colleges and nurseries.
- NHS guidance on food allergy and healthy food for young children.
- Requirements for School Food Regulations 2014, where applicable to school food provision.