



Early Years Safer Eating Policy 2025

This Early Years Safer Eating Policy outlines the school's approach to promoting safe eating practices for all children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). It ensures compliance with statutory requirements and reflects best practice as outlined in Department for Education (DfE) and Ofsted guidance related to child health, safety, and welfare in early years settings.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Framework

- To ensure all children are kept safe from risks associated with eating in the early years setting.
- To embed a whole-school approach that promotes food safety, allergy awareness, and positive eating behaviours.
- To meet statutory obligations under the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (DfE, 2023).

1.2 Legal and Regulatory Framework

This framework complies with:

- Statutory Framework for the EYFS (DfE, 2023) – Section 3: 'Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements'
- The School Food Standards (DfE/NHS England, 2022)
- Food Information Regulations 2014 (Allergen Labelling Guidance)
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF, 2023) – 'Behaviour and Attitudes' and 'Personal Development'

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 Leadership Team

- Ensure all staff are trained in food safety, choking prevention, and allergy awareness.
- Monitor implementation of this policy via regular audits and supervision.

2.2 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Oversee practices in relation to medical conditions and allergies linked with eating.
- Maintain and update Individual Health Care Plans (IHCPs).

2.3 Early Years Practitioners

- Ensure safe food handling and supervision during meal/snack times.
- Recognise signs of choking or allergic reaction and act promptly.
- Follow all protocols concerning food allergies and dietary needs.
- All EYFS staff must hold a current paediatric first aid certificate, as required under Section 3.25 of the Statutory EYFS Framework (DfE, 2023).

2.4 Parents/Carers

- Provide up-to-date information on their child's dietary needs, allergies, or medical diagnoses.
- Ensure appropriate food is provided for packed lunches (where applicable) in line with school guidance.

3. Healthy and Safe Eating Environment

3.1 Supervised Mealtimes

- All meals and snacks must be supervised by a qualified adult.
- Adult-to-child ratios as per EYFS guidance must be followed.



- Staff must remain seated and actively engaged during eating times.

3.2 Safe Seating and Eating Practices

- Children must be seated upright when eating.
- No walking, playing, or running while eating.
- Encourage calm and social eating times to prevent choking risks.

3.3 Choking Prevention

Guidance based on NHS Start for Life and Child Accident Prevention Trust (CAPT):

- No whole grapes, cherry tomatoes, or hard foods that present a choking hazard unless cut lengthwise and appropriate to the age.
- Nuts, popcorn, and boiled sweets should not be served to children under five.
- Educate children on taking small bites, chewing food thoroughly, and not talking with food in their mouths.

4. Allergen Management

4.1 Identification and Risk Assessment

- All allergies must be included in a risk assessment and IHCP, managed in line with Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions (DfE, 2017).
- Update medical records at least termly or when new information is provided.

4.2 Food Labelling and Ingredient Control

- All food served by the school must conform to the Food Information Regulations 2014 allergen labelling requirements.
- Staff must verify all ingredients in foods provided from external suppliers prior to serving.

4.3 Staff Training

- All EYFS staff to be trained on allergy awareness and use of adrenaline auto-injectors (e.g. EpiPens).
- Training records must be maintained and monitored.

4.4 Communication with Parents

- All allergen-related incidents must be promptly communicated to parents.
- Parents must be informed of any shared snacks or party foods ahead of time.

5. Food Preparation and Storage

5.1 Hygiene Practices

- All staff must hold up-to-date Food Hygiene certificates.
- Handwashing policy must be enforced before and after food handling.
- Food preparation areas must be regularly cleaned and sanitised in line with Health and Safety Executive (HSE) expectations.

5.2 Storage Guidelines

- Perishable items must be refrigerated and labelled with storage dates.
- All food containers must be clearly labelled with the child's name and dietary needs.
- Packed lunches must be stored safely to avoid cross-contamination.

6. Managing Children with Special Dietary Needs

6.1 Cultural, Religious, and Ethical Requirements

- The school respects cultural and religious dietary practices as outlined in the Equality Act 2010.



- Work with families to identify suitable alternatives if the school's meals are not appropriate.

6.2 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

- Work closely with the SENDCo and outside agencies to support children with feeding difficulties or specialist diets.
- Introduce Individual Safer Eating Plans if required.

7. Food Brought from Home (Packed Lunches)

7.1 Expectations for Food from Home

- Staff will monitor packed lunches during supervision.
- No whole grapes, cherry tomatoes, or hard foods that present a choking hazard unless cut lengthwise and appropriate to the age.
- If unsafe items are found, staff will follow the school's communication and safeguarding procedure.

7.2 Allergens in Packed Lunches

- Parents reminded not to include common allergens where 'allergy-aware' policies are in place.
- Clear signage in eating areas for allergy management.

8. Emergency Procedures

8.1 Choking

- All EYFS staff are required to hold paediatric first aid training, ensuring they are prepared to manage choking emergencies.
- Immediate actions follow guidance from Resuscitation Council (UK) Paediatric Basic Life Support.

8.2 Allergic Reaction

- Staff follow the emergency care plan detailed in the child's IHCP.
- Adrenaline auto-injectors are stored and accessible, with posters indicating named children and staff trained to administer.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

9.1 Ongoing Monitoring

- Regular audits of food hygiene, supervision logs and medical plans.
- Incident logs reviewed by SLT termly to monitor trends and training needs.

9.2 Policy Review

- Reviewed annually or when new legislation or best practice guidance is released.
- Amendments made in consultation with parents, staff, governors, and relevant stakeholders.

10. Links to Other School Policies

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- SEND Policy
- Medical Needs and Medication Policy
- Behaviour and Personal Development Policy
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (EYFS)

References

- Department for Education (DfE) (2023). Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Ofsted (2023). Education Inspection Framework.



- Department for Education (2017). Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions.
- Food Standards Agency (2014). Food Information Regulations: Allergen Labelling Guidance.
- NHS Start for Life
- Child Accident Prevention Trust (CAPT)
- Resuscitation Council UK (2021). Paediatric Basic Life Support Guidelines.
- Equality Act (2010)

By adopting and embedding this Early Years Safer Eating Framework, the school demonstrates its commitment to safeguarding children's health, wellbeing, and development through safe eating practices in line with national expectations and best practice.