



Eccleston St. Mary's CE Primary School

Safer Eating Policy

Statement of Intent

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that children in our care are provided with a safe eating environment that supports healthy eating, minimises food-related risks, and ensures compliance with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, including the changes introduced in September 2025.

Key Principles

- Ensure all meals and snacks are nutritious, well-balanced, and cater to the individual dietary needs of children.
- Promote healthy eating habits from an early age.
- Safeguard children from food-related risks, including choking hazards and food allergies.

Food Allergies and Special Dietary Requirements

We recognise the importance of catering to children's dietary needs, including food allergies and intolerances.

All food allergies or special dietary requirements must be disclosed to the school by parents and carers prior to the child starting school. Should this allergy develop whilst the child is already at school, then parents should inform school immediately the issue arises.

- **Record Keeping:** We maintain up-to-date records of children's allergies, intolerances, and dietary preferences. This information is shared with all relevant staff members and stored securely.
- **Risk Assessment:** A thorough risk assessment is carried out for children with food allergies, ensuring appropriate precautions are taken, including avoiding allergens in meals and snacks. Eccleston St. Mary's is a nut-free environment and foods containing nuts are not permitted on site. This applies both to meals prepared on site and those brought as packed lunches from home.

- **Communication:** We will ensure that all staff are aware of the allergy needs of the children in their care. Parents should provide emergency medication (eg Epi-pens) where applicable.

Safer Eating Practices

To minimise the risk of choking and ensure safe eating environments for children, the following practices are implemented:

- **Supervision:** All children are supervised during mealtimes and snack time. Children will be within sight and hearing of a member of staff whilst eating. Where possible, staff will sit facing children whilst they eat so they can be sure children are eating in a way to prevent choking and so they can prevent food sharing and be aware of any unexpected allergic reactions.
- **Choking Hazards:** Staff will prepare food in a way to prevent choking and be vigilant to ensure foods sent in packed lunches have also been prepared safely. Guidance for parents sending in healthy snacks and lunches for their children is that:
 - Firm, spherical foods like grapes and cherry tomatoes should be sliced into quarters or segments.
 - Cylindrical foods such as cucumber, carrots and cocktail sausages should be cut lengthways into thin batons.
- **Age-Appropriate Food Types:** Foods will be served in a manner suitable for the child's developmental stage (e.g., food will be cut into small, manageable pieces for younger children).
- **Mealtime Environment:** Children will sit down and remain seated while eating and be given time to chew and swallow their food properly. This applies both to lunch and to snacks at other times of the day. Food sharing is not allowed.

Healthy Eating and Nutrition

We aim to support the health and wellbeing of all children by promoting healthy eating habits:

- **Snack Time:**
 - Children in Early Years (Nursery and Reception) are offered a mid-morning and mid-afternoon snack during their session. This consists of a selection of fresh fruits and vegetables and toast.
 - Children in KS1 are offered a daily snack of fresh fruit or vegetables, provided by school.
 - Children in KS2 may bring a healthy snack from home. This should consist of fresh fruit or vegetables and will vary depending on the individual child. For some, a simple apple, banana or orange will suffice; others may need their fruit to be sliced and packed in a Tupperware box. When preparing such snacks, parents should be mindful of the guidance on chopping foods (above.) Please note : only fruit is permissible as a snack. Biscuits, cakes, and fruit-derivatives eg Fruit Winders are not allowed.

We will always encourage the children to eat healthily.

- **Packed Lunches:** Parents should try to provide a healthy packed lunch for their child. The NHS provides a wealth of ideas on their website:

<https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes/>

- Educational Opportunities: Opportunities to learn about food, nutrition, and healthy eating are woven throughout our curriculum.

Mealtime Hygiene and Safety

To ensure the safety and hygiene of food, the following procedures will be followed:

- Food Storage and Preparation: All food will be stored at the correct temperature, in compliance with food safety regulations. Food preparation areas will be kept clean, and staff will adhere to strict handwashing procedures before handling food.
- Safe Utensils and Equipment: All kitchen utensils and eating equipment will be safe and age-appropriate for the children. Any broken or damaged items will be immediately replaced.
- Hand Hygiene: Children will wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. Staff will ensure that all children have clean hands before meals and snack are served.

Training and Awareness

Staff will receive regular training in paediatric first aid, food safety, allergy management, and safe eating practices. This includes:

- First Aid and Emergency Procedures: All staff will be trained in first aid procedures specific to food-related incidents, including how to handle allergic reactions and choking. Whilst children are eating, there will be at least one member of staff with a valid first aid certificate present in the room. For EYFS, this member of staff will have the full Paediatric First Aid certificate. This will be updated at least every three years as a minimum.

Parent and Carer Involvement

We believe that parents and carers play a key role in the nutritional care of their children. We encourage parents to share any concerns or preferences related to their child's diet, and we will maintain open lines of communication regarding food and meal times.

- Special Occasions: For special occasions or celebrations (e.g., birthdays), we will work with parents to ensure that any treats brought in align with our safer eating and allergy policies.