



Issue number:	001
Responsible:	Headteacher
Approved by:	
Date:	
Review date:	

Policy Statement

This policy outlines how our Early Years setting ensures that all children eat safely, in line with the EYFS statutory safeguarding and welfare requirements and the strengthened Safer Eating regulations (2025 update).

We are committed to:

- Preventing choking and food-related harm.
- Ensuring appropriately trained staff supervise all mealtimes.
- Managing allergies, intolerances and dietary requirements safely.
- Providing safe, nutritious, age-appropriate food.
- Ensuring that mealtimes uphold safeguarding principles as required by Ofsted's inspection expectations.

Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy is informed by the following statutory legislation and national guidance:

- [The Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) Statutory Framework 2025](#), which is given legal force by regulations made under [section 39 of the Childcare Act 2006](#). The EYFS was updated in September 2025 to strengthen Safer Eating requirements, including mandatory Paediatric First Aid (PFA) presence during eating, allergy and intolerance management, risk-reduction measures, record-keeping and supervision requirements.
- [EYFS Nutrition Guidance](#), which providers must have regard to and should follow unless there is a clear and documented reason not to.
- [Ofsted Inspection Framework and Inspection Toolkits \(2025\)](#), which require a strong safeguarding culture, proactive risk assessment and effective supervision of children, including during mealtimes.
- [Food Safety Guidance for Early Years Providers \(DfE – Help for Early Years Providers\)](#), including expectations for food hygiene, choking-risk reduction and safe food preparation.
- [Safer Eating in Early Years Settings – General Guidance \(KSCMP, 2024\)](#), which supports best practice in reducing choking risks and safeguarding children during mealtimes.

Principles of Safer Eating

We ensure that:

- **Children are always within sight and hearing while eating**, with no exceptions. This is a statutory requirement from September 2025.
- **A Paediatric First Aid (PFA)-trained member of staff is always present in the room when children are eating**, in line with EYFS requirements (sections 3.63–3.70).
- **Food is prepared appropriately to reduce choking risk**, following national guidance on cutting, portioning and texture.

- **All staff are aware of children's allergies, intolerances and dietary needs** and check food before it is served.
- **Children are never left unsupervised while eating**, and mealtimes take place in calm, controlled and low-distraction environments.

Roles and Responsibilities

Leadership Team

- Ensures this policy is implemented, monitored and reviewed annually (or sooner if guidance changes).
- Ensures compliance with the EYFS safer eating requirements.
- Provides appropriate training for staff on choking prevention, allergy management and food hygiene.

Safer Eating Lead / Key Person

- The responsibility for Safer Eating oversight will normally sit with the **class teacher**.
- Where the class teacher is absent, responsibility will be delegated to a **suitably trained member of staff**.
- Every child has a nominated staff member responsible for:
 - Checking that food and drink provided is safe and suitable
 - Ensuring allergy, intolerance and dietary information is accurate and up to date
 - Communicating promptly with parents/carers regarding any changes in dietary needs.

Paediatric First Aid (PFA) Staff

- Must be present in the room during all meals and snacks.
- Must be prepared to respond immediately in case of choking or allergic reactions.

All Staff

- Must know children's dietary requirements, allergies and emergency plans.
- Must supervise children within sight and hearing while eating.
- Must follow food-safety procedures and report concerns immediately.

Managing Allergies, Intolerances and Special Diets

Information Gathering

Before a child starts, the setting gathers detailed information from parents/carers about:

- Special dietary requirements.
- Food allergies.
- Food Intolerances.
- Health requirements.

This is a statutory requirement under the updated EYFS (2025).

Allergy Action Plans

- Developed in partnership with parents/carers and, where appropriate, healthcare professionals.
- Reviewed and updated regularly, as allergies and intolerances can develop at any time.
- Shared with all staff and accessible in relevant eating areas.

Food Checking

Staff check every child's food before serving, particularly for children with dietary needs.

The class teacher (or trained deputy if absent, e.g. Teaching Assistant) completes final checks.

Where appropriate, additional safeguards may be used to support safe practices, such as clear communication systems or visual prompts, without reliance on a single control measure.

Staff Training

All staff are trained to recognise:

- Signs and symptoms of allergies and anaphylaxis.
- Emergency procedures and the use of medication.

Choking Prevention Measures

In line with DfE safer eating and food safety guidance:

Food Preparation

To reduce choking risk, we:

- Remove stones, pips and bones.
- Cut small round foods (e.g. grapes, cherry tomatoes, blueberries) lengthways and into quarters.
- Cut hard fruit and vegetables into thin strips or soften them appropriately.
- Avoid popcorn, marshmallows, whole nuts and whole seeds for children under five
- Cut cheese and bread into strips rather than chunks.

Eating Behaviour

- Children do not run, play or move around with food.
- Toys and distractions are removed during meals.

Supervision

- Staff always remain within sight and hearing of children.
- Staff actively observe and listen to each child while they eat.

Environment

- Tables are arranged to maximise visibility.
- Calm, low-distraction environments are promoted.

Food Hygiene and Safe Preparation

All food is prepared, stored and served safely in line with DfE food safety guidance and relevant legislation, including the [Food Safety Act 1990](#) and associated food hygiene regulations.

- Only competent staff may prepare or handle food.
- Staff follow hygiene procedures including effective handwashing, cleaning of surfaces, safe temperature control and prevention of cross-contamination
- Allergen information is accurate, clearly communicated and managed in line with [Food Standards Agency](#) expectations

Mealtime Routines and Safety Practice

To ensure mealtimes are safe, predictable and well-managed:

Serving Food

- Food is checked for suitability and appropriate preparation.
- Staff position themselves to see and hear all children.

During Eating

- Active supervision is always maintained.
- Calm, positive interactions are encouraged.
- Immediate action is taken if a choking risk or concern is identified.

After Eating

- Oral hygiene is promoted where appropriate (e.g. drinking water).
- Eating areas are cleaned safely and hygienically.

Recording and Reporting

We maintain accurate records of:

- Allergies, intolerances and dietary needs.
- Any incidents or near-misses during mealtimes (e.g. choking or allergic reactions).
- Updates from parents/carers regarding new or changing dietary needs.

All information is shared promptly with relevant staff.

Staff Training and Competency Requirements

Mandatory for All Staff

- Recognition of choking signs and safe intervention
- Food safety and hygiene procedures
- Allergy awareness and use of emergency medication
- Understanding of EYFS Safer Eating expectations

Mandatory for At Least One Staff Member (present during eating)

- A valid Paediatric First Aid (PFA) certificate
- Always required when children are eating

Partnership with Parents and Carers

We work in partnership with families to ensure:

- Clear communication of dietary needs and updates.
- Allergy, intolerance and medical plans are jointly created and reviewed.
- Families are supported to promote healthy eating, in line with [EYFS Nutrition Guidance \(2025\)](#).

Monitoring and Review

- This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if statutory guidance changes.
- Mealtime practices are monitored regularly.
- Learning from incidents is shared across the team.
- Compliance is observed through supervision, learning walks and safeguarding monitoring.