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FOOD & DRINK/SAFE EATING POLICY 2025-26

Approved by:

Last reviewed on: Summer 2025

Next review due by: Summer 2026

Food & Drink / Safe Eating Policy

1. Purpose of this Policy

This policy outlines the procedures and standards for providing safe, healthy, and appropriate food and drink to children in our school-based early years provision. It ensures compliance with the EYFS Statutory Framework and promotes children's health, wellbeing, and safety during mealtimes and snack times.

2. Aims

- To provide nutritious food and drink that meet children's dietary and developmental needs.
 - To ensure safe eating practices that minimise the risk of choking.
 - To create a calm, positive, and inclusive eating environment.
 - To meet individual dietary, medical, and cultural requirements.
 - To ensure staff follow consistent hygiene and supervision procedures.
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3. Legal and Statutory Requirements

This policy is informed by: - The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework - School Food Standards - Health and Safety at Work legislation - Allergy and medical needs guidance

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

- Ensure compliance with statutory requirements.
- Provide staff training on safe eating, allergies, and food hygiene.

Early Years Staff

- Follow all procedures in this policy.
- Supervise children closely during all eating and drinking times.
- Record and communicate dietary or allergy needs.

Parents/Carers

- Provide accurate, up-to-date information on allergies, dietary requirements, and cultural preferences.
 - Supply food that meets school guidelines (where applicable).
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5. Food Provision and Nutrition

- Meals, snacks, and drinks provided by the school must follow nutritional standards.
- Drinking water is accessible to children at all times.
- Sugary drinks and sweets are not permitted.
- Fruit, vegetables, and healthy snacks are promoted.
- Foods known as high choking risks are modified, removed, or prepared safely.

Choking-Risk Food List

- Whole grapes, cherry tomatoes, berries – cut into quarters
 - Raw carrot sticks – cut into thin strips or cooked until soft
 - Nuts, seeds, popcorn, marshmallows – avoided
 - Hard or sticky sweets – avoided
 - Large pieces of meat or cheese – cut into small, manageable pieces
 - Sausages – sliced lengthwise
 - Apples and pears – sliced thinly or cooked
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6. Safe Eating Procedures

Supervision

- Children must be **actively supervised** during all eating times.
- Staff must sit with children to model positive eating habits.

Choking Prevention

- Children must be seated while eating.
- No running, walking, playing, or talking with food in the mouth.
- Staff trained in paediatric first aid must be available.
- Foods from the choking-risk list must be prepared appropriately.

Mealtime Conduct

- Promote calm, unhurried eating.
- Encourage independence (e.g., pouring drinks, using utensils) while maintaining safety.

- Educate children about healthy choices.
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7. Allergy and Dietary Management

- The school maintains an **allergy register** accessible to all staff.
 - Individual Healthcare Plans (IHPs) are in place for children with medical conditions.
 - Allergen-free zones implemented where required.
 - Food sharing is not permitted.
 - Staff must be trained in recognising allergic reactions and responding appropriately.
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8. Hygiene and Food Safety

- Staff must wash hands before preparing, serving, or assisting with food.
 - Children wash hands before and after eating.
 - Surfaces are cleaned and sanitised before use.
 - Any food brought from home should be stored safely.
 - Food temperatures and storage follow safety guidelines.
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9. Drinks

- Only water is offered throughout the day.
 - Milk may be offered during snack times.
 - No juice, fizzy drinks, energy drinks, or squash are permitted.
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10. Cultural and Religious Considerations

- Staff respect and accommodate religious dietary rules (e.g., Halal, vegetarian, no pork).
 - Celebrations involving food must adhere to known allergies and cultural practices.
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11. Staff Training

- All staff receive training on:
 - Choking prevention
 - Food hygiene
 - Allergy management
 - EYFS requirements regarding food and drink
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12. Monitoring and Review

- SLT monitors implementation through observation and feedback.
- Policy reviewed annually or sooner if statutory guidance changes.