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ACADEMIES
TRUST

FOOD & DRINK/SAFE EATING POLICY 2026-2027

Approved by:

Last reviewed on: Summer 2026

Next review due by: Summer 2027

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).

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 (this list is not exhaustive)

- 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

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.

Allergy Management (Including Benedict's Law Principles)

Our setting recognises its duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. We are committed to providing an inclusive, safe and healthy environment where children with allergies and medical conditions are supported to participate fully in all aspects of early years provision.

In accordance with the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework**, we obtain information from parents and carers regarding each child's dietary requirements, food allergies, intolerances and medical needs before admission and review this information regularly. Where a child has a diagnosed allergy or is at risk of anaphylaxis, an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP) and, where appropriate, a risk assessment will be developed in partnership with parents, carers and relevant healthcare professionals.

In line with the principles of **Benedict's Law** and current national guidance on allergy management in education and childcare settings, we will:

- Maintain accurate and up-to-date records of children's allergies, medical conditions and prescribed medication.
- Ensure all practitioners receive appropriate training to recognise the signs and symptoms of allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis, and are competent to respond appropriately in an emergency.
- Ensure prescribed emergency medication, including adrenaline auto-injectors where required, is readily accessible and stored in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and the child's healthcare plan.
- Follow agreed emergency procedures, including contacting emergency services where necessary and informing parents or carers without delay.
- Undertake appropriate risk assessments for food provision, mealtimes, cooking activities, celebrations, educational visits and other activities where allergens may be present.
- Promote effective communication between practitioners, parents, carers, catering providers (where applicable) and other professionals to minimise the risk of accidental allergen exposure.

- Review healthcare plans, risk assessments and procedures whenever a child's needs change, following an incident, or at least annually.

The Head has overall responsibility for ensuring that allergy management procedures are implemented effectively, that staff training remains current, and that all reasonable steps are taken to protect children from avoidable harm. Through robust policies, staff vigilance and effective partnership working with families, we aim to create a safe, inclusive environment where every child can learn, develop and

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 fizzy drinks, energy drinks 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.