



Eastfield Infant and Nursery School

Safer Eating Policy

INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

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 before the child begins.

- **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. Parents and carers are encouraged to keep the school up to date if any changes occur.
- An individual health care plan will be built for any child who has an allergy, which will include details of what may cause the allergy, severity of the reaction and treatment plan. Individual Health Care plans will be shared with staff, along with copies kept in the main school hall and within the medical cabinet.
- **Responsibility:** Parents and carers are responsible for informing the school of any allergies, intolerances and dietary requirements. At lunchtime, children with specific allergies, intolerances and dietary requirements will be given a yellow band, along with a badge which will state their requirements. Those children who are halal, will be provided with a red band when relevant.
- **Communication:** We will ensure that all staff are aware of the allergy needs of the children in their care. Parents are encouraged to provide emergency medication where applicable.
- **Prohibited Foods:** Nuts or any products containing nuts are prohibited from Eastfield Infant and Nursery School. This information will be shared during introduction sessions, when the children join Eastfield, with frequent reminders throughout the year. Any items that are brought into school containing nuts, will be removed and returned to parents/carers at the end of the day.

Safer Eating Practices

To minimise the risk of choking and ensure safe eating environments for young 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. Information regarding packed lunches and the safe preparation of packed lunches is shared on our website. Firm, spherical foods like grapes and cherry tomatoes must be sliced length ways. Cylindrical foods such as cucumber, carrots and cocktail sausages must be cut lengthways into thin batons. This guidance on food safety for young children – <https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/safeguarding-and-welfare/food-safety> includes advice on food and drink to avoid, how to reduce the risk of choking and links to other useful resources for early years settings.
- If a child experiences a choking incident that requires intervention, staff will record details of where and how the child choked and parents and/or carers made aware. The records will be reviewed and risk assessed alongside other accidents / incidents.
- **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). Popcorn, marshmallows, jelly cubes and hard sweets are never permitted for children under 5.
- **Mealtime Environment:** Children will sit down and remain seated while eating and be given time to chew and swallow their food properly. Children are discouraged from talking loudly at mealtimes / snack time. Other distractions such as toys at the meal table are, wherever possible, discouraged. Food sharing is not allowed.
- **Additional measures:** Children who are having a school lunch, will be provided with a coloured wrist band and their lunch tray will match this colour to help ensure children have the correct meals.

Healthy Eating and Nutrition

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

- **Snack Time:** All children are offered a snack during their school day. This consists of a selection of fresh fruits and vegetables. During snack times, children will also be encouraged to have a drink of water or for those eligible, a carton of milk.
- **Packed Lunches:** Parents/carers are given information about providing health packed lunches during each child's induction and further information is kept on our website.
- **Educational Opportunities:** We will engage children in learning about food, nutrition, and healthy eating through age-appropriate activities and discussions.

- Support: Staff will have regard for children's food intake and work with parents / carers to provide healthy food options.

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. Time will be allocated to allow the children to wash their hands before going for lunch.

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: 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 full paediatric first aid certificate present in the room. Paediatric First Aid will be updated at least every three years as a minimum.
- All staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis, the differences between allergies and intolerances and that children can develop allergies at any time
- Ongoing Training: Staff will undergo refresher courses on food hygiene and allergy awareness.

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.

- Providing food outside of snack and meal times: There may be occasions where children are given opportunities for baking, cooking and food tasting within their curriculum times. Parents/carers will be informed of these opportunities prior to the children eating anything in addition to their normal meals and snacks.
- Special Occasions: For special occasions or celebrations (e.g., birthdays), some parents/carers may send in food items to share with the class. Staff will send these home

with the children so that parents and carers can decide whether their child is able to eat these or not.