

The Drive Community Primary School



Safer Eating and Food Policy

Date: Autumn 2026

Review Date: Autumn 2027

Statement of Intent

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that children attending The Drive Community Primary School and Nursery 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 and relevant food safety guidance.

The school and nursery are committed to:

- Promoting healthy eating habits from an early age.
- Providing nutritious and balanced food choices.
- Safeguarding children from food-related risks, including choking, allergies and intolerances.
- Creating a positive and safe mealtime experience for all children.
- Working in partnership with parents and carers to ensure consistent safer eating practices.

Scope

This policy applies to all children attending The Drive Community Primary School and Nursery.

The specific safer eating and choking prevention guidance within this policy is particularly relevant to children under five years of age, including Nursery and Reception children, who are at greater risk of choking due to their developmental stage. Staff will use professional judgement when applying choking prevention measures for older children, taking account of individual developmental needs, medical conditions, identified vulnerabilities and SEND needs.

Key Principles

The setting will:

- Ensure all meals and snacks are nutritious, balanced and appropriate for children's needs.
- Support children to develop healthy eating habits.
- Provide a safe eating environment.
- Minimise risks associated with allergies, intolerances and choking.
- Promote good hygiene practices related to food preparation and consumption.
- Ensure staff are appropriately trained in food safety and paediatric first aid.

Food Allergies and Special Dietary Requirements

We recognise the importance of safely meeting children's dietary needs, including allergies, intolerances, cultural requirements and medical dietary restrictions.

All food allergies, intolerances and dietary requirements must be disclosed by parents and carers on the Registration Form when a child starts at the school or nursery.

Record Keeping

- Up-to-date records of children's allergies, intolerances and dietary requirements will be maintained.
- Information will be shared with relevant staff members.
- Records will be stored securely and reviewed regularly.
- Parents and carers are expected to inform the setting promptly of any changes to their child's dietary needs.

Risk Assessments

- Individual risk assessments will be completed for children with allergies or significant dietary requirements.
- Control measures will be implemented to minimise exposure to allergens.
- Risk assessments will be reviewed regularly and whenever information changes.

Mealtime Responsibilities

At every mealtime and snack time, practitioners will be clear about who is responsible for checking that food provided meets each child's dietary requirements.

Communication

- All staff will be made aware of children's allergy needs.
- Parents will be encouraged to provide prescribed emergency medication where required.
- Emergency procedures will be clearly communicated to all staff.

Prohibited Foods

The following items are not permitted within The Drive Community Primary School and Nursery:

- Nuts
- Nut products
- Chocolate bars
- Chocolate spreads
- Sweets intended for consumption during the school day

Individual Risk Assessments for Eating and Drinking

Some children may be at increased risk of choking due to:

- Developmental delay
- Swallowing difficulties
- Sensory needs
- Physical disabilities
- Medical conditions
- Additional educational needs

Where appropriate, the setting will complete an individual eating and drinking risk assessment in partnership with parents, health professionals and other relevant agencies.

Specific strategies, adaptations and supervision arrangements will be implemented as required.

Safer Eating Practices

To minimise the risk of choking and promote safe eating habits, the following procedures will be followed.

Supervision

- Children will always be supervised whilst eating.
- Children will remain within sight and hearing of staff during meals and snacks.

- Wherever possible, staff will sit facing children while they eat.
- Staff will actively monitor eating and drinking.
- Food sharing between children is not permitted.
- Staff will remain vigilant for signs of choking or allergic reaction.

Choking Prevention

Staff will prepare food and monitor food provided from home in accordance with current safer eating guidance for young children.

For children under five years of age:

- All pips and stones will be removed from fruit before serving.
- Small round foods including grapes, cherries, berries, strawberries and cherry tomatoes will be cut lengthways and into quarters.
- Large fruits such as melon and firm fruits such as apples and pears will be served as thin slices rather than chunks.
- Firm vegetables such as carrots and cucumber will be cut into narrow batons.
- Sausages will be cut lengthways into thin strips rather than rounds.
- Firm fruits and vegetables may be grated, mashed, steamed or softened where appropriate.

Foods Not Permitted for Children Under Five

The following foods will not be provided to, or accepted for, children under five years of age:

- Whole nuts
- Whole seeds
- Popcorn
- Marshmallows
- Jelly cubes
- Hard sweets or cough sweets
- Chewing gum

Food Provided from Home

Parents and carers are responsible for preparing packed lunches and snacks in accordance with current safer eating guidance.

For Nursery and Reception children, staff will undertake a visual check of food provided from home before it is served.

Where food does not meet safer eating guidance:

- Staff will not serve the food in its original form.
- Staff may cut, peel, grate, mash or otherwise modify food to reduce the choking risk.
- If food cannot be made safe, it will not be served.
- Parents and carers will be informed.
- Repeated occurrences may result in further discussion with parents and carers.

The setting reserves the right to withhold any food that staff reasonably believe presents a choking hazard. Such decisions will always be made in the interests of children's health, safety and welfare.

Mealtime Environment

To encourage safe eating:

- Children must remain seated whilst eating.
- Children will be encouraged to chew food thoroughly before swallowing.
- Children will be encouraged to eat at an appropriate pace.
- Excessive talking whilst food is in the mouth will be discouraged.
- Toys and unnecessary distractions will be removed from eating areas wherever possible.
- Children will be given sufficient time to finish meals and snacks safely.

Choking Incidents

If a choking incident occurs:

- Staff will follow current paediatric first aid procedures.
- Emergency medical assistance will be sought where necessary.
- Parents and carers will be informed as soon as possible.
- The incident will be recorded in accordance with the school's accident and incident procedures.
- Records will include details of the food involved, location and nature of the incident.
- Incidents will be reviewed as part of the setting's half-termly accident and incident monitoring processes.
- Risk assessments and procedures will be reviewed where concerns are identified.

Healthy Eating and Nutrition

We are committed to promoting healthy lifestyles and positive attitudes towards food.

Snack Time

Nursery

Children are offered snacks in both morning and afternoon sessions consisting of:

- Fresh milk or water
- A piece of fruit or vegetable

Reception and Key Stage 1

Children are offered:

- Water or milk where appropriate
- A piece of fruit or vegetable

Children are encouraged to try healthy options and develop positive eating habits.

Packed Lunches

Parents and carers will receive information regarding:

- Healthy lunchbox choices
- Safe storage of packed lunches

- Safer eating requirements for food preparation

Educational Opportunities

Children will have opportunities to learn about:

- Healthy eating
- Nutrition
- Food origins
- Oral health
- Making healthy lifestyle choices

Support for Families

Staff will monitor children's eating habits and work collaboratively with parents and carers where concerns arise.

Mealtime Hygiene and Food Safety

Food Storage and Preparation

- Food will be stored safely and at appropriate temperatures.
- Food preparation areas will be maintained in accordance with food hygiene requirements.
- Staff will follow effective handwashing procedures before handling food.

Equipment and Utensils

- Equipment will be safe, suitable and age appropriate.
- Damaged equipment will be removed from use and replaced promptly.

Hand Hygiene

- Children will wash their hands before eating.
- Children will wash their hands after using the toilet.
- Staff will ensure hands are clean before food is served.

Training and Staff Awareness

The setting is committed to ensuring staff have appropriate knowledge and skills to support safe eating practices.

Paediatric First Aid

- At least one member of staff holding a valid Paediatric First Aid qualification will be readily available during all meal and snack times.
- Paediatric First Aid training will be renewed at least every three years.

Food Safety and Allergy Awareness

All staff will receive training covering:

- Food hygiene

- Allergy awareness
- Anaphylaxis
- Differences between allergies and intolerances
- Choking prevention
- Safer eating guidance

Staff understand that children can develop allergies at any point and will remain vigilant to signs and symptoms.

Parent and Carer Involvement

We believe parents and carers play a crucial role in supporting children's healthy eating and safety.

We encourage open communication regarding:

- Dietary preferences
- Allergies and intolerances
- Medical conditions
- Concerns regarding eating habits

Special Occasions and Celebrations

For celebrations such as birthdays:

- Arrangements will be made in line with the setting's Oral Health Policy.
- Any food provided must comply with allergy and safer eating requirements.
- In Nursery, birthday cake may be offered following a healthy snack option and accompanied by water.
- Sweets brought into school will be sent home and not consumed during the session.

References

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework
- NHS Best Start for Life: Preparing Food Safely for Babies and Young Children [\[nhs.uk\]](https://www.nhs.uk)
- Department for Education: Food Safety Guidance for Early Years Providers [\[help-for-e...ion.gov.uk\]](https://www.gov.uk/help-for-early-years-providers)
- UK Government Early Years Choking Hazards Guidance [\[assets.pub...ice.gov.uk\]](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk)