

Safer Eating Policy

Early Years Foundation Stage



**Manadon Vale
Primary School**

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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 during induction to the school.

- **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.
- **Risk Assessment:** A thorough risk assessment is carried out for children with food allergies, ensuring appropriate precautions are taken, including avoiding allergens in meals and snacks.
- **Responsibility:** At each mealtime and snack time, practitioners are clear about who is responsible for checking that the food being provided meets the requirements for each child.
- **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.

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 be vigilant to ensure foods sent in packed lunches have also been prepared safely. Firm, spherical foods like grapes and cherry tomatoes must be sliced into quarters or segments. 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.
- **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.

Healthy Eating and Nutrition

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

- **Snack Time:** We offer the children a mid-morning snack during their day. This consists of fresh milk or water, a selection of fresh fruits or vegetables. We will always encourage the children to eat healthily. Children can bring snack from home but this must be healthy and a fresh piece of fruit.
- **Packed Lunches:** Parents are advised about safe storage of packed lunches and given information about providing healthy packed lunches.
- **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:

- **Hand Hygiene:** Children will wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. Staff will ensure that all children have clean hands before meals and snack are served.

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:** All 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 required to complete training each year covering food hygiene and allergy awareness. 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. Staff have completed online Anaphylaxis training in September 2026 inline with new guidance.

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 mealtimes.

- **Special Occasions:** For special occasions or celebrations (e.g., birthdays), we will work with parents to ensure that any treats brought in align with our safer eating and allergy policies. We will only hand out treats at the end of the day with parent/carers permission upon pick up.