



BRIGSHAW
LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

Early Years Food and Nutrition Policy



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Providing a cradle to career education that allows our children to enjoy lives of **choice** and **opportunity**



Monitoring and Review of this Document:

The Trust shall be responsible for reviewing this document from time to time to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice.

Document Controls

Policy Document:	Early Years Food and Nutrition Policy
Legislation/Category: Academy Schools	Category
Lead Staff Member:	H.Dickinson
Approved by:	A.Sadgrove CEO

Version	Date	Author	Changes
1.0	15/9/25	H. Dickinson	
2.0			



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Introduction

At Allerton Bywater Primary School we recognise the vital role that food and nutrition play in supporting young children's health, wellbeing, and development. A balanced diet in the early years lays the foundation for lifelong healthy eating habits and contributes to children's ability to learn, grow, and thrive. In line with the **EYFS Statutory Framework (2025)**, this policy sets out our commitment to providing safe, nutritious, and age-appropriate meals and snacks for children aged under 5 years. We aim to create a positive mealtime environment that promotes independence, social interaction, and enjoyment of food, while working in close partnership with parents and carers to meet the individual dietary, cultural, and medical needs of every child in our care. Allerton Bywater Primary School meets all statutory food safety and nutrition requirements for educational settings in England' and aims to maintain these standards across all meals provided.

1. Policy Statement

At Allerton Bywater Primary School, we are committed to promoting the health, wellbeing, and development of all children through a positive approach to food and nutrition. This policy reflects the requirements of the **EYFS Statutory Framework (2025)**, particularly the safeguarding and welfare requirements, and ensures that children aged 3–5 years receive a healthy, balanced, and age-appropriate diet.

2. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Public Health England 'Example menus for early years settings in England'
- DfE 'School food in England'
- DfE 'The school food plan'
- DfE 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'
- Food Safety Act 1990
- The Requirements for School Food Regulations 2014
- The Food Information (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2019 (also known as Natasha's Law)
- DfE 'Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance'

3. Roles and responsibilities

The Trust is responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy. Ensuring that this policy does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture or religion.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy, as outlined in the setting's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Ensuring the setting uses reliable suppliers for the food purchased.
- Informing parents who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in the setting.

The EYFS lead, in conjunction with the headteacher, is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy.
- Reviewing menus and mealtimes to ensure children's needs are being met.



- Ensuring equipment is suitable for its use and providing separate facilities for handwashing and for washing up in the kitchen area.
- Ensuring all staff members who prepare food (JPL / Pinnacle) are trained in basic food safety and hygiene.
- Ensuring allergy plans are completed, updated, and accessible to all staff.
- Ensuring that at least one member of staff with a valid paediatric first aid certificate is in the room when children are eating.
- Ensuring food is prepared in accordance with choking prevention guidance.
- Ensuring parents are given adequate notice of any changes to meals, food choices or any other aspect of food provision.

Early years staff are responsible for:

- Sitting with children while they eat, where required, and being advocates of healthy eating.
- Discouraging children from sharing or swapping their food in order to protect those with food allergies.
- Treating all children equally, taking account of the eating practices in their cultures.
- Checking allergy and dietary information before serving food.
- Remaining alert to signs of choking or allergic reactions.
- Responding immediately to incidents in line with first aid training and allergy action plans.
- Ensuring children are seated safely and that mealtime distractions are minimised.
- Recording details of any choking or allergy-related incidents on CPOMS and sharing them with parents and the EYFS lead.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing the setting with information on their child's dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies.
- Providing specialist food if necessary for their child, where they may have an allergy, intolerance or medical need.
- Giving consent for the setting to give milk to their child if parents request milk.

4. Aims

- To provide children with nutritious, balanced meals, snacks, and drinks that meet their developmental needs.
- To promote healthy eating habits and support children in making positive food choices.
- To work in partnership with parents/carers to respect cultural, dietary, and medical needs.
- To ensure staff are confident in implementing safe food practices in line with EYFS (2025).

5. Food and Drink Served

All meals will include a variety of foods from the four main food groups:

- Fruits and vegetables
- Starchy carbohydrates
- Dairy and plain, fortified plant-based alternatives
- Proteins

Foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar will be limited in line with the setting's current Healthy Eating and Drinking Policy for the age group of the children concerned. Portion sizes will be based upon the recommended intake for the age group of the children concerned.

In addition:



- Menus will reflect the diversity of the community, with a variety of flavours and textures.
- When children are sleeping during mealtimes, their meal will be covered, stored correctly and served when the child awakens.
- Fridges and store cupboards will be cleaned regularly to ensure they are clean. Food stored in the fridge will be kept at 5°C or lower and, where necessary, reheated until piping hot throughout. Food will be stored in sealed plastic containers, and tin cans will never be stored in the fridge.
- Menus will rotate on a regular cycle (JPL provides our menus in collaboration with school).
- Fresh drinking water will be available and accessible at all times and children will be encouraged to drink regularly.
- Milk will be served with either the morning snack if parents request this.
- Milk or water will be the only drinks offered to children by the setting.
- Staff will not consume carbonated drinks in the presence of children.

6. Nutrition

The setting understands that the Early Years are a crucial time to reduce health inequalities and set the foundations for a lifetime of good health. Staff will ensure that food items prepared and consumed on the premises comply with statutory guidelines and are healthy, balanced and nutritious.

Children aged 1 to 5 years

Staff will encourage children to eat a balanced diet which contains a wide variety of foods, planning meals and snacks that include a variety of food and drinks from the four main food groups every day.

7. Eating environment

The eating environment will be comfortable and relaxed. Children will be given plenty of time to feed themselves and hold feeding utensils. Children will be provided with utensils that are appropriate for their age and stage of development. Staff will sit with children while they eat and encourage interaction at each table. Children will be observed to ensure they are drinking and eating enough, and staff will be aware of the behaviour that may suggest a child is thirsty or hungry. Children will be encouraged to develop good eating skills and table manners. Meals times will be used to help children develop independence, through making food choices, serving food and drink, and feeding themselves.

8. Celebrations and Special Occasions

Whilst the setting will welcome gestures to celebrate children's birthdays or special events, parents will be advised to ensure any food brought in from home to celebrate a special event is balanced and meets the setting's food guidelines. Alternatively, children will be permitted to bring in non-edible options to celebrate. Any food shared in the setting during special occasions will be checked for potential allergens.

9. Allergies and Special Requirements

The setting understands that food allergies can be life threatening conditions for some children and will ensure they are taken very seriously. As part of the setting's ongoing CPD for early years practitioners, staff will be trained to understand:

- The common allergens in food.
- The symptoms of an allergic reaction and the steps to take should anaphylaxis or anaphylactic shock occur.



- Parents will be expected to make the setting aware of any allergies or intolerances their child has and the actions that need to be taken if a reaction occurs.
- A protocol will be established and made accessible to all staff to ensure everyone is aware of a child's allergies and symptoms.
- Where it is suspected that a child has an allergy, the setting will encourage the child's parents to seek advice and diagnosis from their doctor.
- The setting will ensure children with allergies are not exposed to foods that trigger allergies. Appropriate alternatives will be identified to ensure the child still eats a balanced diet.
- All staff will be instructed, where necessary, to ensure they understand how to identify which allergens are present in every meal and snack provided.
- All food that is pre-packed for direct sale (PPDS) will have the name of the food and the full ingredients list, with allergens emphasised, e.g. in bold, italics or a different colour, clearly displayed.
- All preparation of food containing common allergens, e.g. nuts, will be kept separate from other food preparation.
- Food items containing nuts, bread and wheat will be stored separately.
- Learning activities which involve the use of food will be planned in accordance with children's individual healthcare plans (IHPs), taking into account any known allergies of the children involved.
- Children will be discouraged from sharing or swapping their food with other children.
- Food provided for children with allergies will be managed in accordance with the Allergen and Anaphylaxis Policy.
- Appropriate provision will be made for parental preferences, including cultural and religious food sensitivities, e.g. providing halal and kosher food as appropriate.

In all Early Years settings a full PFA trained member of staff will sit with children at all times in sight and sound of all children whilst they are eating.

10. Food brought in from home

Food that is brought into the setting from home will be expected to comply with this policy. Food and drink will be appropriately labelled with the child's details, safely stored until needed and heated properly, if necessary. Any food that is not consumed during the day will be sent home with the child.

11. Eating habits

All children will be supported to manage their own personal needs as far as possible, including understanding the importance of healthy food choices. At mealtimes, fussy eaters will be seated with children that are more adventurous with their food to encourage the adoption of different food preferences. Children will be regularly exposed to new foods in order to increase their liking for, and consumption of, a variety of new foods (providing these foods meet their specific dietary requirements).

Favourite foods will not be used as a reward to encourage children to eat foods they do not like. The setting is aware that some children will have allergies or different dietary requirements; this will be taken into account when encouraging children to try new foods. Before a child is admitted, the setting will obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies – this information will be recorded and acted upon as appropriate. Children will never be forced to finish everything on their plate. Age and stage appropriate portion sizes will be given, with the opportunity to have second helpings if the first serving is finished.



12. Food safety and hygiene

Food will be stored, prepared and presented in a safe and hygienic environment which is adequately equipped to provide healthy meals, snacks and drinks for children. Where necessary, suitable equipment for the sterilisation of babies' food will be available. Children will be taught basic hygiene, such as not eating food that has fallen on the floor and washing their hands before eating and after using the toilet. All staff involved in preparing food for young children, or helping them eat, will be aware of the requirements of the Food Safety Act 1990.

13. Communication

Staff will work alongside parents to ensure that children are provided with healthy, balanced and nutritious food in the setting and at home. Each child's key person / family group leader will be responsible for communicating with parents about the setting's approach to food provision and children's food intake across the day.

Lunch menus will be shared with parents. The setting will agree with parents on the methods used to manage fussy eating, ensuring they are consistent with those used at home.

Parents will be encouraged to attend events to celebrate special and cultural occasions.

14. Meeting the needs of all children

Wherever possible, the setting will endeavour to cater for the cultural and dietary needs of all children in its care.

The setting is aware that children with special dietary requirements may need specific foods excluded or included; however, it will not exclude foods from a child's diet without a valid reason as this may lead to unnecessary restrictions in their diet. In meeting the needs of all children, the setting will take into account the following dietary requirements:

- Food allergies
- Food intolerances
- Vegetarianism
- Veganism or eating a plant-based diet
- Pescetarianism

Religious preferences, for example:

- Only eating halal foods.
- Avoiding pork or beef.
- Keeping kosher.
- Eating specific foods only on certain days.

The setting will create a safe and inclusive environment for all children to eat, and children with special dietary requirements will be included in mealtimes with other children as far as possible.

A child will only need to eat their meal separately to other children where a risk assessment concludes that a significant risk remains despite adequate training and supervision of meals and snacks times.

Staff will have ongoing discussions with parents about their child's dietary needs and encourage parents to assist the setting by sharing guidance from healthcare professionals.



15. Safer Eating

The setting will follow robust procedures to ensure that all children eat safely and that risks of choking, allergic reactions, and cross-contamination are minimised. A member of staff holding a full paediatric first aid certificate will always be present in the room when children are eating.

Before a child starts at the setting, information about any special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies, intolerances, or health needs will be obtained from parents or carers, clearly documented, and shared with all staff involved in food preparation and service.

The setting will work in partnership with parents, carers, and where appropriate, health professionals to create and maintain up-to-date allergy action plans. All staff will be made aware of these plans and will receive guidance on recognising allergy symptoms, understanding the difference between allergies and intolerances, and administering the correct treatment for allergic reactions and anaphylaxis. Staff will remain alert to the possibility of children developing new allergies.

Food will be prepared in a way that is appropriate to each child's developmental stage, with parents and carers consulted to ensure that textures and portion sizes are suitable. Children will be supported to progress safely at a pace appropriate for them, without assumptions made based solely on age.

Food will always be prepared following national guidance to reduce the risk of choking, including cutting food into suitable sizes and avoiding high-risk items. Children will be seated in an appropriately sized low chair – as appropriate for their age and needs – during mealtimes, and distractions will be minimised wherever possible.

Children will always be within sight and hearing of staff while eating, and staff will sit facing the children where possible to monitor eating, prevent food sharing, and respond quickly to choking or allergic reactions.

Any choking incidents that require intervention will be recorded in detail on CPOMS, shared with parents or carers, and reviewed regularly to identify patterns and implement measures to further reduce risk.

Advice can also be found here: <https://www.nhs.uk/best-start-in-life/baby/weaning/safe-weaning/preparing-food-safely/#serve>

Please also see Annex A for Early Years Food Choking Hazard Guidance.

16. Monitoring and Review

Menus will be reviewed regularly to ensure variety and balance. Children's growth, health, and wellbeing will be monitored in partnership with parents and health professionals if needed.





Annex A - Early Years Food Choking Hazards Guidance

Early years food choking hazards



Below is a table of advice on key foods for care givers who are involved with preparing and serving food for babies and young children (under 5 years old)

Vegetable and fruits	Advice
Pips or stones in fruit	Always check beforehand and remove hard pips or stones from fruit.
Small fruits	Cut small round fruits like grapes, cherries, berries, strawberries and cherry tomatoes, into small pieces: cut lengthways and then again cut them in halves (quarters).
Large fruits and firm fruits	Cut large fruits like melon and firm fruits like apple into slices instead of small chunks. For very young children, consider grating or mashing firm fruits, or softening them up by steaming or simmering.
Vegetables	Cut vegetables like carrots, cucumber and celery into narrow batons. For very young children consider grating or mashing firm vegetables and legumes like butter beans, chickpeas and tofu, or softening them up by steaming or simmering.
Skin on fruit and vegetables	Consider removing the skin from fruit and vegetables, especially for very young children. Peeled fruit and vegetables can be swallowed more easily.
Cooking fruit and vegetables	Consider softening firm fruit and vegetables (such as carrots, broccoli, yam and apples) by steaming or simmering until soft. Serve cut into slices or narrow batons.
Meat and fish	Advice
Sausages and hot dogs	Cut sausages and hot dogs into short strips. Cut them in half and then lengthways or as thinly as possible. Peeling the skin off the sausages helps them to be swallowed more easily.
Meat or fish	Remove bones from meat or fish. Cut meat into strips as thinly as possible. Remove skin and fat from meat and fish, it will help the food pass smoothly down the throat.
Cheese	Advice
Grate or cut cheese	Grate or cut cheese into short strips. Cut lumps of cheese as narrow as possible.
Nuts and seeds	Advice
Chop or flake whole nuts	Chop or flake whole nuts, peanuts and seeds. Whole nuts should not be given to children under five years old.
Bread	Advice
White bread and other breads	White bread can form a ball shape with a dough-like texture at the back of a child's throat, if not chewed properly. Brown bread or toasted white bread are good alternatives. Cut bread, chapatis, naan bread and other breads into narrow strips.
Snacks and other foods	Advice
Popcorn	Do not give babies and young children popcorn.
Chewing gum and marshmallows	Do not give babies and young children chewing gum or marshmallows.
Peanut butter	Do not give babies and young children peanut butter on its own, only use as a spread.
Jelly cubes	Do not give babies and young children raw jelly cubes.
Boiled sweets and ice cubes	Do not give babies and young children boiled, hard, gooey, sticky or cough sweets, or ice cubes.
Raisins and other dried fruits	Do not give babies under the age of 1 whole raisins or dried fruits. Cut them into small pieces.

Make sure food is prepared appropriately for children under 5 years old, see: <https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/weaning/>

It is also advisable that care givers are familiar with how to respond to a choking incident, see: How to stop a child from choking: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/habv/first-aid-and-safety/first-aid/how-to-stop-a-child-from-choking/>