St Paul's C of E Primary School

Safer Eating Policy

Revised and adopted by the Governing Body September 2026**Review**

Review Date: September 2027

Early Years Foundation Stage Safer Eating Policy
(Supporting Healthy Growth from the Start -2025)
Introduction
At St Paul's CE Primary School, we are committed to supporting children's health, development and well-being through the provision of nutritious, balanced, and age-appropriate food. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the children in our care are provided with a safe eating environment; minimising food related risks and ensures compliance with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Providing healthy, balanced and nutritious food ensures that all children:
• Get the right amount of nutrients and energy they need while they are growing rapidly, which is especially important for children who might not have access to healthy food at home. This can help prevent children from becoming overweight or obese.
• Develop positive eating habits early on. Children's early experiences with food can shape future eating habits. This can impact children's long-term health including maintaining a healthy weight and good oral health.

The early years are a crucial time to reduce health inequalities and set the foundations for a lifetime of good health.

Our Values at St Paul's CE Primary School
Aims:
- Promote lifelong healthy eating habits from an early age.
- Provide meals and snacks that meet children's nutritional, cultural, and dietary needs.
- Comply with statutory guidance on food and drink for children under five.
- Partner with families to support and respect children's individual food requirements.
- Encourage a positive, inclusive and sociable dining experience.

We provide:
- Healthy, balanced meals and snacks based on the four food groups: fruit and vegetables, starchy foods, proteins and dairy.
- Age-appropriate portion sizes.
- Water freely available throughout the day and milk at designated snack times.

We avoid:
- Foods high in sugar, salt or saturated fats.
- Artificial sweeteners and sugary drinks.
- Our school kitchen/food provider provision reflects the guidance in 'Example Menus for Early Years Settings' and supports healthy growth and development.

Cutting food safely
We will make sure to cut food to a size that's right for a child's size, age and stage of weaning. This helps avoid choking.
Choking can happen with any food, but we will do everything we can to minimise the risks.
When preparing food, we note that it is important to avoid round shapes as these are a choking hazard.
We will cut small fruits lengthways and then halve again (quarters).
These fruits include:
- grapes

- raspberries
- strawberries
- cherry tomatoes.

Foods to avoid Babies/Young children should not eat:

- much salt, as it is not good for their kidneys- do not add salt to food prepared for babies or cooking water; stock cubes and gravy shouldn't be used either
- any sugar- avoiding sugary snacks and drinks including fruit juice can help prevent tooth decay
- foods that are high in saturated fat, salt and sugar like cakes, puddings, sweet and savoury pastries, biscuits, crisps, chocolate and other confectionery
- popcorn, raw jelly cubes or whole nuts, which are all choking hazards
- honey (which should be avoided until 12 months) as it can contain bacteria that can make babies seriously unwell
- cheeses made from unpasteurised milk or mould-ripened soft cheeses- such as brie or camembert; or ripened goat's milk cheese and soft, blue-veined cheese- such as Roquefort: there is a higher risk that these cheeses might carry a bacteria called listeria 10 11
- raw and lightly cooked eggs (including uncooked cake mixture, homemade ice creams, homemade mayonnaise, or desserts) if you do not see a red lion with the words "British Lion Quality" on the box
- rice drinks as a substitute for breast milk or infant formula as they may contain too much arsenic
- slush ice drinks, sometimes known as slushies, as they may contain too much glycerol
- raw or lightly cooked shellfish- such as mussels, clams and oysters- which can risk food poisoning.

The NHS has advice on foods to avoid giving babies and young children. NHS Start for Life has advice on safe weaning.

Paediatric first aid

A qualified paediatric first aider will be present at all times in the room during all snack and meal times.

Supervision when eating

An adult will always supervise children closely when they are eating. Children will be within sight and hearing of a member of staff whilst eating. Staff will stand facing children while they eat to monitor for choking hazards, prevent food sharing and quickly identify any allergic reactions. 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 will be made aware. The record will be reviewed and risk assessed alongside other accidents/ incidents. Appropriate action will be taken to address any identified concerns.

Special Dietary Needs and Allergies

- We maintain a current list of children's allergies, intolerances, and cultural dietary needs.
- Allergen information is displayed and followed in food preparation areas.
- All staff receive training in allergy management and emergency response.
- We work closely with parents and healthcare professionals to develop individual care

plans as needed.

Learning and Mealtime Environment

- Mealtimes are a key learning opportunity and are used to teach children about healthy food, hygiene and manners.
- Children are encouraged to try new foods and take part in preparing simple snacks or meals.
- We support children to serve themselves where appropriate, promoting independence.
- Positive role modelling and discussions about food and health are encouraged.
- Mealtimes are social, inclusive and calm.
- Children sit together with staff who model positive eating behaviours.
- Independence is promoted by encouraging children to serve themselves where age-appropriate.

Guidance for children aged 1 to 5 years

A healthy plate

We encourage children to eat a balanced diet containing a wide variety of foods. We plan meals and snacks that include a variety of food and drinks from the 4 main food groups every day. The more children try new foods, the wider the range of nutrients they will get from their meals. We will enable children to eat together in our setting. This encourages them to try foods that they might not try at home. For example, children who won't touch broccoli at home might happily try some if they see their peers eating it.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

- Menus are shared regularly with families and feedback is welcomed.
- We provide information on healthy lunchbox choices (for children bringing food from home).
- Families are consulted about dietary needs, food preferences, and cultural or religious requirements.
- We signpost parents to external guidance and support where appropriate.

Sustainability

- We aim to reduce food waste and promote recycling in food-related activities.
- Our menus favour seasonal, locally sourced, and sustainably produced ingredients where possible.

Cooking with Children

- Cooking and food preparation activities are part of our curriculum.
- These activities promote fine motor skills, maths, science, and cultural learning.
- Health and safety guidelines are followed at all times.

Celebrations and Special Occasions

- We celebrate in healthy and inclusive ways.
- Families are encouraged to share culturally significant foods that meet our nutrition and allergy guidelines.

Cultural and Dietary Preferences

- We respect and accommodate dietary needs related to religion, culture, and ethical beliefs.
- Parents are consulted to ensure inclusive meal planning.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

- This policy is reviewed annually or in response to updated statutory guidance.
- Menus and food practices are reviewed regularly and adapted based on feedback and nutritional standards.
- Compliance is monitored by the leadership team through regular audits.
- All staff are kept informed of any updates to guidance or training requirements.

Key References

- Statutory Framework for the EYFS (2024, effective September 2024)
- Nutrition Guidance for Early Years Providers (DfE, 2025)
- Example Menus for Early Years Settings (Public Health England, 2025)
- Food Standards Agency: Safer Food Better Business
- Eat Better, Start Better (Public Health England / Action for Children)
- Start for Life - NHS