



## **The Acorn Partnership**

Marston Montgomery Primary School

Long Lane C of E Primary School

### **Safer Eating Policy**

Policy written – April 2026

Policy review – April 2027

## EYFS Safer Eating Policy

### Statement of Intent

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 Reception class staff by parents and carers on the setting 'Registration Form' when a child joins Reception.

- **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, including catering staff and wrap around care staff and is stored securely. A photograph with details of any disclosed allergy is shared with all staff across school including catering staff. We will prompt parents to update the information we hold regarding special dietary needs every 6 months.
- **Risk Assessment:** An individual health care plan is put in place for children with food allergies, ensuring appropriate precautions are taken, including avoiding allergens in meals and snacks.
- **Responsibility:** At lunchtime 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 responsible for providing emergency medication where applicable and this must be in school whenever a child is.
- **Prohibited Foods:** Nuts, nut products and chocolate spreads which may contain nuts are **not** permitted at The Acorn Partnership. All new families are informed of this during transition.

### 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 and 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 lengthways and into quarters or segments. 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> <https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/safeguarding-and-welfare/food-safety> **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 on the first aid form and also on the Choking Record Sheet and parents and/or carers will be informed. The records will be reviewed and risk assessed alongside other accidents / incidents at school on a termly basis. Appropriate action will be taken to address any identified concerns.

- **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 slices for younger children). Popcorn, marshmallows, jelly cubes and hard sweets are never permitted for children under 5 across EYFS.
- **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 lunchtimes / snack time. Food sharing is not allowed and staff make children aware of why this rule needs to be maintained to keep everyone safe and well.

### **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 the morning session. This will be a piece of fresh fruit, vegetables or a snack sent in from home and children are encouraged to drink fresh water to stay hydrated.
- **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 during their time in EYFS.
- **Support:** EYFS staff will have regard for children's food intake and work with parents / carers to provide healthy food options. EYFS staff offer support to parents about healthy packed lunches as needed.

### **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 used by children 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 with soap and water before eating and after using the toilet. Staff will ensure that all children have clean hands before lunch or snacks 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 as part of their induction 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
- **Ongoing Training:** Staff will undergo refresher courses on food hygiene and allergy awareness every two years as a minimum.

### **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 related to their child's diet, and we will maintain open lines of communication regarding food and mealtimes.