



Safer Eating Policy

Policy Statement

Pavilion Preschool is committed to providing a safe environment for all children during mealtimes and snack times. We recognise that eating presents potential risks, including choking and allergic reactions, and we take all reasonable steps to minimise these risks while promoting healthy eating habits and children's independence.

This policy is based on the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework and the Department for Education (DfE) Safer Eating and Nutrition Guidance. From September 2025, providers are expected to follow the DfE nutrition guidance, including safer eating practices, unless there is a good reason not to.

Aims

We aim to:

- Protect children from choking and food-related incidents.
- Promote safe, healthy and enjoyable mealtimes.
- Meet children's individual dietary, medical and cultural needs.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers.
- Ensure all staff understand their responsibilities during food preparation and mealtimes.

Responsibilities

The Operations Manager and Pre School Manager will ensure:

- This policy is implemented and reviewed.
- Staff receive appropriate induction and ongoing training.
- Paediatric First Aid requirements are met.
- Risk assessments are reviewed regularly.



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All staff will:

- Follow this policy at all times.
- Supervise children appropriately.
- Prepare and serve food safely.
- Be familiar with children's allergies and dietary requirements.
- Know emergency procedures for choking and allergic reactions.

Supervision During Eating

Children will:

- Always remain within sight and hearing of a member of staff while eating.
- Sit down whilst eating.
- Never walk, run, play or lie down whilst eating.
- Be encouraged to eat slowly and chew food thoroughly.
- Be discouraged from talking with food in their mouths.

Staff will:

- Sit with children wherever possible.
- Face children during mealtimes.
- Encourage calm conversations.
- Never leave children unattended whilst eating.

At least one member of staff holding a valid Full Paediatric First Aid Certificate will be present whenever children are eating, in accordance with the EYFS.

Food Preparation

All food provided by the preschool or brought from home must be prepared appropriately for the age and stage of development of each child.

To reduce choking risks:



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Grapes

- Cut lengthways into quarters.

Cherry tomatoes

- Cut lengthways into quarters.

Strawberries

- Remove stalks and cut according to size.

Blueberries

- Halve where appropriate for younger children.

Sausages

- Cut into long thin strips.
- Never serve in coin-shaped slices.

Cheese

- Serve in thin strips rather than cubes.

Apples and carrots

- Slice thinly rather than serving in hard chunks.

Melon

- Cut into thin slices.

Meat and fish

- Remove all bones.

Nuts and seeds

- Whole nuts and whole seeds must never be served to children under five.

Popcorn

- Not permitted.



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Marshmallows

- Not permitted.

Hard sweets

- Not permitted.

Jelly cubes

- Not permitted.

These recommendations follow current DfE safer eating guidance for early years settings.

Food Brought from Home

Parents are asked to:

- Follow the preschool's safer food preparation guidance.
- Prepare foods appropriately before arrival.
- Clearly label lunchboxes.
- Inform the preschool of any changes to dietary requirements.

Where food has not been prepared safely, staff may:

- Re-prepare the food before serving where practical.
- Substitute with a suitable alternative if necessary.
- Discuss concerns with parents.

Allergies and Dietary Requirements

Before a child starts, the preschool will obtain information regarding:

- Allergies
- Intolerances
- Medical conditions
- Religious or cultural dietary requirements

Staff will:



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- Check meals before serving.
- Prevent cross-contamination.
- Follow individual healthcare plans where applicable.
- Know the location and use of emergency medication.

Food containing allergens will be managed in accordance with Food Standards Agency requirements.

Hygiene

Children will:

- Wash hands before eating.
- Wash hands after toileting and outdoor play.
- Be encouraged not to share food or drinks.

Staff will:

- Wash hands before preparing food.
- Clean tables before and after meals.
- Store food safely.
- Check use-by dates.
- Follow the Food Standards Agency's food hygiene guidance.

Encouraging Positive Eating Habits

Staff will:

- Encourage children to try new foods without pressure.
- Promote healthy choices.
- Respect children's appetite.
- Model positive eating behaviours.
- Avoid using food as a reward or punishment.

Choking Incident Procedure

If a child begins to choke:

1. Stay calm.
2. Follow current Paediatric First Aid procedures.



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3. Summon assistance immediately.
4. Call 999 if required.
5. Inform parents as soon as possible.
6. Complete an accident/incident record.
7. Review the incident to identify any learning.

All choking incidents requiring staff intervention will be recorded.

Staff Training

All staff will receive training on:

- Safer eating practices.
- Choking prevention.
- Food hygiene.
- Allergy awareness.
- Paediatric First Aid.
- Individual dietary needs.

Training will be refreshed regularly.

Monitoring

The Manager will monitor:

- Accident records.
- Choking incidents.
- Food preparation practices.
- Staff compliance.
- Parent feedback.

Any incidents will be reviewed to identify improvements.

Related Policies

- Food and Drink Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Allergy Management Policy
- First Aid Policy



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- Safeguarding Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy

Legislative and Guidance References

This policy has been developed in accordance with:

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework (England).
- Department for Education – Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance (2025).
- Department for Education – Help for Early Years Providers: Food Safety.
- Food Standards Agency – Safer Food, Better Business.
- Food Information Regulations 2014 (Allergen Information).
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013, where applicable.

This policy reflects the latest Department for Education guidance introducing specific safer eating requirements within the EYFS, including the preparation of food to reduce choking risks, close supervision during eating, and ensuring a paediatric first aider is present whenever children are eating.

This policy was adopted on 15th July 2026

It will be reviewed annually or as and when required.

Last updated: 18.09.26

Signed by Chair of Trustees:

Signed by Operations Manager: