

Lancaster Lane Primary and Pre-School

EYFS Safer Eating Policy



1. Purpose

At Lancaster Lane Primary and Pre-School, we recognise that eating and drinking are important parts of children's health, development and wellbeing. We are committed to ensuring that all children are able to eat and drink safely in an environment where the risks of choking, allergic reactions and food-related illness are minimised.

This policy sets out the procedures we follow to meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, particularly the requirements relating to safer eating.

The policy applies to all staff, volunteers, students and other adults involved in preparing, serving or supervising food and drink for EYFS children.

2. Aims

Lancaster Lane Primary and Pre-School will:

- provide a safe and appropriate environment for children to eat and drink;
- ensure that children are appropriately supervised whenever they are eating;
- minimise the risk of choking through appropriate food preparation, seating and supervision;
- obtain and maintain accurate information about children's dietary requirements, allergies, intolerances and relevant health needs;
- work closely with parents/carers and, where appropriate, health professionals;
- ensure staff understand the symptoms and treatment of allergies and anaphylaxis;
- ensure food and drinks are prepared and provided in accordance with current guidance;
- ensure appropriate paediatric first aid arrangements are in place during eating times;

- record and review choking incidents in order to identify any recurring risks or trends;
- promote positive, healthy and enjoyable experiences around food.

3. Paediatric first aid

Whilst EYFS children are eating, there must always be a member of staff in the room who holds a valid full paediatric first aid certificate, meeting the requirements of the EYFS.

At Lancaster Lane Primary and Pre-School, all members of the EYFS team have full paediatric first aid training. Throughout school, numerous staff members also have this training (list available in school) and within our wrap-around care, there is always more than one adult with paediatric first aid training.

4. Dietary information

Before a child starts at Lancaster Lane Primary and Pre-School, information will be obtained regarding:

- food allergies;
- food intolerances;
- special dietary requirements;
- dietary preferences;
- cultural or religious dietary requirements where relevant;
- special health requirements;
- any known history of choking or swallowing difficulties.

This information will be recorded and kept up to date.

Information relating to children's dietary needs will be shared with all staff involved in preparing, serving or supervising food. The EYFS specifically requires this information to be obtained before admission and shared with staff involved in preparing and handling food.

At snack time, key workers are responsible for checking that the food provided is appropriate for each child. At lunchtime, supervising staff are responsible for checking that school dinners and packed lunches are appropriate for the child.

5. Allergies and intolerances

Lancaster Lane Primary and Pre-School recognises that allergic reactions can be potentially life-threatening. All staff receive annual training on allergies, anaphylaxis and auto-injectors.

We will:

- maintain up-to-date records of children's allergies and intolerances;
- ensure relevant staff are aware of each child's dietary requirements;
- work with parents/carers and, where appropriate, health professionals to develop an allergy action plan;
- ensure allergy action plans are accessible to appropriate staff;
- ensure staff understand the difference between an allergy and an intolerance;
- ensure staff are aware of common symptoms of an allergic reaction;
- ensure staff understand the symptoms and emergency treatment of anaphylaxis;
- ensure appropriate medication, including prescribed adrenaline auto-injectors where required, is available and accessible;
- ensure staff know where emergency medication is stored and how it should be administered;
- regularly review allergy information with parents/carers.

Parents/carers will be asked to inform the setting immediately of any new allergy, intolerance, change in dietary requirement or change to medication.

6. Preventing choking

Lancaster Lane Primary and Pre-School will ensure that food is prepared appropriately to reduce the risk of choking.

Staff preparing food must be familiar with current DfE guidance on choking prevention. Personalised prompts have been created in line with this guidance, to support staff in food preparation, and are displayed in food preparation areas and EYFS classrooms within school.

Particular care will be taken with foods such as:

- whole grapes;
- cherry tomatoes;
- sausages;
- hard raw fruit and vegetables;
- chunks of meat;
- cheese;
- bread;
- marshmallows;
- jelly cubes;
- hard sweets and similar foods.

Examples of appropriate preparation include:

- cutting grapes, cherry tomatoes and similar small round foods lengthways and into quarters;
- removing stones and pips from fruit;
- cutting hard fruit and vegetables into appropriate shapes and textures;
- removing bones from meat and fish;
- cutting sausages into thin strips and removing skins where they are provided;
- cutting cheese into strips rather than large chunks;
- cutting bread appropriately for young children;
- never providing whole nuts to children under five;
- never providing popcorn as a snack;
- never providing hard sweets;
- never providing marshmallows or packet jelly cubes to young children.
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Food must be prepared according to the individual child's developmental stage rather than simply their chronological age.

7. Seating and eating environment

Children must be seated safely while eating.

Depending on their age and developmental needs, children will use:

- an appropriately sized chair

Children should not eat while:

- walking around;
- running;
- lying down;
- playing;
- climbing;
- travelling between areas.

Where possible, eating will take place in a designated area where distractions are minimised.

Staff will encourage children to remain seated while eating and drinking.

8. Supervision

Children must always remain within sight and hearing of a member of staff while eating. Staff must remain alert and actively supervise children throughout snack and mealtimes.

Where possible, particularly at snacktime, staff should sit facing children while they eat so that they can:

- identify signs of choking quickly;
- observe how children are eating;
- discourage unsafe eating behaviours;
- prevent children from sharing food;
- identify potential allergic reactions;
- provide appropriate support and encouragement.

During lunchtimes for Reception in the school hall, staff continually circle tables and supervise children fully when eating.

Staff must remember that choking can be silent and must not rely solely on a child making a noise or calling for help.

Children must never be left alone while eating.

9. Food sharing

Children will be discouraged from sharing food (other than shared snack during supervised snack times).

Staff will supervise closely to prevent children:

- taking food from another child's plate;
- swapping food;
- eating food belonging to another child;
- giving food to another child.

This is particularly important due to intolerances, allergies and dietary requirements.

10. Food hygiene

All food will be prepared, stored and served in accordance with appropriate food hygiene requirements.

All EYFS staff and wrap around care staff who prepare food have had appropriate food hygiene training.

Staff will:

- wash hands before preparing or serving food;
- ensure children wash their hands before eating;

- clean food preparation and eating surfaces appropriately;
- use appropriate utensils and equipment;
- store food safely;
- check use-by dates;
- follow appropriate temperature controls;
- prevent cross-contamination;
- ensure food is cooked appropriately;
- ensure hot food is cooled sufficiently before being given to children.

11. Drinks

Fresh drinking water will always be available and accessible to children. Children will be encouraged to drink water regularly throughout the day. Drinks will be provided in appropriate cups or containers according to children's developmental needs.

12. Healthy eating

Where food and drinks are provided by Lancaster Lane Primary and Pre-School, they will be healthy, balanced and nutritious.

We will promote positive attitudes towards food by:

- providing a variety of healthy foods;
- encouraging children to try different foods without pressure;
- supporting children's independence;
- talking positively about healthy food choices;
- developing children's understanding of where food comes from;
- avoiding using food as a reward or punishment;
- respecting children's individual needs and preferences.

13. Choking incidents

If a child chokes and staff intervention is required, staff will follow the school's paediatric first aid procedures.

Following an incident:

1. The child will receive appropriate first aid.
2. Emergency medical assistance will be requested where required.
3. Parents/carers will be informed.
4. The incident will be recorded.
5. The record will include details of where and how the child choked.

6. The incident will be reviewed by the EYFS Lead/Designated Safeguarding Lead or other appropriate member of the leadership team.
7. Any necessary changes to food preparation, supervision, seating or practice will be implemented.
8. Patterns or recurring features will be monitored.

14. Equality and inclusion

Lancaster Lane Primary and Pre-School will ensure that safer eating arrangements are inclusive and responsive to individual children's needs.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered for children with:

- additional needs;
- disabilities;
- developmental differences;
- sensory needs;
- swallowing or feeding difficulties;
- allergies or intolerances;
- cultural or religious dietary requirements.

Where specialist advice is required, the setting will work with parents/carers and appropriate health professionals.