

St. Maria Goretti Catholic Primary School

EYFS Safer Eating Policy 2026



Shining with God's love, pride and success

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that children in our care at St Maria Goretti Catholic Primary School 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 and the Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance (May 2025).

Intent

At St Maria Goretti Catholic Primary School, the safety and wellbeing of our children are at the heart of everything we do. In line with the EYFS 2025 statutory framework and the Early Years nutrition guidance, this policy sets out how staff in the EYFS class ensure that children eat safely, with reduced risks of choking, allergic reactions, and other food-related hazards.

All the activities in St Maria Goretti School promote the school values and provide equal opportunities for all members of its family regardless of disability, religion, sexual orientation, culture, gender, ethnic origin, colour or age.

All pupils have access to the curriculum, and the right to a learning environment which dispels ignorance, prejudice or stereotyping.

This policy applies to:

All staff and volunteers working with children in the EYFS class (ages 3–5)

Lunchtime supervisors, teaching assistants, and catering staff when supporting children at mealtimes.

Breakfast and Afterschool Club Staff

Parents and carers providing packed lunches. Supervision

At St Maria Goretti Catholic School we will:

- Have a paediatric first aid (PFA) trained member of staff who will always be present in the dining hall or classroom whenever children in Nursery or Reception are eating.
 - Ensure children remain within sight and hearing at all times during meals and snacks.
- Closely supervise children at their tables during lunch, ensuring they remain within sight and hearing and can intervene promptly if required.
- Closely supervise (during snack time) children by sitting alongside them, encouraging safe eating habits while maintaining vigilance for any signs of choking or allergic reactions.

Dietary Needs and Allergies

- ensure parents, on entry, provide full details of their child's dietary requirements, allergies, intolerances, and health conditions. This information is held by the school office and displayed (confidentially) in classrooms, the medical room and the kitchen.
- Ensure each child with an allergy has an Individual Healthcare Plan, agreed with parents and, where necessary, medical professionals. **Kitt medical kits are available in both buildings.**
- Have a named key adult (class teacher or lunchtime organiser) checks food provision for children with allergies before it is served.
- ensure that Children are not permitted to share food under any circumstances. (No child will be allowed to go to their packed lunch box at breaktime.

Food Preparation and Choking Prevention

- | Ensure that food is carefully cut for example:

Grapes, cherry tomatoes, and similar foods cut lengthways and into quarters. Fruits such as plums need cutting and the stone removing.

some hard fruit/veg such as carrots may be grated, cooked, or cut into thin strips.

No nuts, seeds, popcorn, hard sweets, or other high-risk foods.

Sausages/skinned foods cut lengthways into strips (not rounds).

Eating Environment

Ensure Nursery and Reception children eat in a calm, structured environment:

- EYFS children eat their lunch in the school hall (Bistro)
- Children sit at age-appropriate tables and chairs.
- Mealtimes are free from running, playing, or distractions.
- encourage an unhurried pace, supporting children to chew thoroughly and swallow before speaking. (longer time in the dining hall)

- Use mealtimes to promote our Catholic ethos of community and thankfulness, with prayers said before meals.

Incident Response If a child chokes:

- The nearest adult will apply first aid procedures immediately.
 - A PFA-trained member of staff must take the lead.
- An ambulance will be called if required. If an allergic reaction occurs:
 - The child's Individual Healthcare Plan followed (e.g. use of prescribed medication).
 - Emergency services called if required.
- Parents contacted immediately (after emergency services are called, if required). All incidents will be recorded on CPOMs, reported to parents on the same day and reviewed termly to improve practice.

Staff Training

- All EYFS staff (teachers, TAs, lunchtime supervisors) and Breakfast and Afterschool Club staff receive Paediatric First Aid (PFA) training
- All EYFS staff and Breakfast and Afterschool Club staff receive food hygiene training.
- Annual review of updates on choking prevention and food safety.

Parental Partnership

- Parents are informed of this policy when their child starts in our EYFS class
 - Families are expected to:

Provide up-to-date allergy/health information.

Follow safer eating guidance for packed lunches.

This policy was adopted by: St. Maria Goretti Catholic Primary School, Preston, Pr26SJ	Date: September 2026
	To be reviewed: September 2027 (or earlier if required)
	Signed:

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 the nursery by parents and carers on

the setting 'Registration Form' when a child starts at the nursery.

- 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 and stored securely. We will prompt parents to update the information we hold regarding special dietary needs every 6 months.

- Risk Assessment: A thorough risk assessment is carried out for children with food allergies, ensuring

appropriate precautions are taken, including avoiding allergens in meals and snacks.

- Responsibility: At each mealtime 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 encouraged to provide emergency medication where applicable.

- Prohibited Foods: Nuts, nut products, sweets, chocolate bars and chocolate spreads are not permitted at The Acorn Nursery School.

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 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/foodsafety> 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 and parents and/or carers made aware. The records will be reviewed and risk assessed alongside other accidents / incidents at nursery on a half-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 pieces for younger children). Popcorn, marshmallows, jelly cubes and hard sweets are never permitted for children under 5.

- 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 mealtimes / snack time. Other distractions such as toys at the meal table are, wherever possible, discouraged. Food sharing is not allowed.

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 their session. This consists of fresh milk or water, a selection of fresh fruits and vegetables and toast or crackers. We will always encourage the children to eat healthily.
- Packed Lunches: Parents are advised about safe storage of packed lunches and given information about providing healthy packed lunches during each child's induction to The Acorn Nursery School.
- Educational Opportunities: We will engage children in learning about food, nutrition, and healthy eating through age-appropriate activities and discussions.
- Support: Staff will have regard for children's food intake and work with parents / carers to provide healthy food options. We have two trained healthy eating advisors, Mrs Brambley and Mrs Luck who offer support to parents about healthy packed lunches.

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 will be safe and ageappropriate for the children. Any broken or damaged items will be immediately replaced.
- Hand Hygiene: Children will wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. Staff will ensure that all children have clean hands before meals and snack 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 foodrelated 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 or preferences related to their child's diet, and we will maintain open lines of

communication regarding food and meal times.

- Special Occasions: For special occasions or celebrations (e.g., birthdays), we will work with parents to ensure that any treats brought in align with our safer eating and allergy policies