



Featherstone Primary Academy

Snack Preparation Policy

GREENHEART
LEARNING PARTNERSHIP 

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Featherstone Primary Academy implement a snack preparation policy to promote consistency, safety, and healthy eating habits among children. From a young age, pupils are developing their attitudes toward food and nutrition, and school plays a key role in shaping those behaviours. A clear policy ensures that snacks are prepared and provided in a hygienic, inclusive, and age-appropriate way. It also encourages children to engage with food in a positive, structured environment that complements their learning and well-being.

Why is food safety so important for young children?

The [EYFS framework](#) requires providers to take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well – and you must be confident that those responsible for preparing and handling food in your setting are competent to do so.

Children can choke at any age. However, younger children are at greater risk as their narrow airways are more easily blocked.

Babies and young children's immune systems are not as strong and developed as adults' which means they are more vulnerable to infections which can lead to food poisoning. It is important to take extra care with hygiene and preparing food safely.

What it says in the EYFS framework

Staffing arrangements must meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety. You must ensure that children are adequately supervised, including whilst eating.

Before a child is admitted to the setting, you must obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies that the child has, and any special health requirements.

There must be an area which is adequately equipped to provide healthy meals, snacks and drinks for children as necessary. There must be suitable facilities for the hygienic preparation of food for children, if necessary including suitable sterilisation equipment for babies' food. You must be confident that those responsible for preparing and handling food are competent to do so. In group provision, all staff involved in preparing and handling food must receive training in food hygiene.

[Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage.](#)

Food safety advice for children age 5 and under

How to reduce the risk of choking

Choking can happen with any food, but there are steps you can take to minimise the risks.

Food preparation:

- remove any stones and pips from fruit before serving
- cut small round foods, like grapes, strawberries and cherry tomatoes in half.
- cut large fruits like melon, and hard fruit or vegetables like raw apple and carrot into slices instead of small chunks
- do not offer raisins as a snack to children under 12 months – although these can be chopped up as part of a meal
- soften hard fruit and vegetables (such as carrot and apple) and remove the skins when first given to babies from around 6 months
- remove bones from meat or fish
- do not give whole nuts to children under five years old
- do not give whole seeds to children under five years old
- cut cheese into strips rather than chunks
- white bread can form a doughy ball in the throat, consider wholemeal or toasted bread and for very young children cut all types of bread into strips
- do not give popcorn as a snack
- do not give children marshmallows or jelly cubes from a packet either to eat or as part of messy play activities as they can get stuck in the throat
- do not give children hard sweets

Supervision

Infants and young children should be seated safely in an appropriately sized low chair while eating. Infants and young children should never be left alone while they are eating, and staff should be familiar with paediatric first aid advice for children who are choking.

Providers should, where possible, sit facing children whilst they eat so they can:

- make sure children are eating in a way to prevent choking
- prevent food sharing
- be aware of any unexpected allergic reactions

From September 2025 early years settings will be required to always have a member of staff with a valid paediatric first aid certificate in the room when children are eating. This requirement will be part of the EYFS statutory framework.

The criteria for effective Paediatric First Aid (PFA) training can be found in the [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage](#), Annex A.

Useful resources

- [Early years choking hazards poster and table \(foundationyears.org.uk\)](https://www.foundationyears.org.uk)
- [Early Start Nutrition- Preparing food safely for young children \(video\)](#)
- [Choking hazards in the home and how to avoid them \(rospa.com\)](https://www.rospa.com)

Food and drinks to avoid

Drinks

Provide only fresh tap water and plain milk for children to drink. Fruit juice and squash, even when diluted, can contain lots of sugar and can cause tooth decay so this needs to be considered.

When offering dairy alternatives to cow's milk:

- Unsweetened calcium-fortified, plant-based drinks (such as soya, oat and almond drinks) should be avoided before 12 months, however small amounts can be used in cooking. These drinks can be given from 12 months as part of a healthy balanced diet.
- Do not give children under 5 rice drinks, because of the level of arsenic they contain.

Foods to avoid up to 5 years

- **Nuts** whole nuts and peanuts, should not be given to children under 5 years old as they pose a choking risk. Babies can be given nuts from around 6 months old as long as they are crushed, ground or a smooth peanut butter.
- **Raw eggs**, or food containing partially cooked eggs, for example uncooked cake mixture and runny boiled eggs (unless they have the red lion stamp or you see the words "British Lion quality").
- **Foods high in salt** such as, sausages, bacon, crackers, crisps, ready meals and takeaways.
- **Sugar** both in sugary snacks and by not adding sugar to food.
- **Fresh pate** (meat, fish or vegetable-based) to reduce the risk of food poisoning.
- **Unpasteurised milk, milk drinks and cheese**, mould-ripened cheeses and soft blue-veined cheese, to reduce the risk of food poisoning. However, these cheeses can be used as part of a cooked recipe as listeria is killed by cooking.
- **Shark, swordfish and marlin** as the levels of mercury in these fish can affect a child's developing nervous system.
- **Raw shellfish** to reduce the risk of food poisoning, and make sure any shellfish you use is thoroughly cooked.
- **Raw jelly cubes** these are a choking hazard.
- **Slush ice drinks** sometimes known as slushies, as they may contain too much glycerol

Foods to serve occasionally from 6 months to 4 years

- Although it is recommended to provide oily fish in early years settings at least once every 3 weeks, do not provide it more than twice a week, as it can contain low levels of pollutants.

Useful resources

- [Foods to avoid giving babies and young children- NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/health-topics/foods-to-avoid-giving-babies-and-young-children/)
- [What to feed young children- NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/health-topics/what-to-feed-young-children/)
- [Baby and toddler meal ideas- NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/health-topics/baby-and-toddler-meal-ideas/)
- [Example menus for early years settings in England- Part 1: Guidance](https://www.nhs.uk/health-topics/example-menus-for-early-years-settings-in-england-part-1-guidance/)
- [Example menus for early years settings in England- Part 2: Recipes](https://www.nhs.uk/health-topics/example-menus-for-early-years-settings-in-england-part-2-recipes/)

Allergies

Early years settings and your food provider should work closely with families to support children with allergies or intolerances. As part of the [EYFS framework](#), you are required to obtain information about children's special dietary requirements – including food allergies and intolerances – before they attend, and record and act on the information provided about children's dietary needs.

There should be a protocol in place which is accessible to all staff, to ensure everyone is aware of individual children's allergies and symptoms.

Understanding which allergens are present in every meal and snack you provide is an important step in providing food which is safe for children with food allergies and intolerances. Since 2014, all food businesses, including early years settings, have been required by law to give details about the allergens in the food they provide.

Useful resources

- [Food allergies in babies and young children- NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/health-topics/food-allergies-in-babies-and-young-children/)
- [Food allergy- NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/health-topics/food-allergy/)
- [Allergy UK National Charity Free Allergy Support & Resources](https://www.allergyuk.org/allergy-uk-national-charity-free-allergy-support-resources/)
- [Allergen guidance for food businesses- Food Standards Agency](https://www.food.gov.uk/allergen-guidance-for-food-businesses)

Hygiene

Food should be stored, prepared and presented in a safe and hygienic environment. This is especially important when providing food for young children, as they may have a low resistance to food poisoning. It is also important that children are taught basic hygiene themselves, such as not eating food that has fallen on the floor, and washing their hands with soap and warm water before eating meals or snacks and after going to the toilet or handling animals.

Ensure food is cooked until steaming hot to kill harmful bacteria, and is then cooled sufficiently before giving it to infants and young children.

Wash all surfaces for preparing or eating food, especially chopping boards, with hot soapy water (and keep pets away from them). Make sure all bowls and spoons are washed with hot soapy water. Tea towels, kitchen cloths or sponges can harbour lots of germs, so wash them regularly.

Further information on food hygiene:

- [Children's food: safety and hygiene- NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)
- [Safer food, better business \(SFBB\) Food Standards Agency](#)
- [Safer food, better business for childminders Food Standards Agency](#)

Expirations

Food expiration dates must always be visible on packaging. Any food that has not been consumed by the best before/use by must be disposed of.

Training

Kitchen staff and class teachers have certifications in Food Hygiene and Safety. These are renewed regularly.

Monitoring and Quality Assurance

Senior Leaders will conduct monitoring visits to ensure all of the above is adhered to.