# Park School and Little Crickets at Park School Catering, Safer Eating & Food Allergens Policy

**Catering, food allergen and EYFS safer eating policy**

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**Person(s) responsible for review and role**:

Headteacher: Nadia Ward

Safeguarding Lead: Ella Whitbread

# Table of Contents

Aim of policy: ..... 1
Related Guidance and School Policies ..... 2
Food Hygiene ..... 2
Catering Management ..... 2
Kitchen Facilities ..... 2
Food Safety & Hygiene ..... 2
Staff Training ..... 3
Allergen Management ..... 3
Definitions ..... 3
Specified Allergens ..... 3
Medical Information ..... 3
Allergen Information ..... 4
Food Preparation ..... 4
Staff Training and Awareness ..... 4
Emergency Procedures ..... 4
Pupils' Responsibilities ..... 4

## Aim of policy:

Park School and Little Crickets are committed to safeguarding the health, wellbeing and safety of all pupils, staff and visitors by providing food that is safe and suitable for those with food allergies, intolerances and medically diagnosed dietary requirements.

The School recognises that food related illness and allergies can pose serious and potentially life threatening risks and is committed to complying fully with current food safety legislation, while fostering a culture of awareness, vigilance and shared responsibility.

This policy aims to:

- Ensure compliance with current UK food allergens legislation and hygiene practice
- Protect pupils, staff and visitors with food allergies or intolerances
- Provide clear procedures for identifying, managing and responding to food hygiene and allergen risks
- Support pupils' welfare in school
- Promote effective communication between the School, catering teams, pupils and parents

**Park School and Little Crickets** recognises that a number of members of our school community (pupils, parents, visitors and staff) may suffer from potentially life-threatening allergies or intolerances to certain foods. **Park School and Little Crickets** is committed to a whole school approach to the care and management of those members of the School community. The School's First Aid Policy looks more in depth at allergens such as animal stings (bees, wasps etc).

## Related Guidance and School Policies

This policy should be read alongside the following school policies, statutory guidance and advice:

**Policies**:

- *Accessibility Plan*
- *Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy*

- *Administration of Medicines Policy*
- *Controlled Medicines Policy*
- *First Aid Policy*
- *Health & Safety Policy*
- *Infection Control & Illness Policy*
- *Risk Assessment Policy*

**Statutory & Regulatory Guidance:**

- *KCSIE 2026*
- *Food Information Regulations 2014 (as amended)*
- *Food Information (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2019 ("Natasha's Law")*
- *Food Safety Act 1990*
- *Food Hygiene Regulations 2013*
- *Health and Safety at Work Act 1974*

## Food Hygiene

The School will operate its in-house catering provision in accordance with applicable food safety, hygiene and allergen information requirements, including the principles set out in Food Standards Agency guidance and the School's food safety management system. The in-house catering team will maintain written food safety procedures based on hazard analysis and critical control point principles, including safe arrangements for:

- purchase and receipt of food and related materials and products
- storage in appropriate containers and at appropriate temperatures to include stock management and recall or withdrawal of food products
- preparation, cooking and service
- cooling and reheating
- cleaning, pest control and waste management
- allergen control

The School will ensure that food is stored, prepared, cooked, served and disposed of in a manner that protects from avoidable risk of foodborne illness, allergen exposure, physical contamination, chemical contamination and cross-contamination. Particular care will be taken with ready-to-eat foods, chilled foods, hot-held foods, high-risk foods, foods prepared for pupils with allergies or coeliac disease, and food prepared for EYFS children whose developmental stage may increase choking or allergy risks.

The Catering Manager will ensure that all food hygiene records are accurate. Records will include, as appropriate:

- supplier information
- delivery checks
- temperature checks
- cleaning schedules in addition to opening and closing checks
- maintenance logs with pest control records
- staff training records
- allergen matrices where required
- food complaint records with corrective actions and evidence of review

The School will ensure that staff who are unwell do not compromise food safety. Catering staff and any other staff handling food must report symptoms or circumstances that may affect food safety, including diarrhoea, vomiting, infected wounds or sores, fever, jaundice or any illness likely to be transmitted through food. Staff with diarrhoea or vomiting must not return to food handling duties until they have been symptom-free for 48 hours.
https://www.gov.uk/running-food-business/staff-training-illness-hygiene

## Catering Management

The Catering Manager will be accountable to the School's senior leadership for ensuring that catering is safe, hygienic, nutritionally appropriate, inclusive, and responsive to pupil need.

The Catering Manager will maintain effective systems for menu planning, hygiene supervision, food safety records and staff deployment. The Catering Manager will also ensure that any ingredient substitution, recipe change, menu change or supplier change is checked before use for its food safety, allergen, dietary and nutritional implications.

Information about a pupil's allergy, medical dietary need, religious or cultural food requirement, coeliac disease, food intolerance or other special dietary need will be shared only with staff who need the information in order to keep the pupil safe and appropriately supported.

## Kitchen Facilities

The School will provide and maintain kitchen, storage, preparation, serving and dining facilities that are suitable for the scale and nature of the in-house catering operation. Facilities will be kept clean, orderly, well maintained, adequately ventilated, appropriately lit and arranged to support safe food flow from delivery through storage, preparation, cooking, service and disposal.

The kitchen will contain suitable equipment for safe food preparation, including:

- appropriate refrigeration and freezer storage with appropriate temperature monitoring equipment
- cooking equipment
- hot-holding equipment with appropriate temperature monitoring equipment
- handwashing facilities separate or designated clearly from food washing arrangements
- cleaning materials
- pest control arrangements with safe waste storage

Equipment will be maintained, cleaned and repaired or replaced promptly where damage or malfunction may affect food safety. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69c5247ecdfd19de13d0f6ca/sfbb-caterers-pack-fixed_0_3.pdf

Food preparation and storage arrangements will be organised to reduce the risk of cross-contamination. Raw and ready-to-eat foods will be separated by:

- storage in line with food hygiene and safety practices
- equipment, utensils and work areas being clearly designated for purpose where necessary
- preparation timing and cleaning procedures in place to reduce the risk of cross contamination

Foods prepared for pupils with allergies, coeliac disease or other special dietary requirements will be protected from allergen cross-contact through careful ingredient checking, clean work areas, clean utensils, handwashing, labelling, segregation and supervision.

Kitchen access will be restricted to authorised staff and approved visitors only. Contractors, visitors or pupils will not enter food preparation areas unless authorised, supervised and subject to hygiene controls appropriate to the nature of the visit.

## Food Safety & Hygiene

Food will be purchased only from reputable suppliers who can provide appropriate food safety and allergen information. Deliveries will be checked on receipt for condition, packaging integrity, date coding, temperature where relevant, allergen information and suitability for the intended menu. Food that is damaged, out of date, incorrectly labelled, transported or delivered at an incorrect or unsafe temperature, contaminated or otherwise unsafe will be rejected or removed from use. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69c5247ecdfd19de13d0f6ca/sfbb-caterers-pack-fixed_0_3.pdf

The School will ensure allergen information is accurate, consistent and up to date. Written allergen information will be maintained for dishes served by the School, and staff will know where to find it and how to respond to allergen enquiries.

Where the School prepares food that is prepacked for direct sale, including items packaged on the premises before pupils, staff or visitors select them, the School will apply PPDS labelling requirements. Such food will be labelled with the name of the food and a full ingredients list, with allergenic ingredients emphasised, and menu sheets or website information will not be treated as a substitute for PPDS labelling where PPDS rules apply.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prepacked-for-direct-sale-ppds-allergen-labelling-changes-for-schools-colleges-and-nurseries/prepacked-for-direct-sale-ppds-allergen-labelling-changes-for-schools-colleges-and-nurseries

# Staff Training

All catering staff will receive induction and ongoing training appropriate to their role. Training will include:

- food hygiene
- safe methods of work
- personal hygiene
- cleaning and cross-contamination
- temperature control
- allergen management and special diets
- stock control including food waste,
- incident reporting and emergency response

Training may include formal courses, on-the-job instruction, supervised practice, self-study and refresher training. https://www.gov.uk/running-food-business/staff-training-illness-hygieneAll staff involved in food preparation, handling or service will be trained to understand the seriousness of food allergies, coeliac disease and food intolerances, the importance of accurate information, the risk of cross-contact, the need to follow agreed procedures and the requirement to escalate uncertainty rather than guess.

Staff supervising pupils at mealtimes, including EYFS staff, will receive information relevant to their duties. This will include how to identify pupils with known allergies or special diets, how food will be safely served, how to prevent food sharing where required, how to respond to concerns, and how to summon medical assistance in an emergency.

EYFS staff will receive additional training and briefing on safer eating, choking prevention, food allergies and intolerances, anaphylaxis, food textures, developmental readiness, supervision while eating and the child-specific information required before admission. EYFS staff involved in preparing or handling food must receive food hygiene training, and EYFS requires staff to be aware of symptoms and treatment for allergies and anaphylaxis and the difference between allergies and intolerances.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a5f8e4fb00f3323bf1a23a1/EYFS_group_and_school_based_from_September_2026.pdf

## Roles and Responsibilities

The Headteacher and senior leadership team will ensure that this policy is implemented, appropriately resourced and reviewed. The Catering Manager is responsible for food safety systems, accurate allergen information, safe purchasing, storage, preparation and service, and staff training within the catering team. The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Medical Officer will oversee pupil-specific medical information, Individual Healthcare Plans and communication with relevant staff.

All staff must familiarise themselves with this policy, follow pupil-specific plans, prevent food sharing where required, maintain effective hand hygiene and seek verified allergen information rather than guessing.

Parents and carers must provide accurate, current written information about allergies, intolerances, dietary requirements, prescribed medication and emergency contacts. They must supply in-date medication and equipment in the original, clearly labelled container and notify the School promptly of any change.

# Allergen Management

## Definitions

**Food Allergy**

A medical condition in which exposure to a specific food can trigger an adverse immune response, potentially resulting in anaphylaxis.

**Food Intolerance**

A non immune adverse reaction to food (e.g. lactose intolerance), which may still require careful management.

## Specified Allergens

The 14 allergens required by law to be declared are:

1. Celery
2. Cereals containing gluten
3. Crustaceans
4. Eggs
5. Fish
6. Lupin
7. Milk
8. Molluscs
9. Mustard
10. Nuts
11. Peanuts
12. Sesame seeds
13. Soya
14. Sulphur dioxide (sulphites)

### Nut-Aware Approach

The School operates a nut-aware approach and asks families, staff and visitors not to bring products containing peanuts or tree nuts onto the premises. The School cannot guarantee a completely allergen-free environment or that products will be free from traces. Risk controls will therefore focus on accurate information, individual planning, handwashing, cleaning, supervision, prevention of food sharing and prompt emergency response.

## Medical Information

As part of the partnership between the school and parents in keeping children safe, parents must notify the School in writing of any diagnosed food allergy or intolerance. This should include medical information relevant to any medication or provision required and action plans must be provided where appropriate. As per the medicines policies information is recorded securely and shared with relevant staff on a need-to-know basis with ongoing communication such as changes to dietary needs to be communicated promptly. Pupils are encouraged to inform staff if they are unsure about food ingredients.

## Allergen Information

All food prepared and served by the School identifies allergens clearly, where food has been prepared elsewhere or pre-packaged the school will ensure that pre packed food for direct sale complies fully with Natasha's Law, including:

- Full ingredient list
- Highlighted allergens

Non prepacked food allergen information is available on request.

## Food Preparation

- Catering staff follow strict food hygiene and allergen control procedures
- Measures are in place to minimise cross contamination
- Allergen controlled meals are prepared and served separately where required

## Staff Training and Awareness

Catering staff receive regular food allergen and hygiene training. In addition staff supervising pupils at meals, activities or trips are briefed on allergy management with those staff supervising pupils on trips trained in any emergency first aid or administration of medications relevant to the needs of the pupil.

### Individual Healthcare Plans and Risk Assessment

A child with a diagnosed allergy requiring emergency medication must have an Individual Healthcare Plan or allergy action plan in place before attendance, together with an individual risk assessment where required. Plans will be agreed with parents or carers and, where appropriate, healthcare professionals, and reviewed at least annually, after an incident or near miss, and whenever the child's condition, treatment or medication changes.

the child's allergy, intolerance or special dietary requirement and foods that must be avoided

how meals and snacks will be identified, adapted, prepared, supplied and handed over safely

precautions for food-based lessons, celebrations, cooking, crafts, messy play, trips and wraparound care

signs and symptoms, emergency actions, medication, dose, administration instructions and storage location

the staff trained and authorised to administer medication and arrangements for off-site activities

Emergency medication must be readily accessible throughout the school day and during trips. The School will check medication regularly and inform parents or carers when replacement medication is required. A child who requires life-saving emergency medication must not attend without the required medication being available, unless a clinically agreed alternative arrangement is in place.

## Emergency Procedures

If an allergic reaction is suspected, staff must follow the pupil's Individual Healthcare Plan or allergy action plan without delay. Emergency medication, including an adrenaline auto-injector, must be administered by a trained and authorised member of staff in accordance with the plan. For suspected anaphylaxis, staff must call 999 immediately, state that anaphylaxis is suspected, follow the call handler's instructions, contact parents or carers, and arrange for a member of staff to accompany the child to hospital if a parent or carer has not arrived. Every allergic reaction, administration of medication, emergency response or near miss must be recorded, shared with parents or carers as soon as reasonably practicable, reviewed by the Medical Officer, and used to update controls and plans where necessary.

## Pupils' Responsibilities

At an age where they are considered capable of doing so,  students are expected to:

- Inform staff of their allergies where appropriate
- Only consume food that they know is safe for them
- Not share food

Where a child is of an age at which they could not be reasonably expected to inform staff of their allergies staff should be particularly vigilant in checking food before it is served. As a general rule pupils should not share food that has not been checked and served by a member of staff.

# Nutrition & Menu Planning

The School will provide meals and snacks that promote health, wellbeing, participation and readiness to learn. Menus will be planned to offer balance, variety, age-appropriate portions and suitable choice for day pupils and EYFS children.  https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools

Menus will be planned with regard to the needs of pupils across the School day, including breakfast, lunch, supper, snacks, EYFS meals, after-school provision and school events.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a0c1d22c75cc34a8ff8f499/National_Minimum_Standards_for_Boarding_Schools.pdf

The Catering Manager will review menus to ensure that vegetarian, vegan, religious, cultural, allergy-related, medically indicated and other special dietary needs can be met safely and respectfully where reasonable and practicable. Where a menu item must be substituted, the catering team will check the substitute product for allergens, ingredients, suitability and nutritional impact before service.

EYFS menus, snacks and drinks will be healthy, balanced and nutritious, and the School will have regard to the EYFS nutrition guidance. Fresh drinking water will always be available and accessible to EYFS

children.https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a5f8e4fb00f3323bf1a23a1/EYFS_group_and_school_based_from_September_2026.pdfhttps://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-nutrition

## Dietary Needs

The School will support pupils with dietary needs arising from disability, medical conditions, allergies, coeliac disease, religious belief, cultural practice, ethical choice, SEND or other individual circumstances. The School will consider each request carefully, proportionately and respectfully, and will not discriminate unlawfully in the provision of meals, snacks, access to dining facilities or participation in school life.

Where a pupil's allergy, medical condition or other impairment amounts to a disability, the School will consider and implement reasonable adjustments to avoid substantial disadvantage. Reasonable adjustments may include:

- changes to menu access, dining arrangements and supervision
- ingredient sourcing, food preparation, storage and service routines,
- EYFS care arrangements or the provision of auxiliary support

Decisions will be informed by pupil need, parent and pupil input, medical advice where available, health and safety, practicality, effectiveness, resources and the interests of other pupils. Where an adjustment is not considered reasonable, the School will record the reasons and consider whether an alternative measure can reduce disadvantage.

## Meal Services

Meal services will be organised to ensure that pupils receive food safely, calmly, respectfully and in a manner appropriate to their age, needs and school context. The School will provide suitable supervision in dining areas, with particular attention to younger pupils, EYFS children, pupils with allergies or medical conditions, pupils with SEND and pupils who require assistance to eat.

The catering team will ensure that food served corresponds to the published menu and allergen information, unless a change has been checked and communicated. Staff will not provide uncertain verbal assurances about ingredients or allergens. If allergen information is not known or cannot be verified, the food will not be served to a pupil for whom the information is relevant.

Meal service arrangements for pupils with allergies or special diets will be clear and consistent. This may include named meal lists, discreet identification systems, separate labelled meals, designated serving points, supervised collection, colour-coded equipment or direct handover to a responsible adult, depending on the pupil's age, maturity and risk assessment. The School will ensure that such systems protect pupils without unnecessarily singling them out or compromising dignity.

## Special Diets & Individual Needs

Parents must inform the School in writing of any diagnosed food allergy, coeliac disease, food intolerance, special dietary requirement, religious or cultural food requirement, or medical condition affecting food provision. This policy recognises the partnership between the School and parents and expects parents to notify the School in writing of diagnosed allergy or intolerance, including relevant medical information and action plans where appropriate.

The School will maintain a secure and up-to-date record of pupils with special dietary requirements and will share relevant information with staff on a need-to-know basis. Individual Healthcare Plans, allergy action plans or other pupil-specific plans will be used where required to support pupils with allergies.
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/allergy-safety-in-schools

The School will work with parents and, where appropriate, healthcare professionals to agree safe arrangements for pupils with:

- higher-risk allergies
- anaphylaxis risk
- coeliac disease

- diabetes
- swallowing difficulties
- eating disorders
- sensory feeding needs or SEND-related food needs

Arrangements will be reviewed when a pupil's needs change, after an incident or near miss, following updated medical advice, on transition between school stages, or at least annually.

The School will ensure that pupils are supported to take increasing responsibility for their own dietary safety as they mature, while recognising that the duty to safeguard pupils remains with the School. Pupils will be encouraged to ask staff if they are unsure about food ingredients, and staff will treat such questions seriously and supportively.

# Pupil & Parent Consultation

The School will maintain clear, respectful and timely communication with parents about catering, menus, dietary requirements, allergy management and pupil wellbeing. Parents will be asked to provide accurate and current information about allergies, medical dietary needs, food intolerances, religious or cultural requirements and any changes affecting their child's food provision.

The School will consult parents when preparing or reviewing individual arrangements for pupils with allergies, medical conditions or significant dietary needs. Parents in the EYFS must provide information before admission about special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and intolerances, and special health requirements, and must have ongoing discussions with staff and, where appropriate, include health professionals to develop allergy action plans. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a5f8e4fb00f3323bf1a23a1/EYFS_group_and_school_based_from_September_2026.pdf

The School will seek pupil views on food provision in an age-appropriate way, including through school councils, surveys, informal feedback, menu tasting or other suitable consultation methods.

The School will provide parents with appropriate information about food and drinks provided for EYFS children, and EYFS parents will be informed how the setting supports children's needs and how policies and procedures can be accessed.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a5f8e4fb00f3323bf1a23a1/EYFS_group_and_school_based_from_September_2026.pdf

# Food Waste & Sustainability

The School will seek to reduce food waste while maintaining choice and a nutritionally balanced menu. Menu planning, stock ordering, portion control, batch cooking, stock rotation, pupil feedback and monitoring of uptake will be used to reduce avoidable waste.

Food waste will be managed hygienically and stored away from food preparation areas before collection. Waste areas and bins will be kept clean, covered where appropriate, and managed to reduce odour, pest attraction, contamination and blocked drains. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69c5247ecdfd19de13d0f6ca/sfbb-caterers-pack-fixed_0_3.pdfThe School will encourage pupils to understand food waste, healthy eating and sustainability through appropriate educational, or pastoral teaching. Sustainability initiatives will not compromise allergen control, food safety, nutrition or pupil choice. Leftover food will only be reused, stored, chilled, reheated or disposed of in accordance with food safety procedures. Food that has exceeded safe time, temperature, date code or allergen-control limits will not be served.

## Safer Eating and Choking Prevention

Food must be prepared and served in a form appropriate to each child's developmental stage, and staff must consider texture, size, shape, hardness and the child's ability to sit, chew and swallow safely. Children must be seated appropriately and supervised without avoidable distractions. EYFS children must remain within sight and hearing while eating because choking can be silent; where possible, supervising staff should sit facing children.

Any choking incident requiring intervention must be recorded and parents or carers informed. Records will be reviewed periodically to identify patterns, common foods, environments or practices that require further control.

## Incidents & Complaints

Any complaint, food safety incident or allergen incident, including suspected allergic reaction or near miss, will be taken seriously, recorded and reviewed for learning points. Where a pupil shows signs of a serious allergic reaction or anaphylaxis, staff will follow the pupil's action plan, summon emergency medical assistance without delay, administer medication where trained and authorised to do so, and inform parents as soon as reasonably practicable. If a person is having a severe allergic reaction, staff should call 999 and explain that the person could have anaphylaxis. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69c5247ecdfd19de13d0f6ca/sfbb-caterers-pack-fixed_0_3.pdf

For EYFS children, the School will record choking incidents requiring intervention and ensure parents are made aware; EYFS records should be reviewed periodically to identify trends or common features that could reduce future risk. Registered EYFS providers must notify Ofsted of food poisoning affecting two or more children cared for on the premises, and of any serious accident, illness or injury to, or death of, a child while in their care, within the statutory notification framework.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a5f8e4fb00f3323bf1a23a1/EYFS_group_and_school_based_from_September_2026.pdf

Complaints will be handled in accordance with the School's complaints procedure.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a0c1d22c75cc34a8ff8f499/National_Minimum_Standards_for_Boarding_Schools.pdf

## Early Years Foundation Stage

EYFS food provision will comply with the EYFS statutory framework and will be managed as a distinct area of heightened safeguarding, welfare, health, nutrition, allergy and choking risk. The School will ensure that EYFS children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks that are healthy, balanced and nutritious, that fresh drinking water is always available and accessible, and that the School has regard to EYFS nutrition guidance unless there is good reason not to. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-nutrition

Before an EYFS child is admitted, the School will obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies, intolerances and special health requirements. This information will be shared with all staff involved in preparing, handling, serving or supervising food for that child. At each mealtime and snack time, the School will be clear who is responsible for checking that the food and drink provided meet each child's requirements.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a5f8e4fb00f3323bf1a23a1/EYFS_group_and_school_based_from_September_2026.pdf

The School will maintain ongoing discussions with parents and, where appropriate, health professionals to develop and review allergy action plans for EYFS children with known allergies or intolerances. Staff will understand the symptoms and treatment of allergies and anaphylaxis, the difference between allergy and intolerance, and that children can develop allergies at any time.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a5f8e4fb00f3323bf1a23a1/EYFS_group_and_school_based_from_September_2026.pdf

EYFS children will be supervised closely while eating. Children must always be within sight and hearing of a member of staff while eating as choking can be silent. Where possible, staff should sit facing children so they can monitor safe eating, prevent food sharing and identify unexpected allergic reactions. At least one member of staff in the room while children are eating must hold a valid paediatric first aid certificate, and at least one person with a current paediatric first aid certificate must be on the premises and available at all times when children are present and must accompany children on outings.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a5f8e4fb00f3323bf1a23a1/EYFS_group_and_school_based_from_September_2026.pdf

Food for EYFS children will be prepared in a way that reflects each child's developmental stage, including texture, portion size, weaning stage, ability to chew, choking risk, allergies and parental information. Assumptions will not be made based on age alone. Food will be cut, served and supervised to reduce choking risk, and babies and young children will be seated safely in suitable chairs or highchairs while eating.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a5f8e4fb00f3323bf1a23a1/EYFS_group_and_school_based_from_September_2026.pdf

For EYFS children with a known allergy, the Nursery Manager will ensure that relevant staff are briefed before the child attends, the agreed plan and risk assessment are accessible, and responsibility for checking food at each meal and snack is clear. Snack provision and food-related activities will be checked against the needs of children attending. Tables and eating surfaces will be cleaned effectively, children will be supported to wash their hands before and after eating, and food sharing will not be permitted.

All staff involved in preparing and handling EYFS food will receive food hygiene training. EYFS food preparation facilities will be hygienic and suitably equipped, including sterilisation equipment for babies' food where necessary. EYFS catering incidents, choking incidents, allergy incidents, complaints and food poisoning notifications will be recorded and escalated in accordance with EYFS framework, safeguarding, health and safety and complaints procedures.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a5f8e4fb00f3323bf1a23a1/EYFS_group_and_school_based_from_September_2026.pdf

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