Knights Templar Community Church School and Nursery

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Head Teacher: Mrs Laura Weaver, BA Hons QTS

Safer Eating Policy

Date Approved by the Head Teacher	Review Period	Date to be reviewed
November 2026	Annual	November 2027

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Statement of Intent

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that children in our care are provided with a safe eating environment that supports healthy eating, minimises food-related risks, and ensures compliance with the Early Years Foundations Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, including the changes introduced in September 2025.

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 hazard 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's '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 and sweets are not permitted at Knights Templar Nursery.

Safer Eating Practices

To minimise the risk of choking and ensure safe 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 while 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 cocktails sausages must be cut length ways into think batons. This guidance on food safety for young children – https://help-for-early-years-

providers.education.gov.uk/safeguarding-and-welfare/food-safety includes advise 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). Large 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 sessions. This consists of fresh milk or water, a selection of fresh fruits and vegetables and crackers, breadsticks etc. 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 Knights Templar Nursery.
- Educational Opportunities: We will engage children in learning about food, nutrition and healthy eating through age-appropriate activities and discussions.

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 age-appropriate 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 snacks 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 food-related 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 mealtimes.

- 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.