FOOD, NUTRITION AND MEALTIME POLICY

This policy is prescribed by The Good Shepherd Trust and all reference to 'the Trust' includes all Trust schools, the central team and subsidiary organisations.

Date adopted:	14/09/2026	Last reviewed:	21/07/2026
Review cycle:	Annual	Is this policy statutory?	No
Approval:	CEdO	Author:	Head of Early Years
Local approval*:	Head Teacher	Local author*:	Early Years Lead
Next Review Date of Template Policy:	01/09/2027		

Revision record

Minor revisions should be recorded here when the policy is amended in light of changes to legislation or to correct errors. Significant changes or at the point of review should be recorded below and approved at the level indicated above.

Revision No.	Date	Revised by	Approved date	Comments

1. Introduction

It is the intention of the trust that this policy reflects our vision of "Flourishing Together" and our values of kindness, integrity and resilience.

The Good Shepherd Trust is committed to promoting healthy lifestyles and positive attitudes towards food and nutrition. The Trust recognises that developing positive attitudes towards food from an early age supports children's confidence, independence, and lifelong wellbeing. Mealtimes provide valuable opportunities for social interaction, communication, and the development of self-help skills and promote independence, particularly for EYFS children.

We recognise that healthy eating contributes to children's:

- Physical health
- Emotional wellbeing
- Concentration and learning
- Growth and development
- Long-term health outcomes

This policy supports the Trust vision of Flourishing Together and reflects our values of Kindness, Integrity and Resilience.

This policy should be read alongside:

- EYFS Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Educational Visits Policy

2. Healthy Eating Principles

The Trust will promote:
- Balanced and nutritious diets.
- Positive attitudes towards healthy food.
- Appropriate portion sizes.
- Independence at mealtimes.
- Good oral health practices.
- Healthy lifelong habits.

Food and drink provided by the school should support children's health and wellbeing.

Schools will support good oral health by encouraging water as the drink of choice, limiting sugary foods and drinks, and promoting regular tooth-brushing messages in accordance with local health guidance.

3. School Food Standards

Where food is provided, schools will comply with the School Food Standards.
Meals should:
- Include a variety of fruit and vegetables.
- Provide balanced nutrition.
- Limit foods high in sugar, salt and saturated fats.
- Promote healthy food choices.
- Meet statutory and contractual requirements.

4. EYFS Requirements

The Trust will comply with all EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements relating to food and drink.
Children will:
- Have access to drinking water at all times.
- Be provided with healthy and nutritious food where meals or snacks are supplied.
- Be appropriately supervised whilst eating.
- Have dietary requirements fully considered.

Food provision should support children's independence and self-help skills.

5. Safe Eating and Choking Prevention

The safety of children during eating and drinking is paramount.
Staff will:
- Ensure children are seated appropriately when eating.
- Supervise children throughout meals and snacks.
- Encourage children to eat slowly.
- Promote safe chewing and swallowing.
- Be aware of age-related choking hazards.

Children will not be permitted to:

- Walk around whilst eating.
- Lie down whilst eating.
- Consume food in unsafe situations.

Staff will follow current guidance regarding the preparation of foods identified as presenting a choking risk to young children, including ensuring that items such as grapes, cherry tomatoes and similar foods are cut appropriately before being served.

A list of common choking risk foods is included in Appendix 1.

6. Allergies and Anaphylaxis

The Trust recognises the potentially serious consequences of food allergies.
Schools will:
- Maintain accurate allergy records.
- Obtain medical information from parents.
- Implement healthcare plans where required.
- Ensure relevant staff receive training.
- Follow emergency procedures where anaphylaxis risks exist.

Children with severe allergies will have individual risk assessments and care plans. Schools will ensure that prescribed adrenaline auto-injectors (AAIs), such as EpiPens, Jext or Emerade devices, are readily accessible and available at all times to children who require them. Staff responsible for the child will be aware of the location of the medication and the child's emergency healthcare plan.

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Relevant staff will receive regular training on food safety, allergy awareness, choking prevention and emergency response procedures**.**

7. Food Hygiene

Food preparation and serving must comply with food hygiene regulations.
Staff involved with food handling will:
- Follow hygiene procedures.
- Wash hands appropriately.
- Store food safely.
- Monitor food temperatures where required.
- Prevent cross-contamination.

Relevant food safety training will be provided where appropriate.

8. Snacks and Drinks

Where snacks are provided, they should:
- Promote healthy eating habits.
- Include fruit, vegetables or other nutritious options.
- Limit sugary foods and drinks.

Appropriate milk and water provision should be available in accordance with school procedures.

9. Packed Lunches

Parents providing packed lunches are encouraged to include:

- Fruit and vegetables.
- Healthy sandwiches or alternatives.
- Balanced food choices.

The school may communicate guidance regarding unsuitable items, including:

- Energy drinks.
- Excessive confectionery.
- Items that present allergy or choking concerns.

Schools may operate nut-free arrangements where appropriate. Schools will communicate clearly with families when such arrangements are in place.

Where concerns arise regarding the content of packed lunches, the school reserves the right to discuss these with parents and provide guidance to support healthier choices. Repeated inclusion of items that do not align with the school's healthy eating expectations may result in further discussion with families.

10. Celebrations and Birthdays

The Trust recognises the importance of celebrations.
Schools should ensure celebrations:

- Remain inclusive.
- Support healthy lifestyles.
- Consider allergies and dietary needs.
- Do not place pressure on families.

Schools may encourage alternative ways to celebrate special occasions, such as sharing a favourite book, leading a class activity, receiving a certificate or taking part in a special experience, rather than providing food-based treats.

11. Food Brought from Home

Food brought from home for sharing purposes must:

- Be approved by the school.
- Meet allergy and safety requirements.
- Comply with local school guidance.

Homemade items may be restricted where food safety cannot be assured.

12. Water Provision

Fresh drinking water will be:

- Freely available throughout the day.
- Accessible indoors and outdoors.
- Promoted as the preferred drink.

Children will be encouraged to drink water regularly.

13. Infant Feeding (Where Nursery Provision Exists)

Where applicable, schools will support infant feeding in partnership with parents.
Arrangements may include:

- Formula feeding.
- Expressed breast milk.
- Individual feeding plans.

All feeds will be managed safely, hygienically and in accordance with parental instructions.

14. Milk Provision

Where milk is provided:
- Storage requirements will be followed.
- Milk will be served safely.
- Eligibility arrangements will comply with relevant schemes and funding guidance.

Parents will be informed of local arrangements.

15. Cultural and Medical Dietary Requirements

The Trust values diversity and inclusion.
Schools will endeavour to accommodate:
- Religious dietary requirements.
- Cultural preferences.
- Medical dietary needs.
- Allergies and intolerances.

Parents are responsible for informing the school of dietary requirements and any changes.

16. Supervision Expectations

Children must be appropriately supervised during:
- Breakfast clubs.
- Snack times.
- Lunch periods.
- Cooking activities.
- Educational visits involving food.

Supervision arrangements should reflect:
- Children's age.
- Developmental stage.
- Medical needs.
- Identified risks.

Staff must remain vigilant throughout meal and snack times.

17. Educational Visits

Food provision during educational visits must be considered within visit planning and risk assessments.
Consideration should be given to:
- Allergies.
- Dietary requirements.
- Food storage.
- Access to drinking water.
- Emergency medical arrangements.

Relevant information must accompany supervising staff.
Where emergency medication is required, arrangements must be made to ensure it is readily accessible throughout the visit.

18. Recording Allergies

Schools will maintain an up-to-date allergy register.
Information should include:
- Known allergens.

- Severity of reaction.
- Emergency procedures.
- Medication requirements.
- Healthcare plans.

Allergy information must be accessible to relevant staff whilst maintaining confidentiality.
Changes reported by parents must be updated promptly.

19. Monitoring and Compliance

Headteachers are responsible for ensuring that:

- Staff understand this policy.
- Procedures are implemented consistently.
- Allergy records remain accurate.
- Food safety requirements are met.
- Concerns are addressed promptly.

Monitoring may be undertaken by the Headteacher, Early Years Lead, catering provider and other relevant staff to ensure compliance with this policy and the effective implementation of procedures
The Trust may review arrangements through routine monitoring activities.

Appendix 1: Choking Risk Foods

The following foods present a higher choking risk and require particular care:

- Whole grapes
- Cherry tomatoes
- Large blueberries
- Whole cherries
- Popcorn
- Marshmallows
- Whole nuts (where permitted)
- Hard sweets
- Chunks of raw carrot
- Sausages cut into round slices
- Large pieces of apple
- Large pieces of melon

Control measures include:

- Appropriate preparation.
- Cutting food into suitable sizes.
- Close supervision.
- Age-appropriate serving methods.

Appendix 2: Allergy Management Guidance

School Responsibilities

- Maintain accurate records.
- Obtain parental consent and medical information.
- Implement healthcare plans.
- Train appropriate staff.
- Follow emergency procedures.

Staff Responsibilities

- Know which children have allergies.
- Understand emergency responses.
- Prevent accidental exposure where possible.
- Report concerns immediately.
- Ensure prescribed adrenaline auto-injectors are in date and readily accessible
- Ensure appropriate staff are trained in recognising anaphylaxis and administering adrenaline auto-injectors

Parent Responsibilities

- Provide accurate information.
- Supply medication where required.
- Inform school of any changes.

Appendix 3: Mealtime Risk Assessment Template

Location: _____
Date: _____

Hazard	Risk	Control Measures	Person Responsible
Food allergy	Anaphylaxis	Allergy register and care plans	Staff
Choking hazard	Airway obstruction	Appropriate food preparation and supervision	Staff
Hot food/spills	Burns	Safe serving procedures	Staff
Cross contamination	Allergic reaction	Hygiene systems in place	Staff
Insufficient supervision	Injury/medical emergency	Appropriate staffing levels	Staff

Review Date: _____
Completed By: _____
_____

Related Policies

- EYFS Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Accessibility Plan

This draft is written to align with the September 2026 EYFS Statutory Framework, KCSIE 2026, and current safeguarding and welfare expectations, particularly around safe eating, supervision, allergies, and children's health and wellbeing.