Connected Futures Partnership

Authoring our story.

Dorothy Gardner Nursery School
Mary Paterson Nursery School
Tachbrook Nursery School
Essendine Primary School
Hallfield Primary School
Oxford Gardens Primary School
Queen's Park Primary School
Queen's Park Family Hub
Bayswater Children's Centre

Safer Eating and Food Safety Policy

Contribution | Challenge | Inclusivity | Aspiration

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Approved by	Executive Headteacher
Approval date	October 2026
Applies to	CFP primary schools, maintained nursery schools, family hub and children's centre
Policy lead	Executive Headteacher / Heads of School
Review due	September 2027

This policy applies across CFP settings with age-appropriate and setting-specific arrangements. It becomes operational on approval and completion of the relevant local implementation arrangements. Staff must also follow the current statutory framework and the child's individual plan.

1. Purpose and commitments

Connected Futures Partnership (CFP) is committed to ensuring that every child can eat, drink, cook and learn about food safely. This policy establishes consistent expectations across maintained nursery schools, early years classes, primary schools, specialist provisions, family hubs and children's centre activities, proportionate to children's age, developmental stage and individual needs.

We will prevent avoidable choking, allergic reactions and food-borne illness; support enjoyable, inclusive mealtimes; use safe food preparation and handling; and ensure staff are confident about what to do if a child becomes unwell. The policy supplements rather than replaces individual healthcare plans, the Allergy and Anaphylaxis Policy, the Medicines Policy, safeguarding procedures and the relevant food-safety management system.

2. Legal framework and applicability

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework for group and school-based providers, effective 1 September 2026, applies to all relevant CFP EYFS provision, including nursery and Reception. In particular, paragraphs 3.63–3.73 address food, safer eating, hygiene, training, choking and reporting. Its wording distinguishes mandatory "must" requirements from "should" guidance. This policy adopts certain additional CFP operational controls identified below to achieve consistent safety.

For older primary-age children and other CFP activities, leaders apply the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, applicable food hygiene and allergen laws, safeguarding and health-and-safety duties, and individual needs; EYFS-specific requirements are not presented as statutory requirements outside EYFS. Where a caterer or external operator supplies food, the setting must agree roles and safe information sharing.

3. Responsibilities

Governing Board and executive leadership

- Approve and monitor the policy, resource appropriate training, oversee incident trends and ensure consistency with safeguarding, equalities and food safety arrangements.

Heads of School and setting leads

- Put in place local mealtime and cooking arrangements; name food/allergy and first-aid leads; make staff deployment workable across break periods, rooms, trips and clubs; and retain proportionate evidence of checks and staff briefings.

Room, class, catering and activity leads

- Identify the adult checking each child's food at every meal and snack; check up-to-date dietary/allergy records; manage food sources and cross-contact risks; ensure age-appropriate preparation and close supervision; and stop any unsafe activity.

All staff, volunteers and visitors involved with food

- Follow authorised menus, child plans and hygiene processes; report concerns promptly; never make an unapproved substitution; and seek advice rather than guessing.

4. Information before admission and individual needs

- Before the child starts, obtain and record special dietary requirements and preferences, food allergies/intolerances, relevant health information and feeding or swallowing needs. Keep this information up to date through continuing conversations with families and, where appropriate, healthcare professionals.
- Provide an accessible and confidential individual allergy/action plan for children with relevant risks; identify symptoms, avoidance measures, prescribed medication, emergency steps and named trained staff. Use appropriate recognised allergy action-plan formats where applicable.
- Where a child has dysphagia, a choking history, sensory or oral-motor needs, SEND, a medical condition or a modified-texture diet, use an agreed individual eating plan; seek specialist advice where required. Staff must not improvise new textures or feeding techniques.
- Share essential information promptly with all people who prepare, handle, check or serve food, including supply staff and caterers, while respecting confidentiality and minimising unnecessary access.

5. Planning and preparation before food is served

- A named adult at each meal and snack must check each child's food and drink against the current allergy, dietary, texture and choking requirements. A general list on the wall is not a substitute for this check.
- Check menus, packaged-food labels, recipes and ingredient substitutions every time ingredients change. Avoid cross-contact through hands, surfaces, equipment, utensils and serving arrangements; use the setting's food safety/allergen procedure.
- Food sent from home, celebration items, shared snacks, clubs and cooking outcomes must be checked and authorised before being shared. Apply consistent rules to visitors and contractors who bring food on site.
- Provide adequate hygienic facilities, fresh drinking water and healthy, balanced and nutritious food when the setting provides meals and snacks, taking account of DfE EYFS nutrition guidance as applicable.

6. Safer eating and active supervision

- For EYFS provision, there should always be a staff member in the eating room who holds a current full-course paediatric first aid certificate meeting EYFS Annex A. CFP requires leaders to timetable this cover at every early-years mealtime and snack, including staff breaks and any off-site meals.
- Children in EYFS must remain within both sight and hearing of an adult whilst eating. Babies and young children should be seated securely in a highchair or suitable low chair, in a calm eating area where possible, with adults positioned to observe faces and signs of choking.
- Choking can be silent. Adults must actively watch, supervise appropriate mouthfuls and pace, prevent food sharing where unsafe, and remain ready to act; never leave a child eating alone.
- CFP extends active, risk-based supervision to all primary ages: younger pupils and children with feeding or medical risks receive closer adult observation and agreed seating and support. Do not allow young children to walk, run or lie down while eating.

7. Food size, texture and foods to avoid

- Prepare food for each child's developmental abilities, not age alone. Cut small round fruits such as grapes and cherry tomatoes lengthways into quarters; remove stones and pips; cut firm fruit and vegetables into appropriate slices and soften foods for babies where required.
- Cut sausages lengthways into thin strips and remove skins if served; remove bones and hard skins; cut cheese into strips. Follow current DfE and NHS advice on the suitability of foods and textures.
- Do not provide whole nuts or whole seeds to under-fives; do not provide popcorn, hard sweets, marshmallows or packet jelly cubes to young children, including as edible messy-play resources. Review any other high-risk food before serving.

- Never introduce new textures to a baby or child without checking family information and the agreed feeding plan. Introduction to solid food should be coordinated with parents/carers and, when appropriate, health professionals.

8. Cooking and food-based learning with children

- The adult leading a cooking activity must prepare a proportionate activity risk assessment: allergies and cross-contact, ingredients, choking risks, hot food, electrical equipment, sharp utensils, hygiene, supervision, room layout and SEND adaptations.
- All staff involved in preparing or handling food must receive suitable food hygiene training; leaders will keep training records and check competence. A particular numbered food-hygiene qualification is not universally mandated by the EYFS, although a suitable course or certificate may be required by local arrangements.
- Use safe child-sized tools and direct adult supervision. Adults control access to ovens, hot liquids, electrical appliances and higher-risk knives; set clear boundaries before starting and stop immediately if supervision or safety controls break down.
- Wash hands using soap and water before handling food and after toileting, nappy changes or contact with animals; clean and sanitise appropriate surfaces and equipment. Follow controls for raw egg, raw meat, flour, food storage, cooking temperatures and allergens. Children should not taste uncooked high-risk ingredients or mixtures.
- Food-cooking lessons, sensory play using food and celebrations must follow the same allergy and choking precautions as routine meals. Consider non-food alternatives when food-based play creates avoidable risk.

9. Food hygiene and catering controls

Each site must use a suitable documented food safety management system aligned with the Food Standards Agency guidance (including the four Cs: cleaning, cooking, chilling and preventing cross-contamination), and know who is responsible for recording checks and corrective action.

- Keep preparation and eating surfaces clean; separate raw and ready-to-eat foods; maintain appropriate chilled storage and food temperatures; observe use-by dates; and investigate and correct any failure.
- For bottles and baby feeds, follow the relevant NHS and local infant-feeding procedure on sterilisation, preparing formula, storage, identity checking and feeding. Never substitute formula or expressed milk without confirming the child's plan and parental arrangements.
- Check any catering contract, food-allergen information, special diet requests, packed-lunch processes and handover arrangements. Identify who confirms a meal is the correct meal for the correct child.

10. Allergic reaction, choking and illness: response

- If a child is choking or shows concerning symptoms, summon help at once, activate the emergency response and use first aid appropriate to the child's age and staff training; call 999 when indicated. Do not delay urgent care while seeking parental permission.
- For a suspected allergic reaction or anaphylaxis, follow the child's allergy action plan, emergency medication arrangements and first-aid procedures; call 999 when indicated. One adult stays with the child and another supervises remaining children.
- Record incidents, symptoms, food involved, action taken, medication, first aid and communication with parents/carers. Inform parents in line with EYFS accident/injury requirements and local safeguarding and health protocols.
- For choking requiring intervention, record where and how it happened, the food/texture involved and the response; review trends and apply changes. Escalate serious incidents to the leadership team and follow applicable regulator, local authority and public-health reporting duties.

11. SEND, equality, safeguarding and off-site activities

- Make reasonable adjustments so children can participate safely without unnecessary exclusion. Agree medical and feeding support with families, relevant clinicians and the SENDCo/setting lead; brief all adults involved.
- The same safeguards apply to breakfast and after-school clubs, school events, trips, packed lunches, food fundraising and cooking activities; the activity lead verifies plans, adult supervision, first-aid provision and food arrangements in advance.
- Children must never be compelled, shamed, restrained or left isolated as a way of managing mealtime behaviour; any safeguarding concern is reported to the DSL in line with CFP safeguarding procedures.

12. Training, monitoring, reporting and review

- Use induction, annual refresher activities and practical scenarios to test adults' understanding of allergy management, food preparation, supervision, choking and emergency action. Retain attendance, knowledge checks, follow-up actions and updated procedures.
- Heads of School will regularly check mealtime deployment, full-course paediatric first-aid cover in EYFS eating rooms, staff food-hygiene competence, allergies and the quality of incident learning. Provide a concise anonymised assurance summary to leadership.
- Review this policy at least annually and immediately following a serious incident, relevant legislative change, repeated near-misses or a significant change in provision.

Appendix A. Immediate staff response – quick reference

BEFORE: Identify the named meal checker; check plans, labels, food texture and who has full-course PFA cover in the EYFS room.

DURING: Seat and actively supervise children; keep within sight and hearing; watch for silent choking; prevent unsafe food sharing.

EMERGENCY: Act immediately, use trained first aid, follow individual allergy plans, call 999 when indicated, alert parents and record.

IF UNSURE: STOP and ASK the room lead or other designated senior member of staff before continuing.

Appendix B. Local site implementation record

Item to confirm	Local detail / responsible person
Setting, room(s), service(s)	_____
Lead for food hygiene and deputy	_____
Allergy and dietary information system	_____
Named meal/snack checker and relief arrangements	_____
PFA cover for each EYFS eating room and backup	_____
Food safety training and refresher register location	_____
Caterer/club/cooking activity arrangements	_____
Incident record and escalation arrangements	_____
Approved by / checked by / date	_____

Appendix C. Guidance and reference sources

Department for Education, EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers (effective 1 September 2026), especially paragraphs 3.63–3.73, 3.78–3.79 and Annex A: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2

DfE, Help for early years providers – Food safety (guidance for under-fives, food preparation, choking, allergies and hygiene): https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/food-safety

Food Standards Agency – Food hygiene guidance and Safer food, better business: https://www.food.gov.uk/food-hygiene

Food Standards Agency – Allergen guidance for food businesses: https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/allergen-guidance-for-food-businesses

This federation policy is a staff operating standard. Always read with the current CFP Allergy and Anaphylaxis, First Aid and Medicines, Safeguarding, SEND, Health and Safety, and local Food Safety arrangements.

Appendix D. Implementation and leadership assurance checklist

Complete for each school, nursery or family-hub service before issue; retain this signed record with the local food-safety arrangements. These are checks of implementation, not a substitute for the statutory requirements.

- Current dietary, allergy, feeding and swallowing records are available to all relevant authorised staff.
- Meal/snack checkers are named and relief arrangements cover staff breaks, trips, clubs and the full day.
- EYFS eating rooms have planned full-course PFA cover; expiry dates and substitute cover have been checked.
- Food preparation staff have received suitable food hygiene training and know the site food-safety system.
- Food preparation, serving, cooking-with-children and celebration arrangements have been checked for allergens, choking and hygiene.
- Children with individual eating or medical needs have appropriate plans, training and safe handovers.
- Staff have completed the relevant induction/scenario check; gaps have owners and deadlines.
- Choking and allergy incidents and near-misses are reviewed for trends and improvement.

Setting / lead / date	_____
Checked by / role	_____
Outstanding action(s) and deadlines	_____
Final adoption approval and date	_____