

Early Years Food and Nutrition Policy 2025-26



Written by/Updated by	A Blakey	Date	July 2025
Approved by	L Weber (Principal)	Date	September 2025
Next review due	September 2026		

1. INTRODUCTION

In the Early Years section of The King's School, we believe that the health and wellbeing of every child is an important foundation for lifelong learning and spiritual growth. Our Early Years Food and Nutrition Policy reflects our commitment to providing a nurturing, Christ-centred environment where children are encouraged to develop healthy eating habits and enjoy nutritious meals in a loving and inclusive community. We encourage children to appreciate how we are fearfully and wonderfully made by God and therefore to understand the importance of caring for our bodies through what we eat. We acknowledge God as our provider and encourage children to be grateful for the food we eat. We aim to partner with families in promoting balanced, wholesome diets that support children's physical, emotional, and cognitive development in accordance with both national guidelines and our Christian values.

2. SNACK TIME

In the Early Years, we aim to provide children with healthy, balanced and nutritious snacks and drinks. We sit together either at tables or on the carpet. Children can choose milk or water to drink for morning snack, and a list of the kinds of snacks (with allergens) we serve morning and afternoon is displayed in the foyer. Some examples of the sort of food on offer are:

- Bread sticks, rice cakes, cereal (Rice Krispies), wholemeal pitta bread
- Apples, bananas
- Cucumber, carrots
- Cheese batons
- Cakes as a very occasional treat when celebrating a child's birthday (see below)

A notice is also displayed in the foyer to inform parents/carers of allergens contained in any occasional food served in the setting, such as birthday cake or something provided as part of introducing the children to another cultural tradition.

3. PACKED LUNCHES

- a) All children staying for lunch in school need a packed lunch as school meals are not prepared on site.
- b) We sit together at tables at lunch times to help create a sense of community. We see meal times as an ideal context in which to encourage children about how to behave when eating, the give and take of conversation, and how to listen to one another and take turns when talking.
- c) Parents are requested to provide their child with a healthy packed lunch.

- d) Advice on lunch box contents is given in the parent information on the school website and a link is provided to support parents in their understanding of what constitutes a healthy packed lunch.
- e) Children are encouraged to take any food they have not eaten home in their lunch boxes for their parents to check and dispose of.
- f) There are no facilities to keep packed lunches chilled in the setting, so parents should provide ice packs where necessary. The '4-hour rule' can be applied, which allows food to be stored outside of chilled conditions for up to 4 hours, but this should only be done once during storage.

4. DRINKING WATER

- a) Parents are requested to provide their child with a named water bottle to ensure they have constant access to drinking water. Water bottles should contain only water.
- b) This should be taken home each day at the end of the session to be cleaned and re-filled.
- c) Children are encouraged to drink regularly and the importance of drinking plenty is stressed during periods of hot weather.

5. DIETARY REQUIREMENTS, FOOD PREFERENCES, FOOD INTOLERANCES, ALLERGIES AND ALLERGENS

- a) Parents must inform Early Years staff if their child has any food allergies, specific dietary requirements, food intolerances or food preferences before they start at the setting and there is a section in the New Pupil Form for this information to be recorded. They are also responsible for updating staff about any changes to this information.
- b) A record is kept in the register folder for staff reference.
- c) With food allergies and where any intervention could be required by staff, parents are requested to fill out a health care plan and provide details of symptoms to look out for and action to take. All staff are made aware of this information to ensure that children are not given food to which they may have an allergy. This information is reviewed 3 times a year with parents.
- d) The member of staff serving the snack is responsible for making sure the food being served meets the requirements of each child.
- e) If children have specific food preferences, we will try to ensure children have an alternative choice of food and/or drink to meet their preferences as far as is possible.
- f) Children may have food preferences or specific dietary needs for a variety of reasons, and we recognise the importance of staff engaging in open communication with parents and/or carers to ensure that children's needs are met.

6. NUT FREE ZONE

The Early Years area is a 'nut-free zone' and parents are requested in the parent information on the school website (and via email) to avoid nuts in packed lunches.

7. CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS

- a) We recognise that celebrating birthdays with cake is part of our cultural tradition, but when sending in cake or biscuits, we request that parents choose something with a lower sugar content and avoid lots of icing.
- b) Parents are also welcome to provide an alternative sugar-friendly way of celebrating their child's birthday (eg fruit, fruit kebabs or something non-edible).
- c) Sending in something to celebrate a child's birthday is completely voluntary.
- d) Staff will check the ingredients of any cakes or other items to make sure they meet the dietary requirements of children in the setting. A list of allergens is posted on the door in the foyer area.
- e) Where children have specific allergies which means they are unable to eat something provided to celebrate a birthday, parents of the child are asked to provide or suggest something suitable as an alternative.
- f) Parents can request that their child does not consume food sent in by other parents on the home-school agreement form.

- g) Birthdays are celebrated within Nursery, or within Reception, to limit the number of times a year children may end up eating cake.

8. SUPERVISION WHILST EATING

- a) Children will be closely supervised whilst eating during the session, for example, at snack time or during the lunch period.
- b) A member of staff should stand or sit facing children where possible and ensure children are within view as well as hearing (as choking can be completely silent).
- c) Staff should check lunches for potential allergens, prevent food sharing and remain vigilant as to any unexpected allergic reactions.
- d) When children are eating, there will always be a member of staff present with a valid paediatric first aid certificate.

9. CHOKING

If there has been a choking incident that requires intervention, staff should record details of where and how the child choked and parents and/or carers should be made aware. The records should be reviewed periodically to identify if there are any trends to be addressed, and appropriate action taken.

10. STAFF TRAINING

Staff preparing food receive regular Level 2 Food Hygiene training and cascade any amendments to practice needed in staff meetings.

11. FOOD STORAGE

- a) All perishable items are stored in a fridge that is checked daily.
- b) The use by date on food is checked carefully before any food is served in the setting.
- c) Non-perishable items for snack are stored in suitable containers or the original packaging in the kitchen cupboards or snack drawers.
- d) Allergens stored in the fridge will be kept in a separate container and labelled with use by date.
- e) Open packets are labelled with the date opened.

12. FOOD PREPARATION

- a) Staff must wash hands thoroughly before preparing food, using the sink in the disabled toilet where possible, and wear disposable gloves.
- b) Staff must cover any cuts with a plaster.
- c) Staff should clean the designated work surface before and after food preparation.
- d) Staff should wear the apron provided when preparing snacks or handling food (which should be wiped clean on a daily basis using an anti-bacterial spray) or a disposable apron.
- e) Care must be taken when using knives and these should be kept out of the reach of children.
- f) Separate chopping boards are to be used. A sign with the colour code is displayed on the wall next to the sink.
- g) Care should be taken with round food items (eg grapes, cherry tomatoes etc) which should be quartered. Cheese, cucumber and carrot similarly should be cut into strips or batons rather than chunks or rounds.
- h) If children assist in preparing snack or food a staff member will supervise them to make sure that they follow similar guidelines to ensure safe and hygienic food preparation.
- i) Tables used by the children for snack-time are cleaned before and after snack and after lunch, floors are swept or wiped clean of spilt food or drinks.
- j) All dirty dishes, plates, cutlery and cups are washed in hot water and detergent, then rinsed at a high temperature and left to drain where possible.
- k) Staff wear their own rubber gloves when washing dishes etc.
- l) Cloths (3 types) and tea towels are replaced daily (see daily checks list). These are washed at 90°C.

- m) Separate cloths are used for dishes, tables/surfaces and cleaning up after messy play. These are identifiable using a colour code system (see chart by the sink).
- n) The food/snack preparation area is separate from the area used for art and craft preparation. These areas are labelled accordingly.
- o) Different washing up bowls and draining racks are used for washing dishes and cleaning up paints and messy play resources.
- p) The washing up bowl and draining rack used for washing dishes should be sprayed with anti-bac spray on a daily basis.
- q) Regular deep cleans to be carried out on washing up bowls and draining racks, and all crockery etc used.

13. FOOD POISONING

Every care will be taken to minimise the risk of food poisoning to children in the setting and to serve healthy food following the hygiene guidelines outlined in this policy. In cases of food poisoning resulting from food prepared and/or served in the setting, the appropriate authorities would be informed via the school office.

14. LEARNING ABOUT FOOD

We aim to support children's growing understanding of food and healthy eating through meal time conversations and through various of the topics we cover across the year. For example, healthy eating and oral health is covered as part of our '*I'm so wonderfully made*' topic, cultural differences in food are covered in '*He's got the whole world in his hands*' and aspects of where food comes from are covered in '*Growing and changing*'. We also aim to incorporate cooking or food preparation activities into our plans across the year.