Bushfield Road Infant School

Food and Nutrition Policy

Early Years: children aged 3–5
Reviewed: November 2026
Next review: Autumn 2027
Approved by: Governing Body

1. Purpose

Bushfield Road Infant School aims to provide a positive, happy and safe learning environment where every child feels valued and secure. We want children to develop healthy eating habits and have safe, positive experiences of food.

This policy explains how the school supports healthy eating, meets children's dietary needs and helps keep children safe when eating and drinking. It applies to Early Years children aged 3–5.

This policy should be read alongside the school's **Allergy Safety Policy**, which sets out the school's arrangements for preventing and responding to allergic reactions. It does not replace that policy.

2. Healthy food and drink

Food and drink provided by the school must be healthy, balanced and nutritious. The school has regard to the Department for Education's *Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance*. Fresh drinking water is available and accessible to children throughout the day. (gov.uk)

School meals:

- Offer a variety of foods, including fruit and vegetables, starchy foods, dairy or suitable alternatives, and protein foods.
- Are planned to provide variety and include a range of tastes and textures.
- Are served in portions suitable for young children.

At snack time, children are offered fresh fruit. Staff encourage children to try different foods without pressure.

Drinks provided by the school are water and plain milk. Children are encouraged to drink water regularly, particularly during warm weather and after physical activity.

3. Packed lunches

Parents and carers are encouraged to provide a varied packed lunch and limit foods high in sugar, salt and saturated fat.

The following are not permitted in packed lunches:

- Fizzy drinks and sugary drinks.
- Sweets and chocolate bars.
- Nuts or foods containing nuts, in line with the school's nut-free rule.

Small round foods, such as grapes and cherry tomatoes, must be prepared safely. Parents and carers should follow the school's packed-lunch guidance and ensure food is suitable for their child's age and needs.

4. Allergies, intolerances and dietary needs

Before a child starts, the school gathers information from parents and carers about:

- Food allergies and intolerances.
- Special dietary and health requirements.
- Religious or cultural food requirements.
- Relevant food preferences.

This information is recorded and shared with staff who need it, including relevant teaching, support, lunchtime and kitchen staff. At each meal and snack time, staff must know who is responsible for checking that the food provided is suitable for each child.

The school works with parents and carers and, where appropriate, health professionals to keep allergy information and plans up to date. Staff must know how to recognise the signs of an allergic reaction and what action to take, in line with the child's plan and the school's Allergy Safety Policy.

An allergy is different from a food intolerance. Staff must not diagnose either condition or recommend that parents remove foods from a child's diet. Where a concern arises, the school discusses it with the family and encourages them to seek advice from an appropriate health professional.

The school respects children's religious and cultural food requirements and works with families to agree suitable arrangements.

5. Safe food handling and eating

The school provides suitable facilities for hygienic food preparation. Staff who prepare or handle food must be competent and receive food hygiene training.

Children are supervised while eating. They must remain within sight and hearing of a member of staff. Whenever children are eating, a member of staff with a valid full paediatric first aid certificate must be in the room, as required by the EYFS framework. Staff should, where possible, sit facing the children so they can supervise eating and respond promptly to concerns. (gov.uk)

Food must be prepared in a way that reduces choking risk and is appropriate to the child. Staff follow current guidance on preparing food for young children. For example:

- Remove stones and hard pips.
- Cut small round fruits, such as grapes and cherry tomatoes, lengthways and then into smaller pieces.
- Cut firm foods into suitable shapes and sizes.
- Remove bones from meat and fish.
- Do not give whole nuts to children under five.

Staff should not assume that all children can safely manage the same food preparation based only on their age. Where a child has particular needs, staff should follow agreed information from the family and relevant professionals.

If a child experiences a choking incident that requires intervention, staff record where and how it happened and inform the child's parents or carers. Records are reviewed for patterns, and action is taken to reduce any identified risk.

6. Supporting positive food habits

Staff provide a calm, positive example at meals and snack times. They encourage children to explore and try foods, while respecting a child's appetite and not pressuring them to eat.

Children learn about healthy eating and where food comes from through everyday conversations and planned activities, including growing, preparing and tasting food. These experiences should help children understand food in a practical and age-appropriate way.

7. Celebrations

Parents and carers are asked to speak to the school before bringing in food for a celebration. The school encourages non-food alternatives, such as stickers or bubbles.

Cakes are not shared in school. If families wish to provide a birthday treat, the school's agreed approach is to accept small, sealed bags of sweets to be sent home for parents or carers to decide whether and when their child may have them. Lollipops and hard-boiled sweets are not accepted.

8. Communication and review

This policy is available to parents and carers. Staff are informed of the arrangements relevant to their roles.

The Headteacher and Early Years Lead review the policy annually, or sooner if guidance, school practice or children's needs change. The Governing Body approves the policy and reviews it periodically.

Important checks before approval

- **Create or check the separate Allergy Safety Policy.** It should be published and align with the school's arrangements for allergy prevention, staff training, individual plans and emergency response. (gov.uk)
- **Check the nut-free wording and arrangements** against the separate Allergy Safety Policy. A school rule can reduce risk, but should not be presented as a guarantee that accidental exposure cannot occur.
- **Check food-preparation advice against current guidance** before issuing the policy to families, especially the details about cutting and serving fruit and other choking-risk foods.

Sources

- *Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework for group and school-based providers*, Department for Education.
- *Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance*, Department for Education.
- *Allergy safety in schools*, Department for Education.

- *The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 (Commencement No. 3) (England) Regulations 2026*.