



# St Oswald's C of E Academy

*I can do all things through him who gives me strength*

## EYFS Safer Eating Practices Policy

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### Policy Statement

At St Oswald's CofE Academy, we are committed to promoting the health, safety, and wellbeing of every child through safe and inclusive eating practices. We recognise that mealtimes are not only essential for nutrition but also for social development, emotional security, and learning. This policy ensures that all food and drink provided or consumed within our setting meets the highest standards of safety, hygiene, and nutritional value, in line with the EYFS 2025 statutory framework and the Department for Education's nutritional guidance.

This policy is guided by the following statutory and legal frameworks:

- EYFS 2025 Sections 3.62–3.72: Food and Drink and Safer eating
- Childcare Act 2006
- DfE Early Years Nutrition Guidance (2025)
- Food Safety Act 1990 and associated hygiene regulations
- Food Standards Act 1999

### Policy Aims

We aim to:

- Protect children from risks such as choking, allergic reactions, and foodborne illness.
- Support healthy growth and development through balanced, age-appropriate nutrition.
- Respect and accommodate individual dietary needs, cultural practices, and parental preferences.
- Foster positive attitudes towards food and mealtimes in a nurturing and inclusive environment.
- Empower staff with the knowledge and training to uphold safe eating practices consistently.

Throughout this Policy, references to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) classes should be understood to pertain specifically to St Oswald's CofE Academy. This phrasing ensures clarity by defining the scope of the policy, so any procedures, rules, guidance, or curriculum requirements mentioned apply exclusively to the EYFS provision at St Oswald's CofE Academy.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

At St Oswald's CofE Academy, All EYFS staff understand and embrace their shared responsibility in maintaining safe eating practices. Leaders and manager play a crucial role in overseeing the implementation of this policy, ensuring staff are appropriately trained and that compliance is maintained across the setting. Within our setting all practitioners are accountable for checking the safety of food provided to the children in their care, ensuring individual dietary needs are met. These needs may include allergies (e.g. nut, dairy), intolerances (e.g., gluten, lactose), cultural or religious requirements (e.g. halal, vegetarian), and medical conditions (e.g., diabetes, coeliac disease). All EYFS staff at St Oswald's CofE Academy are expected to be fully aware of children's dietary requirements and have received trained in relation to allergy awareness and food safety procedures, fostering a culture of vigilance and care during all mealtimes.

### **Pre-Admission Procedures**

At St Oswald's CofE Academy, we prioritise children's health and wellbeing by gathering detailed information from parents and carers before a child joins us. This includes any special dietary requirements, food preferences, allergies, intolerances, and health needs. This information is shared with all relevant staff involved in food preparation and handling to ensure every child's needs are met safely and consistently. During every mealtime and snack time, a designated member of staff is responsible for checking that each child's food aligns with their individual requirements. We maintain ongoing communication with families and, where appropriate, health professionals to develop and regularly update allergy action plans. These plans are shared with All EYFS staff, who are trained to recognise the symptoms of allergies and anaphylaxis, understand the difference between allergies and intolerances. We follow NHS resources such as Food Allergy – NHS and Anaphylaxis – NHS to ensure our practice is safe, informed, and up to date.

### **Mealtime protocols**

At St Oswald's CofE Academy, we ensure that a member of staff with a valid paediatric first aid certificate is always present in the room while children are eating. Children are always kept within sight and hearing of staff, as we understand that choking can be silent and requires constant vigilance. Staff are encouraged to sit facing the children during meals to monitor their eating habits, prevent food sharing, and quickly identify any signs of choking or unexpected allergic reactions.

At St Oswald's CofE Academy, we prioritise children's safety by seating young children securely in appropriately sized low chairs during mealtimes. We uphold stringent hygiene measures during mealtimes by ensuring children thoroughly wash their hands before eating, table surfaces are cleaned appropriately, and all equipment used is sanitised and ready for use.

We aim to provide a calm, designated eating space with minimal distractions to support a safe and positive mealtime experience.

### **Food Preparation and Hygiene**

At St Oswald's CofE Academy, we ensure that our food preparation areas are fully equipped to provide healthy meals, snacks, and drinks that meet the needs of all children in our care. We maintain suitable, hygienic facilities for food preparation. All EYFS staff involved in preparing or handling food receive up-to-date training in food hygiene and are assessed as competent before taking on these responsibilities.

All food served to children is prepared with choking prevention in mind, and we refer to the Food Standards Agency's visual resources: how to prepare food safely to avoid choking and the latest guidance from the government's Food safety – Help for early years providers. This guidance helps staff understand which foods and drinks should be avoided, how to safely

prepare food for different age groups, and where to find additional resources to support best practice in food safety.

Our team regularly refreshes their training and knowledge to ensure we continue to meet the highest standards of safety and care.

### **Nutrition Standards**

At St Oswald's CofE Academy, we are committed to providing children with healthy, balanced, and nutritious meals, snacks, and drinks throughout the day. Our menus are carefully planned with reference to the Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance to ensure we meet the dietary needs of all children in our care. Fresh drinking water is always available and easily accessible to children, encouraging independence and healthy habits. All EYFS staff involved in food provision receive training in food hygiene and nutrition, ensuring they understand how to support children's health and wellbeing through safe and appropriate food choices. At St Oswald's CofE Academy, we regularly review our food practices to ensure they reflect current guidance and best practice.

### **Managing Choking Incidents**

At St Oswald's CofE Academy, the safety and wellbeing of our children is our highest priority. In the event of a choking incident that requires staff intervention, we ensure that a detailed record is made, including a description of the incident occurred, immediate actions taken, child's condition after the incident and follow up actions. Parents and/or carers are informed promptly and sensitively, and the parent/ carer response is also recorded on the form. These records are reviewed regularly by the management team to identify any patterns or recurring factors that may indicate a need for changes in practice or additional staff training. Where concerns are identified, appropriate action is taken to reduce the risk of future incidents and to strengthen our approach to food safety and supervision during mealtimes.

### **Managing Allergies and Intolerances**

At St Oswald's CofE Academy, we take the management of allergies extremely seriously.

Allergy Action Plans are maintained for all children with known allergies and are regularly reviewed and updated in partnership with parents and relevant health professionals.

All EYFS staff receive training to recognise the signs of allergic reactions and anaphylaxis and are confident in responding swiftly and appropriately. If a food intolerance is suspected, we work closely with families to monitor symptoms and keep a food diary to support further investigation.

At St Oswald's CofE Academy, a designated member of staff is responsible for checking that each child's food is safe and suitable, based on their individual dietary needs.

We actively prevent food swapping between children to reduce the risk of cross-contamination or accidental exposure.

Any incidents, including allergic reactions or near misses, are thoroughly recorded and reviewed to identify any patterns or areas for improvement, ensuring we continue to provide a safe and inclusive environment for every child.

To ensure the safety of all children, we follow clear procedures, including:

- Making sure All EYFS staff are aware of each child's allergies and dietary requirements.
- Clearly labelling all foods with ingredients.
- Storing allergen-containing foods separately.

- Preventing cross-contamination through handwashing, colour-coded plates and utensils, and labelled items (e.g. cups for children with milk allergies).
- Using separate preparation areas for allergen-free meals where needed.
- Having clear rules about food brought in by visitors.
- If a food intolerance is suspected, we work closely with families to monitor symptoms and keep a food diary to support further understanding and care planning.
- Ensuring all tables, highchairs and seating used for mealtimes are cleaned thoroughly before and after use

### **Food for religious faiths and beliefs**

At St Oswald's CofE Academy, we recognise and respect the diverse cultural and religious backgrounds of our children and their families. We understand that some families may follow specific dietary practices—such as avoiding certain foods or requiring meals to be prepared in a particular way—based on their faith or beliefs. We are mindful of how these practices may affect children during mealtimes and aim to take an inclusive, respectful approach that supports every child's wellbeing. We know that customs can vary not only between religions but also between families, so we take time to build strong relationships with parents and carers. Through open and ongoing communication, we ensure that all food provided reflects each child's individual dietary needs and family preferences. This helps us create a welcoming and inclusive environment where every child feels valued and understood. We also love to celebrate the rich cultural diversity within our setting by incorporating traditional foods into our menus. We welcome families to share recipes, ideas, and feedback, helping us to reflect their heritage and create meaningful connections through food.

### **Children with additional support needs and other special diets**

At St Oswald's CofE Academy, we are committed to meeting the individual dietary needs of all children, including those with additional support needs or special diets. We recognise that some children may require food to be prepared in a specific way due to medical, developmental, or sensory needs, and may need one-to-one support during mealtimes. We also consider sensory sensitivities, such as aversions to certain textures or smells, when planning meals and creating a calm, supportive eating environment. If a child has a medically prescribed diet, we request written confirmation from a health professional. We work closely with parents, carers, dietitians, and specialist teachers within IDS to ensure we have clear, up-to-date information about suitable foods, exclusions, any supplements and special measures required. This information is shared with all relevant staff to ensure safe and consistent care.

### **Food from Home**

At St Oswald's CofE Academy, we recognise that some families may choose to provide food from home, and in certain cases, children may need to bring their own meals or snacks due to medical, cultural, or dietary requirements. We work in close partnership with parents and carers to ensure that any food brought in is both safe and appropriate for each child. To support this, we have a clear Healthy Eating policy in place, which we share with families to help them understand our commitment to promoting healthy, balanced, and nutritious food choices. This guidance also helps parents make informed decisions when preparing packed lunches. We encourage all home-provided food to reflect the healthy options we offer within the setting, so that children receive consistent messages about nutrition and develop positive eating habits. To maintain safety, all food brought from home is carefully checked for potential allergens to reduce the risk of cross contamination. We also ensure that all food served is prepared in a way that minimises the risk of choking, following guidance from the Food Standards Agency. We work closely with parents and carers to share best practices for packing lunches and sending food from home.

This includes tips on keeping food fresh and safe throughout the day. We encourage families to:

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- Choose foods that are suitable for their child’s developmental stage and prepared in a way that reduces choking risks.
- Use insulated, sealed lunch bags for perishable items, and where ice packs are not available, follow the ‘4-hour rule’—allowing food to be kept out of refrigeration for up to 4 hours, but only once.
- Clearly label lunch bags with the child’s name and list the contents.
- Pack foods that can be safely stored at room temperature if refrigeration is not available.

While we are not required to refrigerate or reheat food brought from home, we do follow the latest guidance from the Food Standards Agency to support safe food handling. This includes advice on managing risks such as Listeria and using food safety procedures designed for small settings like ours.

### **Celebrations and Special Events**

At St Oswald’s CofE Academy, we know that birthdays and special occasions are important milestones for children and their families. Many families enjoy marking these moments by bringing in cakes or sweets to share.

While we appreciate the joy these celebrations bring, we also want to ensure that children continue to receive consistent messages about healthy eating. To support this, our Healthy Eating policy includes gentle guidance for families around celebration foods. We encourage healthier alternatives such as fruit platters or fun, non-food treats like bubbles, stickers, or story time choices.

Any food brought into share is carefully checked for allergens to keep all children safe. We value open and ongoing communication with our families and work in partnership to create a positive and inclusive approach to celebrations that supports each child’s wellbeing and reflects our shared commitment to healthy, happy experiences.

### **Food poisoning**

At St Oswald’s CofE Academy, we take our duty to safeguard children’s health seriously. In the event of a food poisoning incident affecting two or more children in our care, we are required to notify Ofsted as soon as reasonably practicable and always within 14 days of the incident. We ensure that all relevant staff are aware of this responsibility and that clear procedures are in place to support timely and accurate reporting.

### **Monitoring and Review**

At St Oswald’s CofE Academy, we are committed to maintaining high standards in food safety and nutrition. To support this, we carry out regular audits of our food practices to ensure they remain safe, healthy, and in line with current guidance.

Allergy action plans and incident logs are reviewed each term to help us identify any patterns and make improvements where needed.

Staff training in food hygiene and allergy awareness is refreshed annually, or sooner if required to keep everyone confident and up to date.

We also value the voices of our families and children, and we actively seek their feedback to help shape our approach and ensure mealtimes are safe, inclusive, and enjoyable for all

### **Staff training**

At St Oswald’s CofE Academy, we ensure All EYFS staff are fully equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to keep children safe and healthy. This includes completing mandatory training in Paediatric First Aid and when handling food: Food Hygiene (Level 2 or above).

New team members receive thorough induction training, which includes our safer eating protocols, so they feel confident in supporting children's dietary needs from day one.

Ongoing training and refreshers are provided to keep everyone up to date with best practice and current guidance.