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	16/9/26	A Scott	1/10/2026	New Trust policy

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
- Allergy Safety

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) 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
- 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.

20. 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 policy has been 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.

21. 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

22. 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.

23. Appendix 3: Mealtime Risk Assessment Template

Location: _____

Date of Assessment: _____

Hazard	Potential Risk / Harm	Control Measures in Place	Person Responsible
Food allergies	Allergic reaction / anaphylaxis	Allergy register and individual care plans checked; staff aware of allergies and required emergency procedures.	Staff
Choking	Airway obstruction / serious injury	Food prepared appropriately for children's age and stage; children seated safely; active supervision maintained.	Staff
Hot food or drinks	Burns / scalds	Hot food and drinks handled safely; temperature checked before serving; children protected from hot liquids and surfaces.	Staff
Spills / wet floors	Slips, trips and falls	Spills dealt with immediately; eating area kept clear and dry.	Staff
Cross-contamination	Allergic reaction / illness	Good hand hygiene and food hygiene procedures followed; separate utensils/equipment used where required.	Staff
Food hygiene	Food poisoning / illness	Food stored, prepared and served safely; appropriate hygiene procedures followed.	Staff
Inappropriate food texture/size	Choking	Food cut/prepared according to individual children's age, stage and needs; staff follow relevant guidance and care plans.	Staff
Insufficient supervision	Choking / injury / medical emergency	Appropriate staffing levels maintained; staff positioned to actively supervise all children.	Staff
Individual medical needs	Medical emergency	Relevant medical information, care plans and emergency procedures are accessible and understood by staff.	Staff
Unsafe seating	Falls / injury / choking	Children seated safely and appropriately for their age and developmental stage.	Staff
Children leaving the eating area	Injury / choking without supervision	Clear expectations established; children remain supervised throughout mealtime.	Staff
Sharing food	Allergic reaction / choking	Children are taught not to share food; staff monitor closely.	Staff
Food brought from home	Allergy / choking / food hygiene risk	School procedures followed; staff are aware of relevant dietary requirements and restrictions.	Staff
Cleaning products / chemicals	Poisoning / injury	Cleaning products stored securely and away from children.	Staff
Food waste / rubbish	Hygiene / choking hazard	Waste removed promptly and bins kept inaccessible where necessary.	Staff
Equipment / utensils	Cuts / injury / choking	Age-appropriate equipment provided and supervised; damaged equipment removed.	Staff
Behaviour during mealtime	Choking / injury	Calm mealtime routines established; children encouraged to sit while eating and follow safe eating expectations.	Staff

Individual dietary requirements	Illness / allergic reaction	Dietary requirements clearly recorded and checked before food is served.	Staff

Completed By: _____

Review Date: _____

24. Appendix 4: Ashley's Safer Eating Checklist

Before eating	
	Staff know which children have allergies or specific dietary requirements
	Individual allergy/healthcare information are readily available to relevant staff in the class medical box
	Staff know which children require an individual risk assessment or additional support (e.g. weighted cutlery, food cut up)
	All staff supervising eating know the school's procedures for responding to an allergic reaction and choking
	Food has been checked against children's known allergies/dietary requirements
	Food packaging/ingredients have been checked where necessary
	High-risk choking foods have been appropriately modified or avoided
	Food is cut/prepared appropriately – e.g. grapes, cherry tomatoes and similar foods are cut lengthways/into appropriate smaller pieces
	Children are encouraged to wash their hands before eating
	Tables and eating surfaces are clean
	Children have access to appropriate drinking water
	Eating area is calm, organised and free from unnecessary hazards
	Staff have considered children's seating arrangements and level of supervision required

During eating - Active Supervision / Choking Prevention	
	Children are seated safely while eating
	Children remain seated while chewing and swallowing
	Children are not eating while walking in the dining hall
	Adults actively supervise children throughout the eating period
	Staff position themselves so that children can be seen and heard clearly
	Staff remain alert
	Children are given sufficient time to eat without being rushed
	Children are encouraged to take manageable bites
	Children are encouraged to chew food thoroughly
	Children are not encouraged to put excessive amounts of food into their mouths
	Children are encouraged to drink appropriately
	Staff do not force children to eat food they do not want
	Children are supported to develop independence with eating and drinking
	Adults model through gesture appropriate eating behaviours
	Staff monitor children who require additional support particularly closely
	Staff are alert to signs of choking, distress or an allergic reaction

	Appropriate action would be taken immediately if a child began choking or showed signs of an allergic reaction
	Any suspected allergic reaction is acted upon immediately according to the child's healthcare plan/school procedure
	Class teachers and Parents/carers are informed of relevant incidents or concerns

After eating - Active Supervision	
	Staff check that children have swallowed their food before moving around
	Food trays/food waste are stored/disposed of appropriately
	Tables and surfaces are cleaned
	Any spills are cleaned promptly
	Any eating, choking or allergy incident is recorded appropriately
	Concerns about a child's eating are communicated to the relevant staff member
	Class teachers and Parents/carers are informed where appropriate