

Bailey's Court Primary School

Breaches Gate, Bradley Stoke, Bristol BS32 8AZ

CHOKING AND SAFER EATING POLICY

Issue 1

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Approved by:

Head Teacher

Authorised by:

Chair of Governing Body Bailey's Court
Primary School

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EYFS CHOKING AND SAFER EATING POLICY

1. Summary

This policy outlines the procedures used to promote safe eating practices, reduce the risk of choking and ensure children in EYFS are supported to develop independence, confidence and healthy eating habits.

Young children are still developing the oral skills required to bite, chew and swallow safely. All food provided by the setting, or brought from home, will be managed carefully to reduce risks.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy has been developed with reference to:

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- Food Safety Act 1990.
- General Food Law Regulation (EC) No. 178/2002.
- Food Information Regulations 2014.
- Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Food Standards Agency (FSA) guidance on safer eating and choking hazards.

3. Food Preparation Guidance

All food will be prepared in a way that considers the age, stage of development and individual needs of children.

Staff will:

- Wash hands thoroughly before preparing and serving food and follow good food hygiene procedures.
- Ensure preparation areas, utensils and equipment are clean and suitable for food preparation.
- Check food packaging, use-by dates and ingredient information before serving.
- Remove bones, stones, pips, stalks and other inedible parts before food is offered.
- Cut food into appropriately sized pieces that children can safely manage.
- Consider children's chewing ability and adapt food textures where needed.
- Avoid giving children foods that are hard, sticky, whole, round or difficult to chew unless prepared safely.
- Foods with tough skins or hard textures should be modified before serving.
- Ensure hot food is cooled to a safe temperature before serving.
- When preparing fish, check thoroughly for bones.
- Sticky spreads should be spread thinly and evenly.

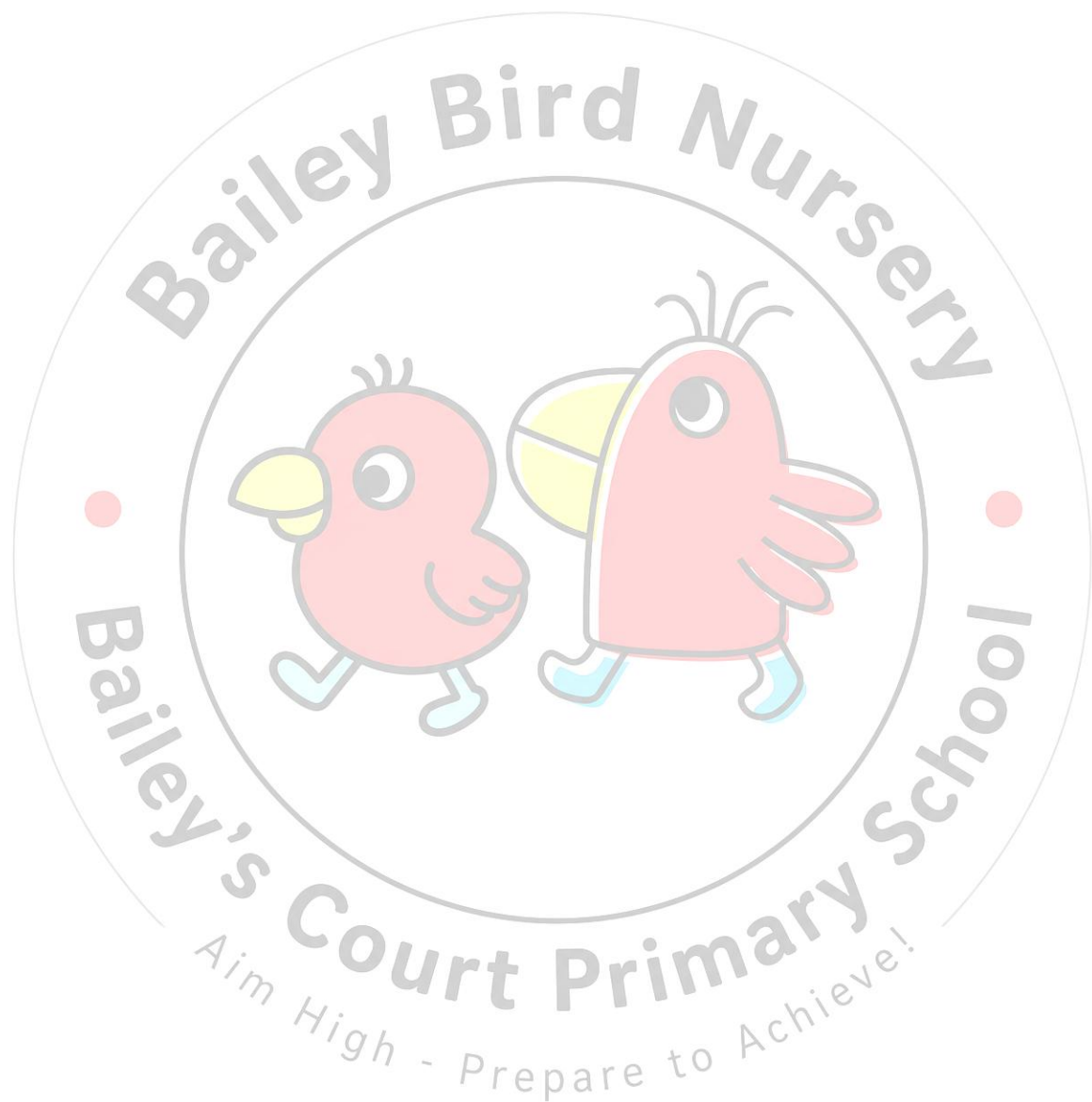
4. Food Standards Agency Choking Hazards Table

<https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/2021/09/food-safety-advice-on-choking-hazards-in-settings/>

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<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/first-aid-and-safety/first-aid/how-to-stop-a-child-from-choking/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/first-aid-and-safety/first-aid/how-to-resuscitate-a-child/>



Early years food choking hazards



Below is a table of advice on key foods for care givers who are involved with preparing and serving food for babies and young children (under 5 years old)

Vegetable and fruits	Advice
Pips or stones in fruit	Always check beforehand and remove hard pips or stones from fruit.
Small fruits	Cut small round fruits like grapes, cherries, berries, strawberries and cherry tomatoes, into small pieces: cut lengthways and then again cut them in halves (quarters).
Large fruits and firm fruits	Cut large fruits like melon and firm fruits like apple into slices instead of small chunks. For very young children, consider grating or mashing firm fruits, or softening them up by steaming or simmering.
Vegetables	Cut vegetables like carrots, cucumber and celery into narrow batons. For very young children consider grating or mashing firm vegetables and legumes like butter beans, chickpeas and tofu, or softening them up by steaming or simmering.
Skin on fruit and vegetables	Consider removing the skin from fruit and vegetables, especially for very young children. Peeled fruit and vegetables can be swallowed more easily.
Cooking fruit and vegetables	Consider softening firm fruit and vegetables (such as carrots, broccoli, yam and apples) by steaming or simmering until soft. Serve cut into slices or narrow batons.
Meat and fish	Advice
Sausages and hot dogs	Cut sausages and hot dogs into short strips. Cut them in half and then lengthways or as thinly as possible. Peeling the skin off the sausages helps them to be swallowed more easily.
Meat or fish	Remove bones from meat or fish. Cut meat into strips as thinly as possible. Remove skin and fat from meat and fish, it will help the food pass smoothly down the throat.
Cheese	Advice
Grate or cut cheese	Grate or cut cheese into short strips. Cut lumps of cheese as narrow as possible.
Nuts and seeds	Advice
Chop or flake whole nuts	Chop or flake whole nuts, peanuts and seeds. Whole nuts should not be given to children under five years old.
Bread	Advice
White bread and other breads	White bread can form a ball shape with a dough-like texture at the back of a child's throat, if not chewed properly. Brown bread or toasted white bread are good alternatives. Cut bread, chapatis, naan bread and other breads into narrow strips.
Snacks and other foods	Advice
Popcorn	Do not give babies and young children popcorn.
Chewing gum and marshmallows	Do not give babies and young children chewing gum or marshmallows.
Peanut butter	Do not give babies and young children peanut butter on its own, only use as a spread.
Jelly cubes	Do not give babies and young children raw jelly cubes.
Boiled sweets and ice cubes	Do not give babies and young children boiled, hard, gooey, sticky or cough sweets, or ice cubes.
Raisins and other dried fruits	Do not give babies under the age of 1 whole raisins or dried fruits. Cut them into small pieces.

Make sure food is prepared appropriately for children under 5 years old, see: <https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/weaning/>

It is also advisable that care givers are familiar with how to respond to a choking incident, see: How to stop a child from choking: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/first-aid-and-safety/first-aid/how-to-stop-a-child-from-choking/>

and How to resuscitate a child: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/first-aid-and-safety/first-aid/how-to-resuscitate-a-child/>

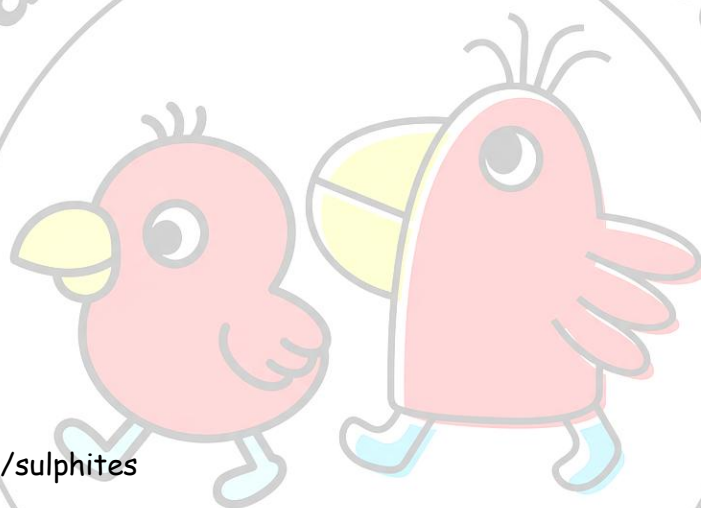
5. Allergies and Dietary Requirements

The setting recognises that food allergies can be serious and, in some cases, life-threatening.

Families must provide details of allergies, intolerances, medical conditions and dietary requirements **before a child can be admitted into school/nursery**. Staff will check ingredients, prevent cross-contamination where possible and ensure children are only offered suitable foods. A list of children's allergies and dietary requirements will be produced and this will be checked carefully before any food is given to the children to eat.

The 14 recognised allergens are:

- Celery
- Cereals containing gluten
- Crustaceans
- Eggs
- Fish
- Lupin
- Milk
- Molluscs
- Mustard
- Nuts
- Peanuts
- Sesame
- Soya
- Sulphur dioxide/sulphites



6. Safer Eating and Supervision

All children **must remain seated whilst eating and drinking**. Children must not walk around, play or engage in other activities while eating, as this significantly increases the risk of choking.

All children must be **actively supervised by an appropriately trained adult at all times during snack and mealtimes**. Supervision must be close, attentive and focused, with adults positioned so they can see and respond immediately to any concerns. A paediatric trained first aider must be available should a choking incident occur.

Staff will ensure children are supported to:

- Sit safely and calmly while eating.
- Take appropriate-sized bites and sips.
- Eat slowly and chew food thoroughly.

- Develop independence and confidence with eating.
- Recognise when they need support or help.

Adults will model safe eating behaviours and remain vigilant for children who may:

- Eat too quickly.
- Attempt to put too much food into their mouth.
- Require support with chewing, swallowing or managing different textures.
- Have additional needs that may affect safe eating.

Staff must never leave children unattended whilst they are eating. Any concerns regarding a child's eating behaviours, ability to manage food safely or increased choking risk must be shared with the Headteacher / Deputy Head and appropriate adaptations or risk assessments put in place.

7. Choking Incident Procedure

If a child begins choking, staff will follow their paediatric first aid training and emergency procedures. Emergency services will be contacted where required. Parents/carers will be informed and the incident recorded and reviewed. If medical support is needed from outside of the school, the school will report the incident to OFSTED in line with statutory guidelines.

8. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation, guidance or practice changes.