



Safer Eating Policy

At Ursuline Preparatory school, we are committed to ensuring that children are able to eat and drink in a safe, healthy, inclusive and positive environment.

We recognise that young children, those in our Pre-Prep. Department, are at increased risk of choking and may require adult support to develop safe eating skills. We also recognise the serious risks associated with food allergies and other medical conditions affecting eating.

Children bring their own snacks and packed lunches which have been prepared at home. The school does not routinely prepare or provide food during the normal school day.

Food may occasionally be prepared or provided by the school as part of:

- before-school provision;
- after-school provision;
- cooking and food-related learning activities;
- celebrations and special events;
- educational activities.

This policy sets out the arrangements used to reduce the risks associated with eating and drinking and should be read alongside the school's Allergy Safety Policy, First Aid and Grape and Olive policies.

1. Responsibilities of Parents and Carers

As snacks and lunches are prepared at home it is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that food sent into school is appropriate for their child.

Parents/carers should ensure that:

- food is suitable for their child's age and developmental stage;
- food is prepared to reduce choking risk;
- food is within its use-by date;
- food is stored and transported appropriately;
- the contents of lunches are suitable for school;
- known dietary requirements are taken into account;
- the school is informed of allergies, intolerances and relevant medical conditions;
- prescribed medication and appropriate allergy information are provided when required.

Parents must inform the school promptly if their child's allergy, medical condition or eating needs change (see Allergy Safety policy).

Parents should follow the school's guidance about foods that must not be brought into school.

Parents should contact the school if they are unsure whether a particular food is suitable.

2. Home-Prepared Snacks and Packed Lunches

Parents are provided with information on 'Food safety advice to children age 5 and under' when their child enters the Pre-Prep Department. Parents are asked to read the advice and return the slip to confirm that they have read the information provided.

Parents are given the following information:

How to reduce the risk of choking

Choking can happen with any food, but there are steps you can take to minimise the risks.

Food preparation:

- remove any stones and pips from fruit before serving
- cut small round foods, like grapes, strawberries and cherry tomatoes, lengthways and into quarters

- cut large fruits like melon, and hard fruit or vegetables like raw apple and carrot into slices instead of small chunks
- do not offer raisins as a snack to children under 12 months – although these can be chopped up as part of a meal
- soften hard fruit and vegetables (such as carrot and apple) and remove the skins when first given to babies from around 6 months
- sausages should be avoided due to their high salt content, but if offered to children these should be cut into thin strips rather than chunks and remove the skins
- remove bones from meat or fish
- nuts are not allowed
- seeds are not allowed
- cut cheese into strips rather than chunks
- white bread can form a doughy ball in the throat, consider wholemeal or toasted bread and for very young children cut all types of bread into strips
- do not give popcorn as a snack
- do not give children marshmallows or jelly cubes from a packet either to eat or as part of messy play activities as they can get stuck in the throat
- sweets are not allowed in school (birthday treats in a sealed bag listing all ingredients may be shared to be consumed at home)

Food and drinks to avoid

Drinks

Provide only fresh tap water and plain milk for children to drink. Fruit juice, smoothies, squash, fizzy drinks and flavoured milk, even when diluted, contain lots of sugar and can cause tooth decay. Diet or reduced-sugar drinks are not recommended for babies and toddlers either. For older children, these drinks can fill children up so they're not hungry for healthier food.

When offering dairy alternatives to cow's milk:

- Unsweetened calcium-fortified, plant-based drinks (such as soya, oat and almond drinks) should be avoided before 12 months, however small amounts can be used in cooking. These

drinks can be given from 12 months as part of a healthy balanced diet.

- Do not give children under 5 rice drinks, because of the level of arsenic they contain.

Foods to avoid up to 5 years

Nuts whole nuts and peanuts, should not be given to children under 5 years old as they pose a choking risk. Babies can be given nuts from around 6 months old as long as they are crushed, ground or a smooth peanut butter.

- **Raw eggs**, or food containing partially cooked eggs, for example uncooked cake mixture and runny boiled eggs (unless they have the red lion stamp or you see the words “British Lion quality”).
- **Foods high in salt** such as, sausages, bacon, crackers, crisps, ready meals and takeaways.
- **Sugar** both in sugary snacks and by not adding sugar to food.
- **Foods high in saturated fat** such as biscuits, crisps and cakes.
- **Fresh pate** (meat, fish or vegetable-based) to reduce the risk of food poisoning.
- **Unpasteurised milk, milk drinks and cheese**, mould-ripened cheeses and soft blue-veined cheese, to reduce the risk of food poisoning. However, these cheeses can be used as part of a cooked recipe as listeria is killed by cooking.
- **Shellfish is not allowed in school**
- **Raw jelly cubes** these are a choking hazard.
- **Slush ice drinks** sometimes known as slushies, as they may contain too much glycerol

Foods to serve occasionally from 6 months to 4 years

- Although it is recommended to provide oily fish in early years settings at least once every 3 weeks, do not provide it more than twice a week, as it can contain low levels of pollutants.

Taken from:

<https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/food-safety>

3. Responsibilities of the school

The school does not routinely inspect children's home-provided food. However, where staff identify an immediate and significant safety concern, appropriate action will be taken to protect the child/children in our care.

As outlined in the school's Allergy Safety policy all staff complete appropriate anaphylaxis training.

A paediatric first aider will always be present when children are eating. **All staff at the Ursuline Preparatory school hold a paediatric first aid certificate.**

If a child experiences a choking incident that requires intervention, the school will record details of where and how the child choked and ensure parents and/or carers are made aware.

3.1 Safe Eating Environment

Children should be encouraged to eat at their own pace and should not be rushed.

Children must eat and drink:

- While seated;
- In an appropriate eating area;
- Under active adult supervision;
- In a calm environment.

Children must not:

- Run while eating;
- Walk around with food in their mouths;
- Lie down while eating;
- Take food from another child's lunchbox;
- Share or swap food.

We are a nut, seed, shellfish free school.

3.2 Supervision

Staff supervising eating must:

- actively observe children;
- know which children have allergies or dietary requirements;
- prevent food sharing;
- monitor for choking;
- monitor for signs of allergic reaction;
- ensure children remain seated;
- respond promptly to any emergency;
- know the school's emergency procedures.
- Children must never be left unsupervised while eating or drinking.

Whilst children are eating there should always be a member of staff in the room with a valid paediatric first aid certificate

Children must always be within sight and hearing of a member of staff whilst eating.

Staff should position themselves so they can observe children effectively.

3.3 Choking

If a child chokes, staff will immediately respond in accordance with their paediatric first-aid training.

Following a choking incident:

- appropriate first-aid will be provided;
- emergency medical assistance will be sought where necessary;
- parents/carers will be informed;
- the incident will be recorded;
- the child's eating arrangements will be reviewed where appropriate.

Where a child experiences repeated choking or difficulty managing particular food textures, the school will discuss the concern with parents/carers and consider whether professional advice is appropriate.

4. Children's Independence

The school will support children to develop safe and age-appropriate independence.

Children will be encouraged to:

- wash their hands before eating;
- open containers where they are developmentally able;
- use appropriate utensils;
- drink independently;
- sit safely while eating;
- take appropriately sized bites;
- chew their food;
- recognise when they are hungry or thirsty;
- recognise when they have had enough;
- tidy their eating area.

Adults will model appropriate eating behaviours.

Children will not be forced to finish food.

Food will not be used as a reward or punishment.

Staff will use positive and respectful language about food.

5. Food Sharing

Children must not share, swap or exchange food.

This is particularly important because another child's food may contain an allergen or may not be suitable for the child's developmental or medical needs.

Staff will actively supervise children to prevent food sharing.

Parents/carers must not send food into school for children to share unless this has been specifically agreed with the school.

6. Allergies and Dietary Requirements

Allergy safety is a key component of safer eating.

Parents/carers must inform the school of:

- diagnosed food allergies;

- suspected allergies;
- food intolerances;
- anaphylaxis;
- prescribed emergency medication;
- medically prescribed diets;
- other medical conditions affecting eating;
- relevant feeding or swallowing difficulties;
- cultural or religious dietary requirements.

The school will maintain appropriate records and ensure relevant staff have access to information necessary to keep children safe.

Children with allergies will be managed in accordance with the school's Allergy Safety Policy.

7. Food Prepared or Provided by the School

Food is not routinely prepared or provided during the normal school day.

Where food is prepared or provided by the school, including during:

- before-school provision;
- after-school provision;
- cooking activities;
- food-related learning;
- celebrations;
- special events;

the school assumes responsibility for ensuring appropriate food-safety and allergy procedures are followed.

Before food is prepared or served, staff must:

- check allergy and dietary information;
- check ingredients;
- consider choking risks;
- consider children's developmental needs;
- follow appropriate food hygiene procedures;
- prevent cross-contamination where reasonably practicable;
- ensure appropriate supervision.

Where there is uncertainty about whether food is safe for a particular child, it must not be given to that child until its suitability has been established.