



HUMPTY DUMPTY PRE-SCHOOL

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Safer Eating Policy

Our setting is committed to ensuring that all children are kept safe during mealtimes and snack times. We recognise that young children are at greater risk of choking due to their developmental stage.

This policy outlines how staff will identify and manage choking hazards, supervise children appropriately, and respond effectively in the event of an emergency.

Our approach supports the principles of the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS 2025)**, and **Public Health England** which requires providers to promote children's health, safety, and wellbeing at all times.

Risk Identification

Choking risks are higher in early years due to:

- children's small airways and developing chewing/swallowing skills
- certain foods that are naturally high risk
- inappropriate portion sizes or food preparation.

High risk foods include:

- whole grapes, cherry tomatoes, olives
- sausages or hot dogs (especially in rounds)
- Nuts and large seeds
- Popcorn
- Hard fruit/vegetables (e.g raw carrot, apple)
- Sweets, marshmallows, chewing gum
- Tough meat or large chunks of cheese

Risk Management Strategies

Food Preparation

- Cut **grapes, cherry tomatoes, and similar food lengthways** and into **quarters**
- **Slice sausages** lengthways before cutting into smaller pieces
- **Remove pips, stones and bones** from food
- **Cook or grate** hard fruit and vegetables
- Avoid serving whole nuts to children under 5 years of age
- Offer food that is **soft, manageable, and age-appropriate**

Supervision and Environment

- **Children must sit down** while eating or drinking
- Ensure a **calm, seated environment** – no running, talking with full mouths, or playing with food
- **Staff remain with children** at all times during meals and snacks
- **Appropriate child to staff ratios** are maintained.
- **Hot food temperatures** are checked before serving.

Staff Training

- All staff receive **paediatric first aid training**, including **choking response techniques**.
- Staff are trained to recognise signs of choking and respond immediately.
- Regular **refresher training** and **risk assessments** take place.

Risk Assessments

- Choking risk assessments are reviewed **termly** and **whenever new foods or routines are introduced**.
- Individual risk assessments are made for **children with specific medical or developmental needs** affecting eating/swallowing

Emergency procedures

If a child begins to choke:

1. **Stay calm and act quickly**
2. **Encourage coughing** if the child can breathe or speak
3. If not effective, **perform back blows and abdominal thrusts** (as per first aid training)
4. **Call emergency services (999)** if obstruction is not cleared
5. Inform parents/carers and record the incident

Partnership with Parents/Carers

- Parents are given **information on safe food preparation** for packed lunches/snacks
- The setting encourages **sharing of dietary information or swallowing concerns**.
- Cultural and dietary preferences are respected within safety boundaries.

Monitoring and Review

- Policy reviewed **annually** or following an incident
- Feedback from staff, parents, and inspections used to update procedures
- Records kept of training, incidents and reviews