# St Ives School
# Haslemere

## Early Years Foundation Stage Food and Nutrition Policy

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

This policy has been developed in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements and with regard to the Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance, May 2025. It recognises that good nutrition is fundamental to children's health, development, and learning outcomes.

**Our Aims:**

Our primary aim is to provide nutritious, balanced meals and snacks, supporting children's optimal growth and development during the Early Years. We are committed to creating positive mealtime experiences, not only supporting children's physical development, but also promoting lifelong healthy eating habits through enjoyable, social dining experiences.

The safety and wellbeing of all children remains paramount during all aspects of food preparation, serving, and consumption, with robust procedures in place to protect every child in our care. We work collaboratively with parents as partners to meet each child's individual dietary needs, recognising that consistency between home and school supports the best outcomes for children.

We view food experiences as valuable opportunities for holistic learning and development, incorporating nutrition education naturally into our curriculum.

## 2. STAFF SUPERVISION AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

### 2.1 Staff Positioning During Meals and Snack Times

Where possible, staff should sit facing pupils while they eat and move around both sides of the table to maintain continuous visual supervision. This ensures that adults can respond immediately to any situation that may arise, particularly choking or allergic reactions, and prevents food sharing.

### 2.2 First Aid Requirements

When Early Years children are eating, a member of staff holding a current Full Paediatric First Aid qualification is present. This essential safety requirement applies to all meal and snack times without exception, ensuring that should any emergency arise, particularly choking incidents which can occur silently and require immediate intervention, appropriately trained staff are immediately available to respond. Staff rotas and timetables are carefully arranged to ensure this requirement is consistently met, with first aid qualified staff clearly identified and their qualifications maintained through regular updates and renewal programmes.

## 3. PRE-ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

### 3.1 Essential Information Required:

Before any child joins the school community, we obtain comprehensive information about their dietary requirements, which may stem from cultural, religious, or personal family preferences that are integral to their identity and wellbeing. We gather detailed information on food preferences that enable children to feel comfortable and secure in their new environment. Critical to child safety, we collect thorough documentation, details regarding any food allergies, including medical information

and emergency procedures that must be followed in the event of an adverse reaction. Additionally, we record information about food intolerances, documenting associated symptoms and the specific management strategies that have proven effective for each individual child. We also gather information about any special health requirements that may impact nutrition or feeding practices, ensuring we can provide appropriate care that supports each child's individual needs.

## 4. MEAL AND SNACK PROVISION

### 4.1 Nutritional Standards

St Ives School has regard for the Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance, May 2025, and follows these guidelines unless there are documented reasons for alternative approaches.

### 4.2 Meal Scheduling

Meals and snacks are thoughtfully provided at regular intervals throughout the day, with careful attention to children's natural rhythms and nutritional needs. Understanding the high energy demands of early childhood growth and development, we ensure that children are offered a meal or snack every two to three hours, supporting sustained energy levels and healthy appetites for nutritious foods. Within the EYFS department, children are given a morning snack and one on entry into After School Care. Portion sizes are carefully calibrated to be age-appropriate while allowing children the opportunity to request additional servings, supporting their natural ability to self-regulate their intake. Our mealtimes are deliberately designed to encourage shared conversation and social interaction, as well as table manners, creating positive associations with food and eating that will benefit children throughout their lives.

### 4.3 Food Quality and Variety

All food served is carefully selected to meet the comprehensive nutritional requirements necessary for growing children during these critical developmental years. Menus are thoughtfully designed to reflect important dates within our nations calendar, as well as important festivals from around the world. We prioritise fresh, wholesome ingredients wherever possible, recognising that quality nutrition forms the foundation for optimal physical and cognitive development. Throughout all aspects of food preparation, we adhere strictly to relevant health and safety guidelines, maintaining the highest standards to protect the wellbeing of every child in our care.

## 5. RESPONSIBILITY AND MONITORING

### 5.1 Designated Responsibility

At each mealtime and snack time, including during the extended day, there is a designated member of staff responsible for checking that the food being provided meets all requirements for each child.

### 5.2 Daily Checks Include:

Our comprehensive daily monitoring ensures that each child's special dietary requirements are met with accuracy, consistency, and careful attention to individual needs. Allergenic foods are robustly managed through appropriate separation, labelling, and handling procedures that eliminate cross-contamination risks. Additionally, we check that portion sizes are suitable for each child's age, developmental stage, and appetite patterns, supporting healthy growth while respecting individual differences in nutritional needs.

### 5.3 Record Keeping

For children under the age of three, and for others, where agreed with parents we maintain detailed daily records of each child's food intake, capturing not only what was offered and consumed, but also noting preferences, refusals, and any mealtime observations that may indicate emerging needs or concerns. Any significant issues including a child regularly refusing to eat, will be reported on to parents. This comprehensive information enables parents to understand their child's nutritional intake and eating development while maintaining consistency between home and school approaches.

All adverse physical reactions or concerns are thoroughly documented, including the specific foods involved, symptoms observed, timing, and actions taken, creating a comprehensive record that supports both immediate care and long-term health management.

We prioritise regular, meaningful communication with parents about their child's eating patterns, sharing both successes and any areas where additional support might be beneficial. Throughout this process, we maintain up-to-date dietary requirement records that are easily accessible to all relevant staff members, ensuring consistent and safe care across all interactions.

## 6. ALLERGY AND SPECIAL DIETARY MANAGEMENT

### 6.1 Allergy Management

We develop comprehensive individual care plans for children with food allergies, working closely with parents and healthcare professionals to ensure all aspects of the child's condition are understood and managed appropriately. Clear labelling and physical separation of allergenic foods is maintained throughout our food preparation, storage, and serving processes, with dedicated equipment and preparation areas used where necessary to prevent cross-contamination. The school

All staff receive thorough training on recognising the early signs of allergic reactions and responding appropriately, including when and how to seek emergency medical assistance. Emergency medication prescribed for individual children is kept readily available in designated, easily accessible locations, with multiple staff members trained in its proper administration and emergency protocols clearly posted and regularly reviewed.

### 6.2 Special Diets

We are committed to accommodating medical and dietary needs and, as far as reasonably possible, respecting religious and cultural practices, recognising that food is often central to family identity and wellbeing. Through regular review meetings with parents, we ensure that our understanding of each child's special dietary needs remains current and accurate as children grow and family circumstances evolve. When complex medical dietary requirements are involved, we actively seek consultation with healthcare professionals to ensure our approach is both safe and nutritionally appropriate. For every child with specific dietary needs, we provide suitable alternative options that are equally nutritious, ensuring no child feels excluded or different during mealtimes.

## 7. DRINKS PROVISION

### 7.1 Healthy Drink Options

Water and milk serve as our primary drink offerings, recognising these as the healthiest options for supporting both dental health and overall physical development in young children.

## 8. CHILD INVOLVEMENT AND INDEPENDENCE

### 8.1 Active Participation

Children are actively involved in age-appropriate food preparation activities supporting their development while building positive relationships with food and cooking. Food exploration activities are thoughtfully incorporated into our broader learning programme, using cooking and food preparation as natural opportunities to develop fine motor skills, mathematical concepts, scientific understanding, and cultural awareness.

### 8.2 Personal Preferences

We maintain a firm policy that food is never used as a reward or punishment, recognising that such practices can create unhealthy relationships with eating that may persist throughout life. Children's individual preferences are respected and accommodated where possible, while gentle encouragement is provided to try new foods and expand dietary variety. We trust in children's natural ability to self-regulate their appetite and nutritional intake, allowing them to eat according to their hunger cues rather than imposed adult expectations about portion sizes or food combinations.

## 9. PARENT PARTNERSHIP

### 9.1 Communication

Weekly menus are available to parents through the school's weekly newsletter. Ready access to the menus enables parents to make informed decisions about complementary meals and snacks provided at home.

## 10. CELEBRATIONS AND SPECIAL OCCASIONS

### 10.1 Healthy Celebrations

We do allow children to bring in birthday cakes and treats to celebrate these special occasions. These are however, sent home and parental discretion is advised as to whether these should be consumed. This also limits risk of cross contamination and potential allergic reactions. When food is incorporated into celebrations, it is carefully planned to form part of our balanced meal provision rather than replacing nutritious options, ensuring that special occasions support rather than undermine nutritional objectives. Cultural celebrations are thoughtfully recognised and incorporated in ways that respect diverse traditions while maintaining a commitment to healthy eating practices.

## 11. HEALTH AND SAFETY

### 11.1 Food Safety

All aspects of food preparation, storage, and serving are conducted in strict accordance with current food safety regulations, with regular monitoring and documentation to ensure consistent compliance. Temperature monitoring of refrigeration and cooking equipment is conducted regularly and

systematically, with records maintained to demonstrate ongoing food safety management. All staff involved in food handling receive comprehensive training in food hygiene principles, with regular refresher training provided to ensure knowledge remains current with evolving best practices. Throughout all food-related activities, we maintain a clean and hygienic eating environment that supports both health and the enjoyment of mealtimes. All Early Years staff hold a Level 1 qualification in Food Hygiene.

### 11.2 Choking Prevention

Age-appropriate food textures and sizes are carefully provided for each child, taking into account not only chronological age, but also individual developmental readiness and familiarity with different food types.

When preparing food, small fruits including grapes, olives, raspberries, strawberries and cherry tomatoes are cut lengthways and then halved again (quarters).

Continuous, attentive supervision is maintained during all eating times, with staff positioned to observe all children clearly and respond immediately to any signs of difficulty. All staff receive thorough training in choking response procedures, including recognition of choking signs and appropriate emergency interventions. Seating arrangements are deliberately planned to ensure clear visibility of all children and enabling rapid response to any emergency situation.

## 12. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

### 12.1 Regular Review

This policy undergoes comprehensive review annually or more frequently, as required by changes in regulatory guidance, best practice recommendations, or specific needs identified within the school community.

Our commitment to continuous improvement is demonstrated through our willingness to adapt practices based on emerging research, best practice developments, and the evolving needs of our school community.

### 12.2 Training and Development

Regular, comprehensive staff training programmes cover all aspects of food safety, and management of special dietary needs, ensuring all staff members have the knowledge and skills necessary to support children's nutritional wellbeing effectively. When guidance or regulations change, immediate updates are provided to all relevant staff members, with additional training sessions arranged as needed, to ensure smooth implementation of new requirements.

**This policy demonstrates our commitment to providing the highest standards of nutrition and food safety for all children in our care, while supporting overall development and wellbeing.**

Policy Reviewed - November 2025

Policy due for review – November 2026