

Safer Eating Policy

At Kingfisher Kindergarten, we are committed to ensuring that children are provided with a safe, healthy and positive experience at lunchtime and snack times. We recognise that eating and drinking can present risks, including choking and allergic reactions, and we have procedures in place to minimise these risks.

This policy has been developed with regard to the current **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework**, Department for Education safer eating and food safety guidance, and the setting's Health and Hygiene, Allergy, First Aid and Safeguarding policies.

All staff are expected to understand and follow this policy.

Lunch Time

Lunch time each day is from **11.30am to 12.30pm**.

Lunch is supervised by appropriate members of staff in accordance with the EYFS staff-to-child ratio requirements. Staff supervising lunch will be familiar with the individual needs of the children attending, including any allergies, dietary requirements, medical conditions or additional needs.

A member of staff with a **valid paediatric first aid certificate** will be present in the room whenever children are eating. Children will remain within the **sight and hearing of staff throughout lunchtime**. Staff will actively supervise children while they are eating and will position themselves so that they can observe children effectively. Children will not be left alone while eating.

Before eating, children will be encouraged and supported to:

- Use the toilet, where appropriate.
- Wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water and dry them appropriately.
- Sit safely at the table before eating.
- Follow safe eating expectations.

Staff will remind children about appropriate behaviour at the table, including sitting while eating, eating at an appropriate pace and not putting excessive amounts of food into their mouths.

Children will be encouraged to develop independence and good hygiene habits while being appropriately supported by staff.

Packed Lunches

Children attending bring a packed lunch from home. Parents/carers are responsible for providing a suitable packed lunch and for informing the setting of any dietary requirements, allergies or intolerances.

Parents/carers are encouraged to provide a **healthy, balanced and nutritious packed lunch** and to follow the Department for Education's Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance. Parents/carers should provide food that is appropriate for their child's age and stage of development and should prepare food appropriately to reduce the risk of choking. Where a child requires food to be cut, softened, mashed or prepared in a particular way because of their age, developmental stage or individual needs, this must be discussed with the setting.

Children are welcome to bring lunches that require reheating. Staff will reheat to appropriate temperature and test the food using our food probes to ensure it has been reheated appropriately.

Choking Prevention

Choking is a significant risk for young children. Staff will ensure that food is prepared and provided in a way that reduces the risk of choking. Parents/carers will be advised to prepare foods appropriately before bringing them into the setting. In particular:

- Grapes, cherry tomatoes, strawberries and other small round foods should be **cut lengthways and into quarters**.
- Large pieces of fruit and hard vegetables should be cut into appropriate slices or otherwise prepared to reduce choking risk.
- Stones and pips must be removed from fruit.
- Whole seeds must not be provided for children under five.
- Popcorn, hard sweets, marshmallows and jelly cubes should not be provided.
- Sausages should be cut lengthways into thin strips rather than round pieces, and skins should be removed.

- Bones must be removed from meat and fish.
- Cheese should be provided in strips rather than large chunks where appropriate.
 - Bread should be cut appropriately for young children.
 - Foods should be softened or otherwise prepared appropriately for younger children.

The DfE advises that children can choke on any food and provides specific advice on preparing food safely for children aged five and under. Staff will familiarise themselves with this guidance and apply it when supervising children.

Children will be encouraged to sit upright and remain seated while eating. Staff will actively supervise children and will not allow children to run, play or lie down while eating.

If a child experiences a choking incident that requires intervention from a member of staff, the incident will be dealt with in accordance with the setting's first aid procedures. The incident will be recorded appropriately and parents/carers will be informed. The setting will review any significant or repeated choking incidents to identify whether changes to food preparation, supervision or practice are required.

Allergies and Dietary Requirements

Parents/carers must inform the setting of any known:

- Food allergies.
- Food intolerances.
- Dietary requirements.
- Medical conditions affecting eating or drinking.
- Cultural or religious dietary requirements.

This information will be obtained before the child starts, where possible, and will be kept up to date. Where a child has a diagnosed allergy requiring emergency medication, the setting will ensure that the child's individual allergy or medical action plan is available to relevant staff and that required medication is accessible in accordance with the setting's medication procedures.

All staff responsible for supervising children at mealtimes will be made aware of relevant allergies and dietary requirements. Staff will take reasonable steps to prevent a child from being given food that could cause an allergic reaction. Children will be discouraged from sharing or swapping food. Staff will remain alert to signs of an allergic reaction, including anaphylaxis, and will follow the setting's emergency procedures if a child develops symptoms.

Nuts and Peanut Products

We ask parents/carers **not to provide peanuts, peanut products or foods containing peanuts** in children's packed lunches. This is an important precaution because of the risk of allergic reactions. Parents/carers should also inform the setting if their child has any known nut or peanut allergy. The setting will communicate any specific allergy controls to parents/carers and staff where an individual child's medical needs require additional precautions.

Food Hygiene and Storage

Parents/carers should provide packed lunches in suitable, clean and labelled containers. Where food requires refrigeration or temperature control, parents/carers should use an appropriate insulated lunch bag and ice pack in accordance with food safety advice. On particularly warm days, parents/carers are advised to use ice packs to help keep food at a safe temperature until lunchtime.

Staff will follow appropriate food hygiene procedures when handling children's food. Staff will wash their hands before handling food and will ensure that tables and eating areas are clean before children begin eating.

Children's food will not be shared between children. Food that has been served to a child and subsequently returned to the lunchbox will not be redistributed to another child. The setting will follow its Health and Hygiene Policy and appropriate food safety procedures when handling food.

Staff Supervision During Eating

Mealtimes will be treated as an important safeguarding and welfare activity.

Staff will:

- Remain with the children while they are eating.
- Ensure children remain within sight and hearing.

- Position themselves so that children can be effectively observed.
- Actively supervise rather than simply being present in the room.
- Be aware of choking risks.
- Be aware of children's individual allergies and dietary requirements.
- Prevent food sharing where necessary.
- Encourage children to eat calmly and safely.
- Respond immediately to signs of choking or an allergic reaction.
- Ensure that children are not left eating while staff attend to another task elsewhere.

The setting will ensure that a member of staff with a **valid paediatric first aid certificate is in the room whenever children are eating**, as required by the EYFS.

Healthy Eating

We encourage children to develop healthy attitudes towards food and drink. Where food and drink are provided by the setting, they will be healthy, balanced and nutritious and the setting will have regard to the Department for Education's **Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance**. Parents/carers will be encouraged to provide healthy packed lunches containing a balance of appropriate foods.

We encourage parents/carers to include foods such as:

- Fruit and vegetables prepared safely.
- Bread, rice, pasta, potatoes or other starchy foods.
- Appropriate sources of protein.
- Dairy or suitable alternatives.
- Water as the main drink.

Foods high in salt and sugar should be limited. We recognise that children may have individual dietary, cultural or medical requirements and will work with parents/carers to support these wherever possible.

Drinks

Children will have access to **fresh drinking water** during the session. Children are encouraged to bring a suitable named water bottle containing water. Milk is offered to children at snack time. No squash or juice is allowed in the children's main water drinking bottles. Instead, we ask that parents include a juice/smoothie drink in their lunch boxes to consume as part of their meal time.

Children will have access to drinking water and will be encouraged to drink regularly throughout the session.

Snack Time

The setting provides healthy snacks during pre-school sessions. Snacks will be prepared and served safely and will be appropriate to the children's age and developmental stage. Foods that present a significant choking risk will not be offered unless they have been appropriately prepared to reduce that risk. Children will be supervised throughout snack time in accordance with the same safer eating procedures used at lunchtime.

A member of staff with a **valid paediatric first aid certificate will be in the room whenever children are eating**.

First Aid and Choking Incidents

All staff will understand the setting's first aid arrangements and will know how to respond if a child chokes. A member of staff holding a valid paediatric first aid certificate will always be present in the room while children are eating. Any choking incident requiring intervention will be recorded and parents/carers will be informed. Where an incident is significant, repeated or indicates a possible change in risk, the setting will review the circumstances and consider whether additional measures are required.

Staff Training and Responsibilities

All staff are expected to understand their responsibilities regarding safer eating. Staff will receive appropriate information and training regarding:

- Choking prevention.
- Safe food preparation.
- Supervision during eating.
- Allergies and anaphylaxis.
- Food hygiene.
- The setting's emergency procedures.

- Individual children's dietary and medical requirements.

The manager/DSL or designated member of the leadership team will ensure that relevant information is shared with staff and that this policy is implemented consistently.

Parent/Carer Responsibilities

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Providing a suitable packed lunch where required.
- Informing the setting of allergies, intolerances and dietary requirements.
- Informing the setting of any changes to their child's medical or dietary needs.
- Preparing food appropriately to reduce choking risks.
- Providing an appropriate lunchbox and, where necessary, an ice pack or insulated bag.
- Following the setting's guidance regarding foods that should not be brought into the setting.
- Ensuring food provided is suitable for their child's age and stage of development.

The setting will communicate with parents/carers if concerns arise regarding the suitability or safety of food provided.

This policy was adopted by Kingfisher Kindergarten Ltd

Date to be reviewed	Annually
Signed on behalf of the provider	La-Ryne van der Westhuizen
Role of signatory	Owner