Safer Eating Policy

Policy Code:	HS9
Policy Start Date:	November 2026
Policy Review Date:	September 2029

Please read this policy in conjunction with the policies listed below:

- HS2 Medical Treatment Policy
- HS4 First Aid Policy
- HS5 Health & Safety Policy
- HS8 Allergy Safety Policy
- SW5 Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- SW11 Educational Visits Policy

1 Policy Statement

1.1 The policy outlines the Trust's approach to safer eating in relation to early years foundation stage (EYFS) provision. It outlines the safer eating procedures in place to prevent choking, minimise food-related risks and ensure safe, supervised mealtimes. This policy should be read alongside the *Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework, Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance* and the Trust's HS8 Allergy Safety Policy.

1.2 References to the Trust or Academy within this policy specifically include all nursery, primary, secondary and special academies within the Trust, as well as Priory Apprenticeships and Lincolnshire ITT.

1.3 This policy does not form part of any member of staff's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

2 Roles, Responsibilities and Implementation

2.1 The People, Performance and Operations Committee has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework. This committee delegates day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy and ensuring its maintenance and review to the Director of Trust Services.

2.2 This policy is approved by the People, Performance and Operations Committee before being ratified at the next available Trust Board meeting. Approval and ratification is minuted, with records kept by the Clerk to Trustees.

2.3 Leaders and Managers have a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this policy and all staff are responsible for supporting colleagues and ensuring its success.

3 Aims

3.1 To ensure settings provide meals which are nutritious, well-balanced and cater to the individual dietary needs of children.

3.2 To ensure settings promote healthy eating habits from an early age.

3.3 To ensure compliance with the *Early years foundation stage statutory framework*.

4 Staff Training

4.1 Whilst children are eating there should always be a member of staff in the room with a valid paediatric first aid certificate for a full course consistent with the criteria set out in the *Early years foundation stage statutory framework*.

4.2 In line with the Trust's HS9 Allergy Safety Policy, all staff will undergo allergy safety training on an annual basis.

4.3 In addition to the above, any member of staff involved in the preparing and handling of food must complete training in food hygiene.

5 Documentation

5.1 Each setting will maintain a register of pupils with medical conditions, including diagnosed allergies. This will be held in each setting's management information system.

5.2 This register is composed using information collected from parents/carers through the setting's Admission Form. Parents/Carers are reminded to update the setting as soon as possible if anything changes with regards to their child's medical information. If applicable, an academy may also collect information from the child's previous setting through the transition process. However, this information will always be checked with parents/carers to ensure it remains up to date.

5.3 The register is used to ensure that appropriate support, risk assessments, communication and emergency arrangements are in place for affected pupils.

5.4 The register will be updated whenever the setting is informed of a change to a pupil's medical information or treatment requirements.

5.5 Before a child is admitted to an early years setting, information must be obtained about any special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and intolerances that the child has, and any special health requirements. This information will be shared with all staff involved in the preparing and handling of food. At each meal time and snack time settings must be clear about who is responsible for checking that the food and drink being provided meets all the requirements for each child.

5.6 Settings must have ongoing discussions with parents/carers and, where appropriate, health professionals to develop Individual Medical Care Plans (IMCPs) for managing any known allergies and intolerances. Staff should be aware that children can develop allergies at any time, especially during the

introduction of solid foods which is sometimes called complementary feeding or weaning. Please see HS8 Allergy Safety Policy for further information.

6 Food preparation

6.1 There must be an area adequately equipped to provide healthy meals, snacks and drinks for children as necessary. There must be suitable facilities for the hygienic preparation of food for children, if necessary, including suitable sterilisation equipment for babies' food.

6.2 Staff must prepare food in a way to prevent choking. Staff will adhere to the government guidance *Food safety – Help for early year's providers*.

6.3 Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, these must be healthy, balanced and nutritious. Fresh drinking water must always be available and accessible to children. Staff will have regard to the *Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance*.

7 Mealtime Environment

7.1 Where possible there should be a designated eating space where distractions are minimised, e.g., toys.

7.2 Babies and young children should be seated safely in a highchair or appropriately sized low chair while eating.

7.3 Children must always be within sight and hearing of a member of staff whilst eating. Where possible, staff should sit facing children whilst they eat, so they can make sure children are eating in a way to prevent choking and so they can prevent food sharing and be aware of any unexpected allergic reactions.

8 Choking

8.1 In the event that a child experiences a choking incident that requires intervention, staff should record details of where and how the child choked (using the Trust's Accident, Incident & Near Miss Portal) and ensure parents/carers are made aware. The records should be reviewed periodically to identify if there are trends or common features of incidents that could be addressed to reduce the risk of choking. Appropriate action should be taken to address any identified concerns.

9 Policy Change

9.1 This policy may only be amended or withdrawn by the Priory Federation of Academies Trust.