St Hilary's Prep School Policy

EYFS Food Policy

INTRODUCTION
In our school, we are committed to giving all our pupils consistent messages about all aspects of health to help them understand the impact of their behaviours, and encourage them to take responsibility for the choices they make. We actively promote democracy, the rule of the law, individual liberty and mutual respect and patience of those with different faiths and beliefs. These are fundamental British Values which underpin all that we offer, as does our School Motto 'Not for oneself but for all.'

The school supports the '5-A-DAY' ethos to encourage children to eat five portions of fruit and vegetables a day, which has been shown to reduce the onset of certain life-threatening conditions, as well as being helpful in tackling and preventing childhood obesity.

RATIONALE
St Hilary's strives to be a healthy school. It is also a 'nut free' school. It is important that we consider all elements of our work to ensure that we promote health awareness in all members of the school community. We can provide a valuable role model to pupils and their families about food and healthy-eating patterns.

Through effective leadership, the school ethos and the curriculum, all school staff can bring together all elements of the school day to create an environment which supports a healthy lifestyle. At St Hilary's School we aim to ensure that all children in our care learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. Adults in school promote positive behaviour and relationships by modelling 'positive behaviour and highlighting exemplary behaviour of children in class, narrating what was kind and considerate about the behaviour.' Development Matters, 2020, Updated 2021 p.68

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
- To ensure that we are giving consistent messages about food and health
- To give our pupils the information they need to make healthy choices
- To promote health awareness
- To contribute to the healthy physical development of all members of our school community
- To encourage all children to eat five pieces of fruit or vegetables each day

<u>EYFS (Nursery, Kindergarten and Reception)</u>

School Lunches, Snacks and Safer Eating
Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS): Nursery, Kindergarten and Reception

Aim and Scope
St Hilary's School EYFS is committed to providing healthy, balanced and nutritious food and drink for all children in Nursery, Kindergarten and Reception. The school aims to promote children's health, growth, development and wellbeing, while ensuring that meals and snacks are provided in a safe, inclusive and supportive environment.

This policy applies to all staff involved in the planning, preparation, serving, handling and supervision of food and drink, including the school's contracted catering provider, Thomas Franks.

The policy must be read alongside the school's relevant policies and procedures for medical conditions, allergies and anaphylaxis, first aid, food hygiene, health and safety, and the administration of medication.

Legal and Statutory Framework

St Hilary's School will comply with the applicable statutory requirements and relevant guidance, including:

- **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers**, effective from 1 September 2026, particularly paragraph 3.63 (Food and drink) and paragraphs 3.64 onwards (Safer eating and associated requirements).
- **Department for Education (DfE), Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance**, which providers must have regard to and should follow unless there is a good reason not to.
- Applicable food safety and food hygiene legislation, including the Food Safety Act 1990 and the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013.
- Relevant guidance from the Department for Education, the NHS and the British Society for Allergy and Clinical Immunology (BSACI).

The school will use the current statutory framework and associated guidance when reviewing this policy and its procedures.

Healthy Meals, Snacks and Drinks in EYFS

In accordance with paragraph 3.63 p.36 of the EYFS Statutory Framework, all meals, snacks and drinks provided by St Hilary's School must be healthy, balanced and nutritious. The school will have regard to the DfE's Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance when planning and providing food and drink.

Thomas Franks, the school's contracted catering provider, is responsible for providing meals that support children's growth, development and wellbeing. Menus should offer a suitable variety of foods, flavours and textures, promote healthy eating habits and take account of children's ages, developmental stages and individual dietary requirements.

The school will ensure that:

- Meals and snacks are appropriate for young children and support a balanced diet.
- Children are encouraged to explore a variety of suitable foods and develop positive attitudes towards eating.
- Individual dietary requirements, food allergies, intolerances and relevant medical needs are taken into account when food is planned, prepared and served.
- Fresh drinking water is available and accessible to all children at all times, including during meals, snacks and throughout the school day.
- Children are encouraged and supported to drink water regularly and may access it whenever they need it.
- Mealtimes provide opportunities to develop independence, social interaction and appropriate table manners in a calm and welcoming environment.

Staff will model positive attitudes towards food and eating. Children will be encouraged to try suitable foods without pressure or coercion, and their individual needs and preferences will be respected.

The school will regularly review its food and drink provision to ensure that it remains appropriate, nutritious and consistent with current statutory requirements and guidance.

Dietary Requirements, Allergies and Intolerances in the EYFS

In accordance with EYFS paragraph 3.64, p.37 (EYFS Statutory Framework) before a child is admitted to the setting, the school must obtain information from parents and/or carers about the child's special dietary requirements, food preferences, known food allergies and intolerances, and any special health requirements. This information is recorded, kept up to date and shared with all staff involved in preparing or handling food. At every mealtime and snack time, the school must ensure that responsibility for checking the suitability of each child's food and drink is clearly allocated.

St Hilary's School will ensure that:

- Parents and/or carers provide accurate information about their child's dietary and medical needs.
- Relevant information is shared promptly with Thomas Franks and all appropriate EYFS staff.
- Food is checked before it is given to a child with an allergy, intolerance or other dietary requirement.
- Food containing an allergen that is unsafe for an individual child is not given to that child.
- Appropriate precautions are taken to prevent cross-contamination during preparation, storage, serving and eating.
- Dietary requirements and arrangements are reviewed whenever a child's circumstances change.

The school distinguishes between a food allergy, which involves the immune system, and a food intolerance, which does not usually involve the same immune response. Both must be managed in accordance with the child's recorded requirements and any relevant healthcare advice.

Recording and Communicating Allergy Information

Thomas Franks is informed of pupils' recorded food allergies, intolerances and relevant dietary requirements. This information is maintained on record, and a visual information board is displayed by the serving counter to support checks by the catering team.

EYFS practitioners are informed of relevant allergies and intolerances before food is served. Staff must check the current information and follow the school's procedures rather than relying on memory or informal communication alone.

An Allergy Book containing relevant information about children in Nursery and Kindergarten is kept on the wall by the entrance to Kindergarten T. A member of the EYFS team takes the book to the Dining Hall at lunchtime and keeps it available for staff reference throughout the meal. Once lunch has finished, the book is returned to its designated place on the wall shelf in Kindergarten T.

For Reception, an Allergy Book is available on the wall to the left of the Dining Hall entrance from the main entrance hall.

All allergy information must be handled confidentially while remaining readily accessible to staff who need it.

Allergy Action Plans and Emergency Medication

In accordance with EYFS paragraph 3.65, the school will maintain ongoing discussions with parents and/or carers and, where appropriate, health professionals to develop and review individual allergy action plans for children with known allergies and intolerances.

The school will:

- Keep individual allergy information and action plans up to date and accessible to relevant staff.
- Refer to the BSACI allergy action plan guidance.
- Ensure staff understand the signs and symptoms of allergic reactions and anaphylaxis, the appropriate treatment and the emergency procedures.
- Ensure relevant staff know where prescribed emergency medication is kept and how it must be accessed and administered in accordance with the child's plan, their training and school procedures.
- Respond appropriately to suspected new allergic reactions, recognising that allergies can develop at any time.

If a child experiences a suspected severe allergic reaction or anaphylaxis, staff must follow the child's allergy action plan and the school's emergency procedures, administer prescribed emergency medication in accordance with their training and the relevant instructions, and call 999 as required. Parents and/or carers must be informed as soon as practicable.

EYFS Lunchtime Arrangements and Allergy Safety

Nursery and Kindergarten
Children in Nursery and Kindergarten are escorted to the Dining Hall (The Pepperpot) in their classes. A member of staff is allocated responsibility for each table, with no more than eight children seated at any one table.

Children with recorded food allergies and/or intolerances sit at a designated table with selected friends. A separate designated table is provided for Nursery and for Kindergarten. These tables are supervised by the senior member of staff on duty, normally the Room Leader or Deputy EYFS Manager.

The senior member of staff responsible for these children carries each child's individual red medical bag, containing the child's care plan and prescribed medication, throughout the lunchtime arrangements.

Each child with a relevant allergy or intolerance has an individual, named red placemat displaying their photograph and the words: "Think of me, I have a severe allergy." These placemats support identification and awareness but do not replace the required checks of food, ingredients and individual care arrangements. Food prepared for children with allergies, intolerances or other specific dietary requirements is provided by the kitchen on a named, covered white plate. The senior member of staff allocated to the table is responsible for checking and serving the appropriate meal to each child.

For other children, the member of staff supervising the table collects and serves the food from the kitchen hatch, one table at a time.

Desserts are prepared in advance by the kitchen and served by staff on duty at the smaller hatch. The senior member of staff responsible for children with individual dietary requirements checks and serves their desserts in accordance with their recorded requirements.

Additional accompaniments and condiments, such as gravy and custard, are served from the smaller hatch away from the children. Staff must ensure that these items are suitable for the child receiving them and that appropriate precautions are taken to prevent cross-contamination.

Reception
EYFS practitioners or class teachers escort Reception children to the Dining Hall (The PepperPot).

Children use a blue tray if they have no recorded food allergy and a red tray if they have an allergy. The trays help the catering team Thomas Franks identify the appropriate serving procedure but do not replace checks against the child's current dietary and medical information.

The catering team serves the children at the lunch hatch. Staff ensure that each child receives the correct meal and that all relevant dietary requirements are followed before the food is given to the child.

The EYFS practitioner or class teacher carries each child's individual red medical bag, containing the child's care plan and prescribed medication, throughout the lunch service. The bag remains with the responsible adult and accompanies the child back to Reception at the end of lunchtime.

EYFS Staff Responsibilities during Food Service
At every meal and snack time, the designated member of staff must ensure that the food and drink provided are suitable for the child concerned.

Staff must not rely solely on the colour of a tray, placemat or plate to confirm that a meal is safe. The child's current allergy and dietary information are always checked in accordance with school procedures.

If there is any uncertainty about the ingredients, suitability or preparation of a meal, the food must not be served until the catering team, Thomas Franks and the responsible member of staff have confirmed that it is appropriate.

Children must not share food, drinks or utensils where this could expose them to allergens or food that is unsuitable for them.

Safer Eating
St Hilary's School is committed to ensuring that all children eat and drink safely in a calm, supportive and inclusive environment. Staff must follow the safer-eating requirements of the current EYFS Statutory Framework and take appropriate steps to prevent choking and respond promptly to medical emergencies.

Paediatric First Aid
In accordance with paragraph 3.63, P.36 (EYFS Statutory Framework) a member of staff holding a valid paediatric first aid certificate for a full course, consistent with the criteria set out in Annex A of the EYFS Statutory Framework 2026, must be present in the room whenever children are eating.

Staff are familiar with the school's emergency procedures and know how to respond promptly to choking, allergic reactions and other medical emergencies.

Developmental Needs and the Introduction of Solid Foods
In accordance with EYFS paragraph 3.67, p.37 the school will maintain ongoing discussions with parents and/or carers about each child's stage of development in relation to the introduction of solid foods, including the textures the child is familiar with and can manage safely.

St Hilary's EYFS Practitioners must not make assumptions about a child's feeding abilities based solely on age. Food must be prepared and offered in a manner appropriate to the child's individual developmental needs. Where applicable, staff will work in partnership with parents and/or carers and take account of relevant advice from health professionals when supporting children to progress to new textures and stages of eating. Staff should refer to NHS guidance on weaning and introducing solid foods.

Food Preparation and Choking Prevention
Food at St Hilary's EYFS must be prepared, presented and served in a way that reduces the risk of choking and is appropriate to each child's age, developmental stage and individual needs.

Staff must:

- Ensure food is cut, softened or otherwise prepared appropriately.
- Follow current guidance on foods that may present a choking hazard.
- Ensure children are seated and supported appropriately while eating.
- Encourage children to take manageable mouthfuls, eat at a suitable pace and chew their food thoroughly.
- Ensure children do not eat while walking, running or playing.
- Remain alert to signs of choking, including silent choking, and respond immediately in accordance with their training.

Safe Seating and the Eating Environment in the EYFS
Children must be seated safely in suitable seating appropriate to their size and developmental needs. Young children must use a suitable highchair or appropriately sized low chair, as appropriate.

St Hilary's EYFS Staff must ensure that:

- Children sit in a stable, upright position while eating.
- Highchairs and other seating are suitable and safe for the child.
- Children are not left unattended in highchairs or other eating seats.
- The eating area is clean, calm and appropriately supervised.

- Distractions are minimised so that children can concentrate on eating safely.

Supervision during Meals and Snacks in the EYFS
Children at St Hilary's must remain within the sight and hearing of a member of staff at all times while eating, in accordance with the applicable EYFS requirements.

Staff must maintain active supervision throughout meals and snacks and, wherever possible, sit facing the children so that they can observe eating and drinking and respond promptly to concerns.

Staff must:
- Remain alert to children's behaviour and signs of choking or an allergic reaction.
- Ensure that each child receives only the food and drink intended for them.
- Discourage children from sharing food, drinks or utensils where this could create a safety risk.
- Avoid distractions that could compromise effective supervision.
- Ensure that children are never left eating alone or without appropriate adult supervision.

Supervision arrangements must remain effective when staff are supporting individual children or responding to other needs.

Recording and Reviewing Choking Incidents in the EYFS
Whenever a child experiences a choking incident in the EYFS at St Hilary's School requiring intervention, we will record the incident and inform the child's parents and/or carers in accordance with the applicable EYFS requirements.

The record should include, where relevant:
- The date, time and location of the incident.
- The food or drink involved.
- The circumstances in which the incident occurred.
- The intervention provided and any further action taken.
- Whether medical assessment or additional support was required.
- When and how parents and/or carers were informed.

St Hilary's will review incident records to identify any recurring patterns or factors that may increase risk. Where necessary, the school will review food preparation, supervision arrangements, staff training and individual risk assessments to reduce the likelihood of recurrence.

Food Hygiene and Food and Drink Facilities in the EYFS
St Hilary's School EYFS and Thomas Franks will ensure that suitable facilities and equipment are available for the safe preparation, storage, serving and consumption of food and drink.

All relevant staff must follow appropriate food hygiene procedures, including:
- Effective handwashing.
- Cleaning and disinfection of food preparation surfaces and equipment.
- Safe storage and handling of food.
- Prevention of cross-contamination, including cross-contact with allergens.
- Safe serving practices and appropriate waste disposal.

St Hilary's EYFS Staff will ensure that food preparation, storage, serving and eating areas are kept clean and hygienic and that food is handled in accordance with applicable food safety legislation and guidance.
All staff must follow the school's procedures for reporting concerns about food hygiene, unsafe food, suspected contamination or equipment that may compromise food safety.

Monitoring and Review in the EYFS
St Hilary's EYFS will regularly review its food and drink provision and the implementation of this policy to ensure that arrangements remain appropriate for children's ages, developmental stages, individual dietary requirements and medical needs.

The review will take account of:

- Changes to the EYFS Statutory Framework or relevant guidance.
- Changes to children's dietary requirements, allergies or medical care plans.
- Food-related incidents, including choking and suspected allergic reactions.
- Feedback from EYFS staff, parents and/or carers, and Thomas Franks Catering Provider.
- Any identified improvements to food preparation, service, supervision or hygiene.

The policy will be updated when necessary to reflect changes in EYFS statutory requirements, guidance or school procedures.

Related Guidance and References

- Department for Education: *Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers*, effective 1 September 2026.
- Department for Education: *Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance*.
- British Society for Allergy and Clinical Immunology (BSACI): Allergy Action Plans.
- NHS: Food allergy and anaphylaxis guidance.
- NHS: Weaning and introducing solid foods.
- GOV.UK: Food safety guidance for Early Years providers.
- Food Safety Act 1990.
- Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013.

Author: Head of EYFS and Pre Prep
Read & Approved by: The Headmaster and St Hilary's Senior Leadership Team
Read & Shared: with all staff at St Hilary's School
Reviewed: September 2026 (formerly part of Whole School Food Policy)
Next Review Date: June 2027
Persons responsible: Julia Ranger, Head of EYFS and Pre Prep

APPENDIX

A list of Nut Free Snacks that has been communicated to all parents in September 2026.

NUT FREE SNACKS

PRODUCE

- Fresh fruit (no kiwi fruit)
- Fresh vegetables (no celery)
- Raisins
- Dried Fruit

SAVORY SNACKS

- Pretzels
- Mini cheddars
- Popcorn
- Rice cakes
- Corn cakes
- Potato crisps (e.g. Pom Bears)

SWEET SNACKS

- Bear Pure Fruit Snacks (e.g. YoYo)
- Kellogg's Rice Krispie Squares
- McVitie's Penguin biscuit
- McVitie's Club biscuit (mint or orange)