

SAFER EATING IN THE EYFS

Key changes from September 2026 for primary schools

For nursery and reception provision in school-based early years settings



From September 2026, inspectors will look more closely at how schools implement the EYFS safer eating and safer weaning requirements.



1. The headline change

- The safer eating requirements already in the EYFS remain in place.
- From September 2026, schools will need to show that safer eating is understood, risk assessed and consistently put into practice.



2. What the EYFS requires



1 A member of staff with a valid paediatric first aid certificate must be in the room while children are eating.



2 Before admission, collect information about dietary needs, allergies, intolerances and health requirements.



3 Keep allergy action plans up to date and make sure all staff know symptoms, treatment and anaphylaxis procedures.



4 Do not assume stage by age: prepare food to match each child's developmental stage and familiar textures.



5 Prepare food to reduce choking risk, seat children safely, and minimise distractions in the eating area.



6 Children must always be within sight and hearing of staff while eating.



7 Record choking incidents, tell parents or carers, and review patterns to reduce future risk.



3. Actions for primary schools



Review your EYFS mealtime policy and risk assessment.



Make sure nursery, reception, lunchtime and wraparound staff know the safer eating routine.



Check allergy information is clear, current and easy for staff to access.



Train staff on choking prevention, supervision and emergency response.



Audit seating, food preparation and snack routines.



Keep evidence of practice ready for inspection.



Remember

Safer eating is safeguarding.
Children can choke silently,
so active supervision matters.



Based on the EYFS statutory framework and Ofsted inspection updates for September 2026.

Always follow your school policy, allergy plans and individual risk assessments.

