

Safer Eating Policy for Childminders Working with Others

Rationale

One child dies in the UK every month from choking and hundreds more require hospital treatment. This policy is designed to support Childminders to safeguard mealtimes and reduce the risk of serious harm resulting from choking whilst eating.

It has been written to incorporate the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework as well as good practice and learning from incidents where children have sadly died during mealtimes.

Procedure

Throughout this policy we are referring to all food including all meals and all snacks.

Before a Child starts at Little Home Learners

The EYFS requires that before a child is admitted to Little Home Learners, we (myself or a staff member) must obtain information about:

- any special dietary requirements
- food preferences
- food allergies and intolerances
- any special health requirements
- stage of weaning

It is essential that we discuss with you what stage of weaning your child is at, if applicable, including detailed information about textures your child is familiar with and what we will be required to provide at Little Home Learners.

We will ensure the person responsible for preparing foods and snacks is aware of your child's weaning requirements, including texturisation of food.

We will also ask you to confirm that the information is correct. This will be reviewed on a regular basis, as the child progresses through their weaning stages. To ensure the safety of the child, parents are required to advise the Childminder of any updates to the child's weaning stage between review dates.

Progression from the introduction of first foods, to a range of blended or mashed foods, and then to a wider range of chopped or minced foods should be a gradual process, based on each child's developmental readiness rather than a staged process based on age alone.

Staff Competency

We will ensure that those responsible for preparing and handling food are competent to do so. All staff involved in the preparation and handling of food will receive training in food hygiene. All staff will hold a current 12 hour Paediatric First Aid Training Certificate and this will be updated every 3 years.

All staff will be aware of the First Aider at the setting and the procedures to follow if an incident occurs. The First Aider will be in the immediate vicinity of children during mealtimes.

Parents Providing Food

We will discuss with you how food is to be prepared for your child if it is being brought in from home.

If we provide food, it will be prepared and stored in line with the Safer Food Better Business for Childminders guidance from the Food Standards Agency, and in accordance with the parent's wishes and the child's stage of weaning.

Recording and Learning from Incidents

Should your child experience an actual or potential choking incident, the child's key person will record this on an accident and incident record form and the risk assessment will be updated with any additional steps and lessons to be learned.

Recorded information will include:

- where the incident happened
- how the child choked
- what the child choked on
- what the outcome was
- what steps or lessons were learned

Safeguarding Mealtimes

We will ensure that eating times and the space designated to eating are designed with safety in mind to reduce the risk of serious harm through choking whilst eating.

We will ensure that children are seated in either a highchair or appropriately sized low chair/dining chair with booster seat whilst eating.

Your child will be supervised at all times when they are eating and will never be left alone. A designated member of staff will sit face-to-face with your child during all meal and snack times.

Responding to Choking

Despite preventative measures it is still possible for a child to choke and we will ensure that we are ready and prepared to intervene safely and effect a positive resolution. We will follow the recommended course of action based on current Resuscitation UK guidelines.

There will always be a first aid box accessible containing appropriate contents and we will ensure that relevant staff are aware of where this is stored and that they are competent in using the equipment.

Procedures are in place in the setting to ensure staff are aware of their responsibilities around contacting emergency services should the need arise.

Allergies and Intolerances

We will have ongoing discussions with parents and/or carers and, where appropriate, health professionals to develop allergy action plans ([BSACI Allergy Action Plan 2018 NoAAI2981-2.pdf](#)) for managing any known allergies and intolerances.

Where useful we may refer to the NHS advice on food allergies: Food allergy - NHS (www.nhs.uk) and treatment of anaphylaxis: Anaphylaxis - NHS (www.nhs.uk).

Staff have completed training in understanding and managing food allergies and intolerances.

Date of next review: February 2027.