HAYES MEADOW PRIMARY SCHOOL

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'Be the Best We Can Be'

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3rd September 2026

Safer Eating at Hayes Meadow Primary September

Dear Parents and Carers,

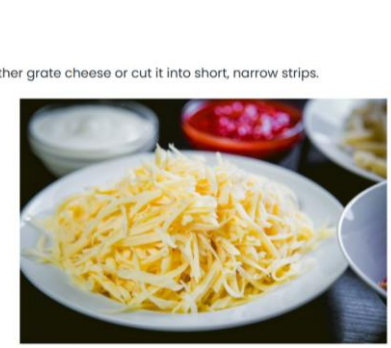
As part of our ongoing commitment to keeping our children safe, healthy and happy, we would like to share some important information about safer eating at school.
We know that mealtimes and snacks are an important part of a child's day. They provide opportunities for children to enjoy food, develop independence and social skills, and learn about healthy choices.
As part of our responsibilities under the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), we have a duty to promote good health, nutrition and safety, including keeping children safe while eating. The Department for Education's current nutrition and food-safety guidance provides advice on preparing food appropriately to reduce the risk of choking.

We would therefore be grateful for your support in making sure that any lunch boxes and snacks brought into school are prepared in a way that is safe and appropriate for young children.

Young children can choke on food that has not been prepared appropriately. Small, round, hard or unusually shaped foods can present a particular risk.

Please remember to:
Cut grapes, cherry tomatoes and other small fruits lengthways and into quarters.

Slice apples rather than providing whole apples or small, hard chunks. Cut hard fruit and vegetables into appropriate slices or sticks, rather than small, hard chunks. Remove any stones and pips from fruit before packing it.



Where bread is included, wholemeal bread is encouraged, and bread should be cut into manageable strips which are easier for young children to handle and eat.

Please **do not** include popcorn, as this can present a choking risk for young children. Consider the size, shape, texture and hardness of all foods when preparing your child's lunch or snack.

Important reminder

To help us keep every child safe, any food that has not been appropriately cut, prepared or made safe for a young child to eat will not be given to the child and will be returned home.

We would also like to encourage families to think about the amount of food placed in a lunch box.
Young children have small stomachs and their appetites can vary from day to day. A useful rough guide when thinking about portion sizes is that a portion can be approximately the size of your child's hand.
We completely understand that parents want to make sure their child has enough food. However, a lunch box containing large quantities of food can sometimes feel overwhelming for a young child.
Rather than providing a large amount of one or two foods, it can be helpful to offer small, manageable portions of a variety of healthy foods.

For example:
A small portion of fruit, a small portion of vegetables, a small sandwich, wrap or other starchy food, a small portion of protein such as cheese, egg or another suitable filling. Children's appetites naturally change, so please don't worry if your child eats more on some days and less on others. We encourage children to listen to their own hunger and fullness cues and they will not be expected to finish everything in their lunch box.

Please try to limit foods that are high in sugar, salt and saturated fat, such as sweets, chocolate, biscuits, cakes and crisps. Healthy eating is not about being perfect. We simply want to encourage children to develop positive and enjoyable relationships with food from an early age.

We appreciate that preparing lunch boxes and snacks every day can sometimes be challenging, and our aim is not to make parents' lives more difficult. These guidelines are about making small, practical changes that can help keep our children safe while also supporting their health and wellbeing.

We really appreciate your support in helping us to provide a safe, healthy and positive eating environment for every child. **Please also remember that we are a nut free school, Nutella or peanut butter sandwiches are not allowed.**
If you are ever unsure whether a particular food is suitable for school, or how it should be prepared, please speak to us. We are always happy to help.

Kind regards

Mrs Morgan
Assistant headteacher

www.nhs.uk/best-start-in-life

First Steps nutrition trust