

Food Sharing & Edible Treats Guidance

Guidance for Staff & Parents

1. Purpose

This guidance supports the school in ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of all children, by managing the risks associated with food sharing, including allergies, food hygiene, and choking hazards. It also provides guidance on safe ways to celebrate special occasions, such as birthdays, within the school environment.

2. General Guidance on Food Sharing

- To minimise allergy risks, **children are not permitted to share food** from their packed lunches or snacks.
- School staff should ensure any food given as rewards/celebrations, are in line with section 3 below.
- School staff should be vigilant in ensuring children do not swap food items.
- If a child has a food allergy, their parents/carers must inform the school in writing and ensure an up-to-date allergy action plan is shared with the school
- The school will ensure the allergy plan is understood and available to all relevant staff via iSAMS, alongside allergy lists available to all staff.
- The school will develop supporting Risk Assessments which are agreed by the parents, where applicable.

3. Birthday Celebrations & Treats

If parents wish to provide treats for a birthday or special occasion, they must follow these guidelines:

- **Only pre-packaged, store-bought food with a clear ingredient label is allowed.**
- **No homemade food** will be accepted to ensure transparency of ingredients and hygiene standards.
- Items must be nut-free and should clearly label common allergens (e.g., dairy, eggs etc).
- Small, age-appropriate portions should be provided to reduce choking risks (e.g. not hard-boiled sweets etc).
- Parents should **inform the class teacher in advance** if they plan to bring in birthday treats for children to share.
- Non-food alternatives (e.g. stickers, pencils, or similar) are encouraged as a safe and inclusive way to celebrate.

4. Allergy Awareness

The ingredients for all foods *must exclude* all nuts. However, due to industry manufacturing processes [including the sharing of preparation equipment], *The Paragon School cannot guarantee that products are free of all allergens.*

5. Food Hygiene & Handling

- Prior to distributing foods, staff must consult the ingredients label to ensure adherence to the Allergy Awareness as above.
- Any shared food must be **handled hygienically** (e.g., staff using gloves when distributing treats that are not individually wrapped).
- Paper napkins should be available to support the transfer of foods.

- Children should wash their hands before and after eating.
- Any uneaten food must be disposed of properly and not shared further.

6. PTA Snack Cafes

The school periodically runs an optional 'Healthy Snack Cafe' after school. The foods are produced in domestic kitchens using an agreed list of ingredients (excluding all nuts). Given the nature of domestic kitchens *The Paragon School cannot guarantee that products are free of all allergens.*

7. Parental Agreement & Permission

If a parent wishes to withdraw their child from receiving any food items not produced by the school chef, they should contact the Deputy Head who will make suitable arrangements.

8. Communication with Parents & Staff

- This guidance will be shared with all parents at the start of the school year and any in-year joiners and reminders will be included in regular editions of the Bulletin.
- Parents are reminded to inform the school if, at any point, their child's health/medical needs change including those relating to allergy changes.
- This guidance will be shared with all staff at the school.
- Staff will be trained to recognise allergy risks, respond to first aid situations and enforce the above this guidance consistently.
- Staff are reminded to check the allergies register frequently.
- Staff are alerted to any new students who have allergies.

9. Review & Updates

This guidance will be reviewed annually or as needed to reflect best practices and health guidelines, and to ensure it is relevant for the pupil cohort and their needs.