Early Years Food and Nutrition Policy

1. Policy Statement

We are committed to promoting the health and well-being of all children in our care by providing nutritious, balanced, and age-appropriate meals and snacks. We recognise that establishing healthy eating habits early in life lays the foundation for long-term health and development.

2. Aims

- To provide meals and snacks that meet children's nutritional needs and support their growth and development.
- To encourage positive attitudes towards food and healthy eating and to share this knowledge with parents/carers.
- To respect individual dietary requirements, cultural preferences, and family choices.
- To involve children in food-related learning experiences that promote independence and understanding of healthy lifestyles.

3. Implementation

3.1 Meal Provision

- Meals and snacks will be freshly prepared and balanced.
- Food offered will include a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, protein sources, and dairy. Lunchtime menus will be shared with parents/carers and these are reviewed termly to ensure that children are offered a range of foods throughout the school year.
- Foods high in salt, sugar, and saturated fat will be limited.
- Fresh drinking water will be available to children at all times and milk will be offered at snack times for Early Years children.
- Allergies, cultural preferences and intolerances are respected and children will not be given foods that are unsuitable for them personally. Children with these needs are given certain coloured wristbands to ensure that all staff are aware of any foods that must not be given.
- Snack and lunchtimes are supervised by paediatric first aiders and those who have received epi-pen training.
- If children have an allergy/intolerance they are invited into school to meet with Mrs Sykes (the head chef), the child's class teacher, Miss Jones (who

oversees the medical provision within Rooks Nest Academy) and in some circumstances, the Academy Headteacher, Ms Dawson.

3.2 Special Dietary Needs

- Parents/carers will be asked to provide details of any allergies, intolerances, or dietary requirements before a child starts.
- A record of dietary needs will be kept and updated regularly, parents/carers have a responsibility to inform the Academy of any changes.
- We will take all reasonable care to avoid cross-contamination and ensure all staff are aware of children's individual needs.

3.3 Mealtime Practice

- Mealtimes will be calm, social occasions that encourage conversation and good manners.
- Children will be encouraged to serve themselves at snack times, where possible, to promote independence and portion control under the supervision of staff..
- Staff will model healthy eating and positive food attitudes.
- Children will never be forced to eat but will be encouraged to try new foods.

3.4 Food Safety and Hygiene

- All staff handling food will have up-to-date food hygiene training.
- Food will be stored, prepared, and served safely according to environmental health regulations.
- Allergen information will be displayed and shared with staff and parents as appropriate.

4. Partnership with Parents and Carers

- We value parents' input and encourage them to share cultural or family food practices.
- Menus will be displayed and shared with families regularly.
- Feedback on meals and children's eating habits will be communicated openly.
- We encourage parent/carers to provide school with bubbles/stickers etc if they are wanting their child to give out gifts due to their birthdays or any other celebrations. This is preferred rather than sweets/cake etc.

5. Education and Learning

- Children will be involved in food-related activities such as cooking, growing vegetables, or tasting new foods.
- Staff will use these opportunities to teach about nutrition, hygiene, and healthy lifestyle choices.

- Families will be offered healthy eating workshops.

6. Monitoring and Review

- This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if there are changes to legislation or EYFS requirements.
- Feedback from parents, staff, and children will inform updates to the policy.

Date of next review: September 2027
Policy approved by: