Keeping Your Child Safe When Eating
Food Preparation Guidance for Under 5s

At our school and nurseries, children's safety is our priority. We follow national guidance to reduce the risk of choking and ask all parents/carers to prepare food safely - including lunchboxes.

Reduce the Risk of Choking

Children can choke on any food.
Please follow these important safety steps

Prepare Food Safely

Remove stones and pips from fruit
Cut small round foods (grapes, cherry tomatoes, strawberries) into quarters lengthways
Cut large fruits (melon) into slices
Cut hard foods (apple, carrot) into thin slices or batons
Soften hard foods (cook, steam or grate if needed)
Remove skins when appropriate for younger children

Cut foods into Safer Shapes

Sausages → cut lengthways into thin strips (not chunks)
Cheese → cut into strips
Bread → cut into strips
Top Tip: Safer shape = long, thin and soft (not round or chunky)

Wraps and Sandwiches

Wraps and sandwiches can be a great option for lunchboxes, but must be prepared safely:

- Cut wraps and sandwiches into small, manageable pieces
- Avoid large, thick or tightly rolled portions
- Use soft fillings and spread them thinly
- Grate or finely slice harder fillings (e.g. carrot, cucumber)

If not chewed properly, white bread/wraps can form a ball shape with a dough-like texture in the throat.
Try lightly toasting white bread, or use brown bread instead.

Foods NOT suitable for under 5s

Please do not include these in lunchboxes:

- Whole nuts or whole seeds
- Popcorn
- Marshmallows or jelly cubes
- Hard sweets

Safe Eating Habits

In school, we ensure children:

- Sit down while eating
- Are supervised at all times
- Eat in a calm, safe environment

You can support this at home by encouraging:

- Sitting while eating
- Taking small bites
- Chewing food well

Further Information

Preparing Food Safely for Young Children
NHS Start for Life – Preparing Food Safely
Early Years Food Choking Hazards

Wrockwardine Wood Infant School and Oakengates Nursery Federation.
Love, Laugh, Learn