Policy No: 22

Safe Feeding and Drinking

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Approved by:	Lizzie Bell-Headteacher Governor		
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Safe Feeding and Drinking Policy.

Safeguarding of children at Paces is of paramount importance. We always work to ensure that the health and welfare of the children is maintained to a high standard.

As a school we recognise that there are certain risks associated with lunchtimes and snack times. We work hard to ensure that these risks are reduced as much as possible. There is a generic risk assessment in place that all staff follow with regards to all children in our school. See Appendix One.

There are some children within school that require additional support in terms of feeding and drinking. These children are supported by Speech and Language Therapists and dieticians. Additional mealtime mats are put in place for these children outlining the information on the following areas: Chew and Swallow, Food type and texture, Drinks, Position, Equipment, Communication and choice, Risks and help I need.

These are shared with all staff and copies are kept within each classroom and can be always referred to. Particular care will be taken regarding the consistency of food and drink given to the children, in line with the IDDSI guidelines. This will be outlined on the mealtime mat. Staff will liaise with parents to ensure that appropriate meals are selected, i.e. food that can be blended to the appropriate consistency. Staff will communicate to the Paces café whether food needs to be blended and to what consistency. Staff will only give children food that is compliant with the guidance set out on each child's mealtime mat.

Staff training:

Staff have regular training from the Speech and Language Therapist. This includes details of, what might cause difficulties when eating, risks to the child when eating and drinking, positioning of the child, managing the risks with food, textures of food and the IDDSI guidelines, and creating quality mealtimes.

PEG feeding:

Some children in school are peg fed. For those accessing a blended diet we have a specific policy and guidelines. See Blended diet policy.

All staff must receive training from the Nutricia nurse team before assisting a child with Peg feeding. A register of those staff trained is kept in the school training records and updated regularly. Guidelines for the safe peg feeding of a child can be found at in Appendix 2 of this policy. Any milk given to a child via the peg feeding process must be recorded, signed by the staff member administering the milk and countersigned by a witness.

Any child who is peg fed has a feeding plan that has been put in place with the dietician. Copies of these can be found in each classes Medication folder. This plan will be always adhered to.

There may be instances where children are fed orally and via a peg. In these cases, it may be appropriate that the feeding plan has a degree of flexibility. Staff will liaise with parents to ensure that there is an agreed arrangement in place. It may be appropriate to amend the amount of milk given depending upon how much food the child has had prior to the peg feed. This information will always be shared with parents and recorded in the child's home-school diary as well as in our own school records.

What to do when there is a concern?

There are times in school when staff may have concerns that a child may be at risk when they are eating and drinking.

1. Staff will work closely with the SaLT to ensure that the risks with eating and drinking are reduced to the lowest possible level.

2. If concerns remain regarding a child's eating and drinking, this should be shared with the Senior Management Team. At this stage parents would be contacted to share this concern, this would be either via telephone or a face to face conversation. Parents will be informed that staff will now be completing a mealtime check list every time the child is given something to eat or drink to monitor for any adverse signs. See Appendix 3a.

3. Initially the Mealtime Checklist will be completed every mealtime for 2 weeks to help to monitor and formalise any concerns staff have raised. Following 2 weeks monitoring with the Mealtime Checklist, if concerns have been identified and documented, parents will be informed and an offer of SALT review made (if not already underway).

4. If we have monitored your child with the Mealtime Checklist for 2 weeks, their feeding has been optimised with SALT advice, and we are still observing risks to your child during a mealtime, school reserve the right to refuse to give further oral food or drink that day. This decision would be made by the member of staff supporting the child at lunchtime with the Conductor and a member of the Senior Leadership team.

   This would be reviewed mealtime to mealtime using the Mealtime Checklist as a guide for when adverse signs have been observed. This plan is put in place to try to mitigate the potential long-term effects of aspiration and reduce choking risks and is designed to keep your child safe whilst in school. If a child has a PEG, the rest of the child's food or drink would be administered via their PEG and parents would be informed. If a child does not have a PEG, parents will be contacted and given the option to come into school and feed their child or come and collect their child from school and feed their child at home.

In some very rare cases, the medical team, the family and the child or young person may have collectively made the considered decision to 'feed at risk' and this may be a) while the

child is on the waiting list for a PEG to be fitted or b) a decision which is under regular review and monitoring from the full medical team and SALT. In these cases, school may request that parents sign a 'known aspirator' form to acknowledge the risks staff are taking when feeding their child. School can review the decision to feed at risk and decline to continue to take these risks at any time.

Appendix 2 Paces School for Conductive Education

Tube Feeding.

- On a child's arrival to school a member of staff must check that all the necessary equipment is needed to tube feed that child for the day, including the adaptor and any food to be given.

- Only staff trained to tube feed must undertake this task and the training must be followed at all times.

- The child's feeding plan must be adhered to at all times, which will state the amount of food and liquid required throughout the day.

- Staff must sign and an additional member of staff who witnessed the tube feeding taking place must counter sign the form. This form is in the class medicines folder.

- Parents should always be informed when there has been any problems with the tube feeds and any necessary action taken.

Appendix 3 Paces Mealtime Checklist

If a child is reported to be having difficulties at mealtimes, please complete this checklist at the next mealtime and every mealtime until told otherwise by a member of the senior management team.

Child's name: ……
Reported concern: ……
Date of mealtime checklist: ……..
Staff member completing checklist: ……..

	Tick each time observed	**What food/drink?**
Coughing when drinking		
Coughing when eating		
Choking		
Wet sounding voice on speaking		
Wet sounding breathing		
Rattly chest		
Laboured breathing		
Eye watering		
Gagging		
Vomiting		
Throat clearing		
Multiple swallows		

The named child above will be closely observed throughout the meal time and each time the member of staff observes any of the above difficulties it will be marked down.