



5 January 2026

Dear Families

Ref: Safe Eating and Changes to Legislation

I am writing to inform you of an important change to national legislation following a tragic case review into the death of a child at another setting.

The EYFS Statutory Framework for group and school-based providers has been updated, and these requirements now apply not only to EYFS-aged students, but also to older students who are operating at an early developmental stage. This includes a significant and increasing number of students at Abbot's Lea School.

The updated legislation places a strong emphasis on reducing the risk of choking, and we must now implement the following safety measures across the school:

Key requirements:

- All students must be seated while eating. Eating while walking or moving around is no longer permitted.
- Food must be prepared safely, including cutting grapes, cherry tomatoes and similar foods into small, safe pieces.
- Close supervision must be maintained at all times, with distractions kept to a minimum.

Many early years settings have already moved away from free-flow or graze-style eating towards scheduled snack times, and all schools must now also follow this approach.

We recognise that for some of our students, especially those with very complex needs, sitting still can be very challenging. Nonetheless, it is essential that we work together to implement these changes as safely and consistently as possible.

Your support makes a significant difference. Families can help by:

1. Reinforcing the same expectations at home

Encouraging your child to:

- Sit down while eating
- Stay seated until they have finished
- Eat during planned snack or mealtimes

This consistency helps your child understand what is expected at school.

2. Preparing food safely before sending it into school

Please ensure that:

- Grapes, cherry tomatoes and similar foods are cut lengthways

- Snacks are in small, manageable pieces
- Avoiding foods with known choking risks where possible

3. Talking positively about the changes

Simple language such as “We sit down to eat because it keeps our body safe” helps children understand why routines are changing.

4. Not sending your child onto transport or handing them over to staff while they are still eating

Eating during transitions, including the transport hand-over process, significantly increases choking risks and is no longer permitted under the updated legislation. Please may we ask that you do not send your child onto transport with food.

We appreciate that this might be difficult for your child, but we hope you understand that it is important to address this matter and avoid potentially serious consequences.

Yours sincerely



Mrs E Tobin
Deputy Headteacher