

Little VIPs Choking Risk Policy and Procedure



Philosophy

Little VIPs Day Care ensures the safety of young children in our care during feeding routines; snack and lunch times and handling small parts.

All our Little VIPs staff have full Paediatric First Aid Certificates and are trained to watch for and respond to incidents of choking.

Principles

Choking episodes with young babies and children. What to look for:

- A piece of food or foreign object will be lodged in the child's trachea (wind pipe) which will be causing a blockage in the airway.
- The child or baby will begin coughing, unable to speak, breathe, gagging or breath might sound high pitched, loud or harsh.
- The onset can be very sudden, but sometimes choking can be silent with no sound to warn you that something is wrong.
- Child's normal pallor may change.

Procedure

When a baby or young child is choking staff trained in first aid will be competent enough to follow the correct procedures to clear a blockage.

- Partial Blockage – If a child is able to speak, cough and breathe. Encourage the child to keep calm and cough. The obstruction should clear itself.
- Full Blockage – If the child is unable to speak, cough or breathe.

Children over 1 year:

- Encourage the child to bend forward from the waist or bend over adult knee so head is lower than their chest.
- With your other hand give up to 5 back blows with the heel of your hand between the child's shoulder blades.
- If the obstruction hasn't cleared stand or kneel behind the child, place both your arms around their waist and encourage them to lean forward.
- Abdominal thrusts – with one fist placed between the belly button and the bottom of the breastbone and other fist on top of the first, pull sharply inwards and upwards. Repeat this sharp motion up to 5 times.
- If the blockage still has not cleared call for an ambulance 999 and continue until help arrives or if the child stops breathing.
- If child has stopped breathing – begin CPR immediately.

Children under 1 year:

- Lay the infant face down along your forearm so the head is lower than their chest.
- With one hand give up to 5 back blows with the heel of your hand between the infant's shoulder blades. Check mouth for obstructions between each blow.
- If the obstruction hasn't cleared turn the infant over onto their back, place 2 fingers on the breast bone and thrust sharply inwards and upwards towards the infant's head. Repeat up to 5 times.
- Repeat full procedure up to 3 times.
- If the obstruction still hasn't cleared call for an ambulance 999 and continue until help arrives or if the infant stops breathing.
- If infant has stopped breathing – begin CPR immediately.

- Remain with the child at all times and try to stay calm.
- If possible other children should be removed from the incident.
- Follow any further guidance from paramedics regarding after care.
- Inform the parents of the incident as soon as possible.

Management will:

Carry out a critical incident review following the incident to assess whether the procedures were followed and whether there was anything that could have been done differently. Complete relevant notifications where relevant to Ofsted, the Local Authority.

How to prepare food to minimise the risk of choking

- Preparation of food for babies and young children will be done in line with NHS guidance and our weaning policy.
- Remove stones and pips before serving fruit to young children.
- Do not leave grapes or cherry tomatoes whole make sure they are cut in half. Grapes should be cut lengthways. Children under 3 will not be offered grapes or cherry tomatoes.
- Do not cut carrots, banana, cucumber, peppers, sausages and apples into small circles or cubes, always slice length ways. Melon should be left whole (larger slice) & cut in playroom in-line with age of children (not cubed).
- For under 2s Do not break up into small pieces: - crackers/oatcakes/pancakes/pitta breads/tortilla wraps/muffins/rice cakes/breadsticks – these will cause children to choke-children should be able to take the food and soften it till they are able to chew and swallow it. Cut into fingers for babies to hold.
- Solid cheese should not be cut up into small cubes, slice it thinly or grate.
- Marshmallows, popcorn, peanut butter, jelly cubes, boiled sweets and ice cubes can present a choking hazard to young children due to their texture and will not be offered at nursery. Raisins and other dried fruits will not be given to children under the age of 1-year-old.
- Under 2s should have skin peeled from all fruit where appropriate.
- All staff must adhere to eating & drinking plans for all children with additional support needs where appropriate..
- Encourage all children to chew foods well and not overfill their mouths, this will reduce the risk of choking.
- Ensure that babies and young children are alert and seated safely upright in a high chair or appropriately sized low chair whilst eating.
- Children will remain seated whilst eating.
- All children will be in sight and sound whilst eating.

Toy Safety (Indoors & Outdoors)

Keep small objects out of reach: Remember all small objects could be a potential hazard and block a child's airway. Children should be supervised in order to minimise the risk of choking. Staff should check all small items with the choking tube prior to use and consult relevant risk assessments.

The following items are potential choking hazards:

- Coins, screws, beads.
- Balls (smaller than 4.45cm).
- Deflated balloons or pieces of a burst balloon.
- Plastic bags (to prevent inhalation).

These items will be removed from reach of children immediately.

Glitter (to prevent inhalation) will only be used sparingly under close adult supervision at all times and never by children under the age of three.

Toys should be age appropriate and British Safety Kite Mark.
All toys/resources should be checked daily prior to use for wear and tear.

Resources

- Trained First Aiders in workplace.
- First aid Manual.
- Choking tubes (these should be visual & easily accessible daily).
- Food Standards Agency Guidance re, Choking Hazards.
- Guide to safe food preparation will be on display in food preparation areas.

Monitoring

To ensure this policy is being adhered to it must be monitored.

- Policy will be reviewed every 2nd year by nursery manager and in line with new guidance.
- Staff to ensure the renewal of first aid certificates are completed before expiry dates.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
April 2026	Hayley Fassam Nursery manager	April 2028