

# The Phillip Promise

*Every Resident. Every Meal. Every Mouthful.*

## Purpose

The Phillip Promise has been developed to ensure that no resident is placed at unnecessary risk of choking or aspiration because warning signs were missed or appropriate action was delayed.

It commits all staff to identifying swallowing difficulties early, acting immediately, following evidence-based practice and never assuming someone is "just having an off day."

The Promise is based on one simple principle:

*If there is any concern about eating or drinking safely, action must be taken immediately.*

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## The Phillip Promise Principles

### 1. Recognise

Every member of staff is responsible for recognising signs that someone may be developing swallowing difficulties.

Examples include:

- coughing during meals
- throat clearing
- wet or gurgled voice
- food remaining in the mouth
- pocketing food
- repeated chest infections
- unexplained weight loss
- refusing food
- struggling to chew
- taking much longer to eat
- choking episodes
- becoming frightened during meals
- excessive saliva
- food falling from the mouth
- reduced alertness affecting swallowing

*No concern is too small.*

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## 2. Respond Immediately

If concerns are identified:

- ✓ Inform the nurse or senior immediately.
- ✓ Record observations.
- ✓ Inform the Registered Manager.
- ✓ Contact the GP the same day.
- ✓ Complete an urgent SALT referral.
- ✓ Begin enhanced monitoring.

No staff member should wait until someone chokes before action is taken.

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## 3. Safe While Waiting for SALT

Residents often wait several weeks for assessment.

The Phillip Promise says:

Nobody should be left at unnecessary risk whilst waiting.

Pending professional assessment:

- discuss concerns with GP
- consider temporary food texture modification if clinically appropriate and in line with local clinical advice
- ensure close supervision
- encourage slow eating
- offer small mouthfuls
- encourage one mouthful before another
- ensure upright positioning
- monitor closely for deterioration

Once SALT assesses the resident, only the prescribed diet and fluid consistency should be followed.

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#### 4. IDDSI Compliance

Every resident requiring texture modified diets will have:

- ✓ Correct IDDSI food level
- ✓ Correct IDDSI fluid level
- ✓ Diet clearly displayed
- ✓ Care plan updated
- ✓ Kitchen informed
- ✓ Agency staff informed
- ✓ Relatives informed where appropriate
- ✓ Hospital transfers informed

No resident should receive the wrong consistency.

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#### 5. Individualised Care Planning

Every resident at risk must have:

- Eating and Drinking Care Plan
- Choking Risk Assessment
- Nutritional Care Plan
- MUST assessment
- Weight monitoring
- Food and fluid charts where required
- Positioning guidance
- Assistance requirements
- Communication plan if needed

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## 6. Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Deprivation of Liberty

Every resident has the right to safe, person-centred care. Every decision about eating and drinking must respect the Mental Capacity Act 2005, protect individual rights and freedoms, and ensure that risks are managed transparently, proportionately and in the person's best interests. Where DoLS applies, swallowing safety and nutrition will form part of the evidence provided to the Best Interests Assessor so that any necessary conditions can be included within the authorisation to protect the resident from avoidable harm

## 7. Mealtime Safety

Residents identified as being at risk must never be left unsupported if they require assistance or supervision.

Care plans should clearly state whether the resident:

- Eats independently.
- Requires prompting.
- Requires supervision.
- Requires partial assistance.
- Requires full assistance.
- Requires one-to-one support throughout the meal.

Staff should know exactly what level of support is needed.

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## 8. The Right Position

Residents should:

- sit upright
- have correct chair height
- feet supported
- remain upright for at least 30 minutes after eating where advised
- avoid eating in bed unless clinically appropriate and safely positioned

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## 9. Nutrition Matters

The Promise includes monitoring:

- weight
- MUST score
- hydration
- food intake
- fluid intake
- supplements
- fortified diet
- cream shots
- cultural preferences
- likes/dislikes

Poor nutrition increases risks.

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## 10. Staff Competency

All staff must receive competency assessment covering:

- choking recognition
- IDDSI
- assisting residents to eat
- dysphagia awareness
- aspiration
- emergency choking response
- documentation
- nutrition monitoring

Competencies reviewed annually.

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## 11. Emergency Response

If choking occurs:

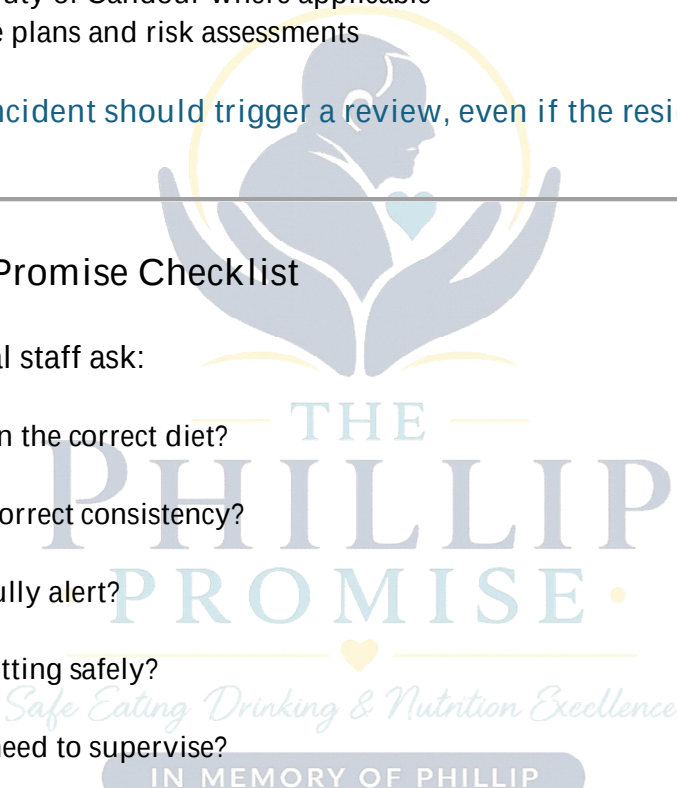
- follow current first aid guidance and training
- summon immediate assistance
- call emergency services when indicated
- provide appropriate first aid within the limits of staff training
- record the incident
- inform family
- complete Duty of Candour where applicable
- review care plans and risk assessments

Every choking incident should trigger a review, even if the resident recovers.

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### Daily Phillip Promise Checklist

Before every meal staff ask:

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- ☐ Is the resident on the correct diet?
- ☐ Are drinks the correct consistency?
- ☐ Is the resident fully alert?
- ☐ Is the resident sitting safely?
- ☐ Does someone need to supervise?
- ☐ Does someone need feeding?
- ☐ Has the resident changed recently?
- ☐ Is assistance available?
- ☐ Has everyone been informed of any changes?

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## Mandatory Reviews

Review immediately following:

- coughing episodes
- choking
- chest infection
- hospital admission
- significant weight loss
- dehydration
- reduced mobility
- stroke
- dementia progression
- Parkinson's progression
- reduced consciousness
- medication changes affecting swallowing

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## The Phillip Promise Pledge

- ✚ We promise never to ignore concerns about eating or drinking.
- ✚ We promise to act early.
- ✚ We promise to seek specialist advice without delay.
- ✚ We promise to support every resident according to their individual needs.
- ✚ We promise to follow evidence-based practice, including IDDSI guidance and specialist recommendations.
- ✚ We promise to learn from every incident.
- ✚ Above all, we promise that every meal is treated as an opportunity to protect life, dignity and wellbeing.