

## **Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Health**

Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, they must be healthy, balanced and nutritious.



## **6.5 Food and drink**

### **Policy statement**

We regard snack and meal times as an important part of our day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. We promote healthy eating snack and meal times. We aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs.

### **Procedures**

We follow these procedures to promote healthy eating in our setting.

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we find out from parents their children's dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies. (See the Managing Children with Allergies policy.)
- We record information about each child's dietary needs in her/his registration record and parents sign the record to signify that it is correct.
- We consult with parents termly to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs - including any allergies - are up-to-date. Parents sign the up-dated record to signify that it is correct.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs on our drinks trolley so that all staff and volunteers are fully informed about them.
- We display Allergen Advice for any food we supply for all parents to see.
- We implement systems to ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and preferences as well as their parents' wishes.
- We display information about snacks given for parents to see.
- We provide nutritious food for all snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings. Starchy food is provided as part of the snack each day. Snacks offered are fresh fruit/vegetables, cheese, breadsticks/crackers.
- Birthdays: If parents wish to bring in a special treat we ask them to provide a healthy snack i.e. raspberries or sticks rather than sweets or cakes
- We include snacks from a variety of cultures, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.
- We take care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products and are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts.
- We DO NOT allow nut or nut based products in lunch boxes.
- Through discussion with parents and research reading by staff, we obtain information about the dietary rules of the religious groups to which children and their parents

belong, and of vegetarians and vegans, and about food allergies. We take account of this information in the provision of food and drinks.

- We require staff to show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. Staff do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child or make a child feel singled out because of her/his diet or allergy.
- We organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate.
- We use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.
- We provide children with utensils that are appropriate for their ages and stages of development and that take account of the eating practices in their cultures.
- We have fresh drinking water constantly available for the children. We inform the children about how to obtain the water and that they can ask for water at any time during the day.
- Our Welcome Pack includes information for parents who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in the setting.
- We give parents who provide food for their children information about suitable containers for food.
- In order to protect children with food allergies, we forbid children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- Parents are asked to cut up grapes, small tomatoes and other small food that may be a choking hazard.
- Children remain seated when eating
- For children who drink milk, we provide semi-skimmed milk.
- Children and staff wash their hands after using the toilet, messy play, before and after eating. Handwashing is supervised before eating by an adult.
- When children go to another setting after ours, we provide information about what they've eaten.
- Tables are cleaned with an anti-bacterial spray before being used for snack and meal times.
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#### *Packed lunches*

- Parents are advised to ensure perishable contents of packed lunches contain an ice pack to keep food cool;
- Our Welcome Pack includes advice on Healthy Lunches and top tips from the Children's Food Trust.
- Encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk based desserts such as yoghurt or crème fraîche on the understanding that we can only provide cold food from home. We discourage sweet drinks and can provide children with water;
- We discourage packed lunch contents that consist largely of crisps, processed foods, sweet drinks and sweet products such as cakes or biscuits.
- Children and staff wash their hands before and after eating;
- We leave all empty wrappers and packaging and left over food in the lunch boxes so that parents can see what their child has eaten
- We remove lids from drinking bottles as they can be a choking hazard;
- Staff sit with children to eat their own lunch so that the mealtime are a social occasion and that staff can feedback to parents and carers about how well their child has eaten that day. No child is left alone while eating.
- We acknowledge that children eat at different speeds and will ensure all children have enough time to eat their lunch.
- Lunch bags must be labelled and are handed out by adults to ensure children are given the correct lunch bag to avoid allergy issues.

- Please note NO nuts or nut based products should be in your child's lunch box due to possible allergies within the setting.

### *Cooking Activities*

We regularly include cooking activities which reflect our approach to healthy eating as part of our educational programme as an enjoyable and effective way of encouraging children to eat and try a range of foods.

- All cooking activities take place under adult supervision
- Children and adults wash their hands before touching food
- Tables cleaned with antibacterial spray before activity
- Safe utensils used for cutting, mixing and chopping, under supervision
- Children have no access to kitchen and are not involved in heating food or liquids
- Staff speak to parents about known cultural dietary rules, allergies or intolerances and ensure children only touch or prepare food that is consistent with their dietary needs and preferences
- Staff wear an apron, roll up sleeves and tie hair back, if necessary, during activity

### *Celebrations, Special Events and Birthdays*

As part of our educational programme, we include snacks from a variety of cultures, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones (subject to dietary allergies and intolerances). Food and drinks served at celebrations can be high in saturated fat, sugar and salt and therefore have limited nutritional value. They are therefore kept to a minimum.

We ask that parents do not bring in sweets or cakes to be given out on special occasions. However, parents may wish to consider bringing in non-food items such as stickers, instead of cakes or sweets, to avoid problems with food allergies or fruit such as raspberries and to support our approach to healthy eating.

### *Fussy or faddy eaters*

It is natural for children to develop their own food preferences. Fussy eating and fear of new foods are part of a child's development. This behaviour can be helped using a simple and consistent approach. Our strategy is

- Sit children together at snack time and mealtimes. Children often adopt the food preferences of their peers if they eat together regularly
- Staff eat with children and talk enthusiastically about the taste and texture of food at mealtimes and at other opportunities
- Give children regular and repeated chances to try different snacks
- Encourage children to try small amounts of new food and allow them to spit out food into a tissue if they really do not like it
- Praise children for trying new food
- Children are never forced to finish everything in their snack bowl or lunchbox
- Sweet desserts and puddings are not used as a reward or a punishment for eating or not eating another food
- Children are encouraged not to fill up on drink as fluid intake can reduce food consumption

### *Sustainability*

We reduce the impact we have on the environment by buying and preparing only the amount of food we need for snacks. We buy products with minimal packaging and we recycle packaging and food waste where possible.

### Legal Framework

- Regulation (EC) 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the hygiene of foodstuffs

### Further guidance

- *Safer Food, Better Business*  
[www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/regulation/hygleg/hyglegresources/sfbb/](http://www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/regulation/hygleg/hyglegresources/sfbb/)

This policy was adopted on

19/02/2020

Date to be reviewed

Spring 2023

Signed by committee chairperson

Signed by preschool leader