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6.5 Food & 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. At snack and lunch 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 ask their parents about their dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies. (See 6.2 Managing Children who are Sick, Infectious or with Allergies Policy.)
- We record information about each child's dietary needs in the Registration Form and parents sign the form to signify that it is correct.
- We ask Parents to consult with us if their child's dietary needs change - including any allergies - Parents sign the updated record to signify that it is correct.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all our staff and volunteers are fully informed about them.
- 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 serve nutritious and healthy snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings - We serve for snack fruits, vegetables, crackers etc what the parents have kindly donated.
- We include foods from the diet of each of the children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.
- We take care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products and especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts - We have a 'No Nut Policy'
- Through discussion with parents and research reading, we obtain information about the dietary rules of the religious groups to which children and their parents belong, and of vegetarians and vegans, as well as about food allergies. We take account of this information in the provision of food and drinks.



- We show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. We 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 lunch and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children can talk to their friends and adults.
- We use lunch 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.
- We inform parents who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in our setting so they can pack it according to the weather.
- In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- We serve semi-skimmed milk and water as a choice at snack times and water at lunch times if the child does not bring their own water bottle (we ask for only water in these)

Packed lunches

Parents provide their own lunch boxes for the children and:

- We ask they contain an ice pack to keep food cool in warmer weathers;
- We inform parents of policy on healthy eating;
- We encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk based deserts, such as yoghurt or crème fraîche, where we can only provide cold food from home. We discourage sweet drinks and solid chocolate bars 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. We reserve the right to return this food to the parent as a last resort;
- We provide children bringing packed lunches with plates, cups and cutlery when necessary
- We ensure that adults sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.



Legal framework

- Regulation (EC) 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Hygiene of Foodstuffs.

Further guidance

- Safer Food, Better Business (Food Standards Agency 2011)
- Nutritional Guidance for the Under Fives (Pre-school Learning Alliance 2009)
- The Early Years Essential Cookbook (Pre-school Learning Alliance 2009)
- Healthy and Active Lifestyles for the Early Years (Pre-school Learning Alliance 2012)