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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/serve 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, bread 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'

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- 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 (Milk or Water) 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. Their own Water bottles are accessible too.
- 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 (only water in these) If a child comes in with squash or flavoured water in their bottle this will be tipped away and filled with fresh water.

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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 as we do not have refrigeration facilities.
- We inform parents of policy on healthy eating;
- We encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk-based desserts, such as yoghurt or fromage frais or a sugar-free jelly, as we can only provide cold food from home.
- Sweet drinks and solid chocolate bars are not allowed and will not be given to the children.
- 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.

Birthday Celebrations

We celebrate a child's birthday at preschool with the wooden cake. It has a wooden number on and then we put in the correct amount of candles for them to blow out. This is normally done at snack time where the children share their normal snack containing a variety of fruits, vegetables, crackers, breadsticks or bread.

We ask parents if they would like to provide a present for the Pass-The-Parcel and then we supplement this with some party games or yoga.

The children are also invited to dress up with an outfit from home or by choosing something we have in our dressing up box.

Cookery Activities

We frequently cook with the children and produce a wide range of foods and snacks ie Pizza's, Damper Bread and small Fairy Cakes.

All foods that are made by the children then go home with them at the end of their session. We then ask parents/carers that these are given to the children as part of their mealtimes due to sugar sometimes being included.

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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)

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