



Safer eating, food and nutrition policy

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 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 the Allergies and Food Intolerance policy.)
- We record information about each child's dietary needs in the 'Enrolment Form' and parents sign the form to signify that it is correct.
- We regularly consult with parents to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs – including any allergies - are up-to-date.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs in the kitchen 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 provide nutritious food for all snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- We take care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products and we are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts.
- 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 meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and adults 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.

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- All children bring a named water bottle each day so that they have access to drinking water independently.
- In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- For young children who drink milk, we provide semi-skimmed milk at snack time.

Packed lunches

Children who attend during the afternoon session are required to bring a packed lunch, we:

- ensure perishable contents of packed lunches contain an ice pack to keep food cool;
- encourage children to learn to manage their lunch independently.
- Share our 'Healthy Lunches' guidance with parents in our Welcome Pack
- encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk based deserts, such as yoghurt or crème fraîche.
- We discourage sweet drinks and can provide children with water.
- discourage packed lunch contents that consist largely of crisps, processed foods, sweet drinks and sweet products such as cakes or biscuits.
- ensure that adults sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.

We provide and/or serve food for children on the following basis:

- Snacks.
- Cooking activities
- Packed lunches.

We maintain the highest possible food hygiene standards with regard to the purchase, storage, preparation and serving of food.

Procedures

- All our staff who are involved in the preparation and handling of food have received training in food hygiene.
- The person responsible for food preparation and serving carries out daily opening and closing checks on the kitchen to ensure standards are met consistently.
- Food is stored at correct temperatures and is checked to ensure it is in-date and not subject to contamination by pests, rodents or mould.
- Packed lunches are stored in a cool place; un-refrigerated food is served to children within 4 hours of preparation at home.
- Food preparation areas are cleaned before and after use.
- There are separate facilities for hand-washing and for washing-up.
- All surfaces are clean and non-porous.
- All utensils, crockery etc. are clean and stored appropriately.
- Waste food is disposed of daily.
- Cleaning materials and other dangerous materials are stored out of children's reach.

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- Children do not have unsupervised access to the kitchen.
- When children take part in cooking activities, they:
 - are supervised at all times;
 - understand the importance of hand-washing and simple hygiene rules;
 - are kept away from hot surfaces and hot water; and
 - do not have unsupervised access to electrical equipment, such as blenders etc.

Allergy action plans

For children with allergies, we will create and maintain an allergy action plan in collaboration with parents and healthcare professionals. The child's plan will be updated regularly, as allergies can develop at any time. Refer to Allergies and Food Intolerance policy.

Choking

During mealtimes at least one member of staff will supervise or sit with the children and we will ensure that at least one member of staff in the room holds a relevant Paediatric First Aid certificate. Any choking incident will be recorded, and parents will be informed as soon as possible.

Healthy eating education

Children are encouraged to learn about healthy food through hands-on experiences, such as food tasting, gardening, and cooking activities. We integrate messages about nutrition and health into the Early Years curriculum through stories, role-play, and discussions.

Partnership with parents

We encourage parents to share information about their child's dietary needs and preferences. We provide guidance on healthy packed lunches. Regular communication is maintained about children's eating habits and preferences while at pre-school

Reporting of food poisoning

Food poisoning can occur for a number of reasons; not all cases of sickness or diarrhoea are as a result of food poisoning and not all cases of sickness or diarrhoea are reportable.

- Where children and/or adults have been diagnosed by a GP or hospital doctor to be suffering from food poisoning and where it seems possible that the source of the outbreak is within our setting, the manager will contact the Environmental Health Department to report the outbreak and will comply with any investigation.
- We notify Ofsted as soon as reasonably practicable of any confirmed cases of food poisoning affecting two or more children looked after on the premises, and always within 14 days of the incident.

Policy review date June 2027