

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

Our provision regards 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 using resources and materials from the Pre-school Learning Alliance. At snack time, 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 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 regularly consult with parents 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.
- Staff are made aware about individual children's dietary needs in a folder in the kitchen so that all staff 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 snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- We include a variety of foods from the below list:
 - cereals
 - fruit and vegetables.
- 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 are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts.
- 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, as well as 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 snack times so that they are social occasions.

- We use 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 the setting.
- In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.

Packed lunches

We DO NOT provide cooked meals therefore children are required to bring packed lunches:

- we advise parents to put an ice pack in lunch boxes to keep food cool;
- we inform parents of our 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 will provide children with water or semi-skimmed milk if no drink is supplied.
- We ensure children sit to eat their lunch appropriately and we encourage mealtimes to be a social occasion.

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 (Food Standards Agency 2011)

This policy was adopted at a meeting of _____ *(name of provider)*

Held on _____ *(date)*

Date to be reviewed _____ *(date)*

Signed on behalf of the provider _____

Name of signatory _____

Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner) _____

Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications

- Nutritional Guidance for the Under Fives (Ed. 2010)
- The Early Years Essential Cookbook (2009)
- Healthy and Active Lifestyles for the Early Years (2012)