

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. 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 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 are up-to-date.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all 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 snacks containing nuts or nut products and are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts. This may from time to time include other allergens should the risk require it e.g. sesame.
- 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 have fresh drinking water available for the children. We inform the children about how to obtain the water if it is not already left out for them 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.
- When baking food in the nursery we keep a record of all allergens present in any of the ingredients.

- When cakes, biscuits, sweets and or chocolates are provided by parents in celebration of a child's birthday we always confirm the ingredients and highlight any allergens next to the food items. Children are only allowed to choose an item with their parent/carer present.

Packed lunches

Children are required to bring packed lunches, we:

- inform parents of our policy on healthy eating;
- For packed lunches which are not going to be eaten for 4 hours after preparation or removal from a fridge at home we ask parents to include an ice pack with their children's packed lunches.
- If food is to warmed up at the nursery we ensure it is heated to a core temperature of 75°C to ensure any potential bacteria has been killed.
- inform parents of whether we have facilities to microwave cooked food brought from home;
- 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;
- provide children bringing packed lunches with plates, cups and cutlery as required; and
- ensure staff sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.

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