

## **6.6 FOOD AND 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 meal times, we aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs. We promote healthy eating through our planned activities and through discussions with children.

### **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 updated record to signify that it is correct.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs in the food preparation area 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 plan menus in advance, involving children and parents in the planning.
- We display the menus of meals/snacks for parents to view.
- We provide nutritious food for all meals and snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- We include a variety of foods:
  - dairy foods;
  - grains, cereals and starchy vegetables; and
  - fruit and vegetables.
- We may 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 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 snack and lunch 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.
- 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.
- 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 pasteurised milk.

### **Packed lunches**

Where children are required to bring packed lunches, we advise parents that:

- A freezer pack is put in the lunch bag, or a drink is frozen, or something like a Frube is frozen – we eat lunch at 1.00pm, so this helps to keep the contents cool;
- Anything that contains meat, fish, egg or cheese etc, is prepared the night before and kept at home in a fridge all night – including sandwich, chicken nuggets, etc, so it is thoroughly chilled;
- Parents can put small items in the Preschool fridge in the kitchen, in a named sealed container, but not the whole lunch bag as there is not room.
- No nuts – so no peanut butter or Nutella or other nut butters, or packets of peanuts. Pesto is safe as pine nuts are a seed.
- Small round items like cherry tomatoes or grapes must be cut in half (long-ways) as they are a choking hazard.
- Parents will need to include a drink and cutlery if needed – spoons and forks.
- We always get children to bring home rubbish, so parents can see what they have managed to eat.
- Please make sure lunch-bags are named.

We can provide children with water or milk.

We ensure that adults sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is 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 the pre-school held on (date).....**

***Signed on behalf of the pre-school..... (Chairperson)***

**Next Policy Review February 2018**