

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. We promote healthy eating through all meals and snacks. At snack and meal 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 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 child's dietary needs including any allergies, are up-to-date.
- 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 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 from the four main food groups;
 - meat, fish and protein alternatives;
 - dairy foods;
 - grains, cereals and starch vegetables;
 - 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 nuts products and we are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts.
- Through discussion with parents and research, 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 provide a vegetarian alternative on days when meat or fish are offered.
- We show sensitivity in providing 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 feeding themselves.
- We provide children with utensils that are appropriate for their ages and stages of development and take that into 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 if they require more by asking throughout the day. However, the water is freshly topped up by the staff throughout the day.
- We inform parents who provide food for their children information about the storage facilities in our setting and advise parents on the suitable containers for the food to be in.
- In order to protect children from allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping food with one another.
- For young children who drink milk, we provide whole pasteurised milk.
- For each child under two we provide parents will daily written information about feeding routines, intake and preferences.
- Staff are to sit with children at mealtimes to eat their lunch and ensure the mealtime is a social occasion.

Packed lunches

Where we cannot provide cooked meals and children are required to bring packed lunches we:

- Ensure perishable contents of packed lunches are refrigerated or contain an ice pack to keep food cool;
- Inform parents of our policy on healthy eating;
- Inform parents of whether we have facilities to microwave cooked food brought from home.
- Encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit and milk based deserts such as yoghurts or crème fraiche, where we can only provide cold food from home. We discourage sweet drinks and can provide children with water.
- We 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 at the end of the day.

Legal framework

- Regulations (EC) 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the council on the hygiene of Foodstuffs.

This policy was adopted by _____ *(name of provider)*

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) _____
