

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Health

Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, they must be healthy, balanced and nutritious.

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 using resources and materials from the Pre-school Learning Alliance. 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 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.
- 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 provide nutritious food for all meals and snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- We have a NO NUT policy to all children, parents and staff.
- 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.
- 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.
- In accordance with parents' wishes, we offer children arriving early in the morning, and staying late, an appropriate meal or snack at out of school club.
- We inform parents who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in our setting.

- We give parents who provide food for their children information about suitable containers for food.
- In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- Milk or Water is supplied/offered at snack times and breakfast club.
- 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 drink at snack and during cooking activities.

Hot Dinners

- Our hot dinners are provided by Aspens. They include a variety of foods from the four main food groups:
 - meat, fish and protein alternatives;
 - dairy foods;
 - grains, cereals and starch vegetables; and
 - fruit and vegetables.
- Aspens provide a vegetarian alternative on days when meat or fish are offered and make every effort to ensure Halal meat or kosher food is available for children who require it.
- 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.

Packed lunches

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

- ensure perishable contents of packed lunches contain an ice pack to keep food cool;
- inform parents of our policy on healthy eating;
- Encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk based deserts, such as yoghurt or crème fraiche, where we can only provide cold food from home. We discourage sweet drinks and can provide children with water or milk.
- 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; and
- Ensure that adults sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.