

## **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**

Our provision regards snack 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 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 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 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
- 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 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 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 his/her diet or allergy.
- We organise snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate.
- 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 they can 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.
- 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.
- For young children who drink milk, we provide whole pasteurised milk.

### Packed lunches

When children bring packed lunches, we

- Inform parents of our policy on healthy eating
- Encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk based deserts, such as yogurt or crème fraiche. 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.
- Ensure staff sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.
- *Children are encouraged to wash their hands prior to being given food or drink.*
- *Staff who are eating with the children must role model hygiene best practice.*
- *Tables are never overcrowded during mealtimes. Some social distancing is encouraged even though it is acknowledged that children will play in close proximity for the rest of the session.*