

3.03 Food and Drink

Policy statement

Our provision regards snack and Lunch 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 Early Years Alliance and Healthy Active Little Ones, (Halo), East Sussex County Council. 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 find out from parents their children's dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies. (See the Managing Children who are Sick, Infectious or with Allergies policy.) Allergy forms are completed jointly by the parent/carer, key person and or Manager, which informs us and instructs us of signs, symptoms and treatment required.
- We record information about each child's dietary needs on their Annual Contract, and parents sign the record to signify that it is correct.
- We depend on parents to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs - including any allergies - are up-to-date and expect them to let us know if there are any changes from the initial information on their contract. Parents will sign the updated record 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. This information is also on the daily snack list used to record children's snack.
- 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, making sure healthy food is available throughout the week.
- We display the weeks menus of snacks for the information of parents outside daily on the notice board and also a weeks menu on our website.
- 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.
- We include foods from 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 inform parents we have a "No nut policy" at the preschool, we 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, and about food allergies. We take account of this information in the provision of food and drinks.
- 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 Lunch and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate.

- We use Lunch 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 both inside and outside. 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 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 children who drink milk, we provide semi-skimmed milk.

Packed lunches, we will:

- 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 we have the facility to microwave cooked food brought from home;
- encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk based deserts such as yoghurt or crème fraîche where we can only provide cold food from home. We discourage sweet drinks and can provide children with water.
- 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. We encourage children to eat their sandwich etc, fruit and yoghurt before we eat any crisp snack.
- provide children, bringing packed lunches, with plates, cups and cutlery; and
- ensure staff sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.

Food Poisoning

- We notify Ofsted of any food poisoning affecting two or more children looked after on the premises as soon as is reasonably practicable, but in any event within 14 days of the incident.

Date to be reviewed – on or before end October 2024