

Muddy Boots Pre-School CIO

Health – 6.5 Food and drink



Review Date:

SEE COMMITTEE POLICY REVIEW SCHEDULE

Health

Food and drink

Policy statement

This setting regards snack and meal times as an important part of the setting's day. Eating represents 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 publications, and by following food hygiene training standards. At snack and meal times we aim to promote 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 the parents their children's dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies. (see Managing Children with Allergies policy).
- We record the information about each child's dietary needs in his/her registration record and parents sign the record to signify that it is correct.
- We regularly consult with parents to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs – including allergies – are up-to-date. Parents sign the up-dated record to signify that it is correct.
- We display current information about the 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 plan menus in advance, involving children in choosing healthy snacks.
- We display the snacks for the information of parents.
- We provide nutritious food for snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- We provide a variety of foods from the main food groups:
 - dairy foods;
 - grains, cereal and starch vegetables;
 - fruit and vegetables.
- We include foods from 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 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 provide vegetarian alternatives and make every effort to ensure this is available for those 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 develop independence by making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.
- We provide children with the 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 freshly available for the children. We inform children of how to obtain water and that they can ask for water at any time of the day.
- We inform parents who provide food for their children information 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 that drink milk we provide semi skimmed milk.

Packed lunches

Our setting cannot provide cooked meals and therefore children are required to bring packed lunches – we;

- Ensure packed lunch boxes/bags are kept in the cool entrance hallway of the setting. Advise parents to provide an ice pack.
- Inform parents on our policy on healthy eating.
- Encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling or an alternative savoury food. Fruit and milk based deserts such as yoghurt or crème fraiche. We discourage sweet drinks and can provide children with water to drink.

- Discourage packed lunch contents that consist of largely 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 a last resort.
- 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.

Legal framework

- Regulation (EC) 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the hygiene of foodstuffs

Further guidance

- Safer Food, Better Business (Food Standards Agency 2020)