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Food and Drinks Policy

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Written by	Sharlene Parkin
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Introduction

As an Ofsted registered provider we meet the statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS 2026) as well as legislation Equality and Human Rights Commission and United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1992). To this end, we have developed a policy that sets out how we will store, prepare and serve food and drinks within the setting. This policy meets the EYFS specific requirements 'Registered providers must notify Ofsted of any food poisoning affecting two or more children cared for on the premises. Notification must be made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but in any event within 14 days of the incident. A registered provider, who, without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with this requirement, commits an offence'. 'Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, they must be healthy, balanced and nutritious. Before a child is admitted to the setting the provider must also obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies that the child has, and any special health requirements. Fresh drinking water must be available and accessible at all times. Providers must record and act on information from parents and carers about a child's dietary needs'. 'There must be an area which is adequately equipped to provide healthy meals, snacks and drinks for children as necessary. There must be suitable facilities for the hygienic preparation of food for children, if necessary including suitable sterilisation equipment for babies' food. Providers must be confident that those responsible for preparing and handling food are competent to do so. In group provision, all staff involved in preparing and handling food must receive training in food hygiene.'

Policy

It is our policy to provide children with healthy, balanced and nutritious meals, snacks and drinks. We will consider individual's needs and requirements when planning meals and snacks, such as allergies, intolerances, religious or cultural preferences as well as their age. All food will be stored and prepared in a clean and safe environment, in accordance with specific requests. At least one member of staff on duty will have completed a food hygiene course and will keep this up to date. We will ensure fresh drinking water is available at all times, both in and outside the setting.

As a provider of meals and snacks we are aware of our responsibilities under food hygiene legislation. This includes, if necessary, registration with the relevant Local Authority Environmental Health Department. We are happy to have our premises inspected by a food safety officer.

We currently hold a food hygiene rating 5

We will ensure that all meals and snacks are healthy and that they follow current government guidelines regarding portion size, nutrition, health and dental care.

We will ensure that everyone caring for children, as well as the children themselves, are aware of good hand washing procedures and how these are carried out. If there is an outbreak of food poisoning affecting two or more children looked after on the premises we will notify Ofsted as soon as possible but definitely within 14 days of the incident occurring in order to comply with regulations. We will keep all food receipts, including those under £10, so that if there is an outbreak of food poisoning on the premises we will be able to trace the outlet where the food was purchased.

We are happy for children with allergies and intolerances to bring food from home but it must be in accordance with our healthy food guidance. Children with allergies and intolerances will be closely supervised during meal times and where any contact with their allergen may occur. All food and drinks brought from home should be clearly labelled with your child's name. All staff have done allergy and intolerance training.

Procedure

We will collect, record and act on information from parents about a child's dietary requirements. Where parents provide meals for their children to eat in our setting we will provide chilled storage for packed meals and appropriate storage areas for other foodstuffs. We will also provide children with clean and age-appropriate cups, crockery and eating utensils. We will respect the diversity of practice around mealtimes e.g. use of chopsticks or fingers for eating. We will provide children with healthy meals, snacks and drinks as appropriate and as recommended by the Food Standards Agency literature (See attached advice sheet). Cultural, religious, medical and developmental needs will be met for all children.

All food and drinks will be stored in an appropriate way.

The children will eat together as a group at the table in the annex where good manners will be encouraged. This helps children to develop in many areas, such as:

- Personal, social and emotional development – mealtimes are a perfect time for everyone to join in with a conversation, this gives the opportunity to encourage interaction, manners and opinions
- Physical development – Children are encouraged to be independent and to use the appropriate utensils to feed themselves when they are able. It is also a great time to learn about healthy bodies and good food choices
- Literacy – We will develop new vocabulary by describing the taste, smell, sound, look and feel of the foods we try
- Knowledge and understanding of the world – we can discover the wonders of foods from different cultures. We can learn about the origins of our foods and how it is transported to us. We can learn about the life cycle of plants and animals. We can grow our own ingredients and enjoy our produce. We will use special occasions to talk about the celebrations of different faiths

Children who are fussy eaters will be:

- Encouraged to try small amounts of new foods, when seeing the other children enjoying the new food it may be enough to encourage their curiosity to try them. If a child does not like the new food they will be allowed to spit it out. It has been shown that a child may need to taste a food up to 15 times before their taste buds accept the new taste. Children who try new foods will be praised and rewarded with stickers
- Children will never be forced to eat any food, or made to finish what is on their plate, small servings are offered, and then they may have more if they are still hungry. Portion size is important to control the amount of food a child eats. The calories a child eats needs to be

restricted relevant to their age, and amount of exercise a child takes. If a child has too many calories their weight will increase, which could become detrimental to their health.

Children who have special nutritional requirements such as:

- Cultural requests - these children may require vegetarian, vegan or other specific food requests. We can cater for these children if given advance notice, packed lunches can be brought from home if they contain a nutritionally balanced, healthy meal.
- Religious dietary requirements – We will respectfully cater for children with specific dietary needs as a result of their religious beliefs. Training may be needed to ensure that staff knowledge meets the family's specific requirements:
- Islamic children are not allowed to eat carnivorous animals, pork or seafood which does not have scales or fins. Allowable meat products must be prepared in the correct way, known as Halal
- Hindu children generally adopt a vegetarian diet. They may eat certain types of foods with their hands rather than using knives and forks. They strictly avoid beef products
- Sikh children may also adopt a vegetarian diet, but those that do eat meat will avoid Halal and Kosher meat as they do not believe in ritual killing of animals. Some will not eat onions or eggs
- Food allergies or intolerances – we will require up to date information about specific food allergies and intolerances in case a child in our care may need support in this area. Food allergies can be potentially lethal, and therefore we need to know how to deal with the effects on a child, and how to react. We may need further training to administer medication or Epipens in the case of children who have known allergies. As Anaphylaxis is life threatening, we would dial 999 immediately for assistance.
- Developmental requirements - Some children, whether through age or specific medical needs, may need their food mashing or liquidising for easy intake or digestion. Early education in health and nutrition will provide the building blocks for a balanced and healthy diet throughout life. We will plan meals and snacks to ensure that they offer a balanced and fulfilling diet for each child dependent on their age:

Methods of educating children and adults in effective food management

We will plan activities such as cooking and talk about healthy choices and portion control to encourage a healthy attitude to food from an early age.

For parents/carers-

Further information can be found at:

- <http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/earlylearningandchildcare/delivery/providers/a0074583/diet-and-nutrition-in-early-years>
- <http://www.nhs.uk/change4life/Pages/change-for-life.aspx>
- http://www.bbc.co.uk/health/treatments/healthy_living/nutrition/life_children.shtml
- Leaflet – Getting a good start can be downloaded at:
<http://www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk/resources/nutrition/pdfs/nutrition5s.pdf>
- Leaflet – Feeding your growing child can be downloaded at:
<http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/publication/growingchild0310.pdf>
- Leaflet – Feed your toddler can be downloaded at:
<http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/feedtoddler0310.pdf>

Conclusion

We will provide safe, healthy food, drinks and snacks for the children in our care. Fresh drinking water will be available at all times. Children's individual needs will be met and healthy eating will be explored and encouraged.

Signed _____ (Director and registered person)
Date _____

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Date _____

Advice for healthy packed meals and snacks



Government guidelines for a healthy meal states that it should be nutritionally balanced. The nutritional balance should be incorporated in meals, snacks and drinks, and children should aim to have at least five portions of fruit or vegetables each day to give them all the vitamins and minerals they require.

A child's diet should be low in salt – a child aged 1 – 3 years should have no more than 2g of salt/0.8g of sodium each day. A child aged 4 – 6 years should have no more than 3g of salt a day/1.2g of sodium.

Children should take the majority of their daily calorie intake at meal times, although with small stomachs, they may need healthy snacks between meal times.

Drinks - Children should have constant access to fresh water. Milk is also an acceptable healthy drink that contains nutrients essential to a healthy diet and provides energy, although it does contain a high number of calories so needs to be considered as part of the daily calorific intake. Fruit juices and smoothies also contain vital nutrients, although the sugar content and acidity can be detrimental to teeth, and so should be given at meal times and in moderation. Fruit drinks,

squash and fizzy drinks should be given rarely as they contain no nutritional value and can contain sugars that may cause tooth decay.

Snacks – Children should have healthy snacks, but these should be included in their total daily calorie intake. Healthy snacks may include fruit and vegetables, sandwiches, cheese and crackers, plain popcorn (no salt or sugar added), yogurt, fromage frais, rice crackers and bread sticks.

Meals - Based on the eatwell plate, children should be encouraged to eat:

Fruit and vegetables - at least five portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day. As a rough guide, one portion is equal to the child's handful. A small child's handful will be considerably smaller than an adult's

- Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy foods - wholegrain varieties should only be given to young children in moderation. They can fill a child up before they have taken in the calories they need. Bran should be avoided as it interferes with the absorption of calcium and iron which are essential to a child's health
- Some milk and dairy foods- dairy products are usually high in calories because of the fat content which young children need but this must be considered as part of their overall daily intake
- Some meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein
- Try to avoid foods and drinks high in saturated fat and/or sugar because they have a high calorific value but are low in nutrients