

10.0 Food and Drink Policy

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. At snack and meal times, we aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs. We follow the 'Eat Better, Start Better' Programme. <https://foundationyears.org.uk>.

We recognise that establishing good eating habits early in life positively influences children's growth, development and achievement.

We do not accept packed lunches due to children's individual dietary requirements and allergies.

Procedures

We follow these procedures to promote healthy eating in our settings.

- Before a child starts the setting, we ask their parents/carers about their dietary needs, including any allergies they may have.
- We record information about each child's dietary needs on a Dietary Requirements Form. Parents sign the form.
- We regularly consult with parents to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs are up to date. Parents sign the updated records to signify that it is correct.

- 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.
- We plan menus in advance, involving children, parents and professionals such as: Dietitian and Nutritionist in the planning.
- Our menus are shared with all parents/carers and are available upon request.
- 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 provide a menu that includes plant based whole foods with a small amount of chicken and fish. No red meat is served.
- We include a variety of foods from the four main food groups:
 - meat, fish and protein alternatives
 - dairy foods
 - grains, cereals and starch vegetables
 - fruit and vegetables
- We include foods from different cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.
- We use celebrations as opportunities to share foods from different countries/cultures.
- No Nuts are allowed in our setting.
- We work in partnership with parents regarding their child's religious, cultural, medical or ethical needs to ensure the child's dietary needs are fully met.
- We provide suitable alternatives for children with dietary requirements.
- 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.
- Individual place mats are used to specify children's dietary requirements.
- 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 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. We offer milk alternatives for children that are dairy free.
- We provide parents with verbal feedback regarding their child's feeding routines, intake and preferences.
- We carry out cooking/food activities to promote healthy eating and to support children's independence by involving them in the food preparation.
- We encourage their independence, by helping them to set up for mealtimes and to clear away their plates and cups afterwards.
- We have rolling breakfast, snack and tea time at nursery so that the children can be independent and make choices around when they are hungry and would like to eat.
- We encourage parental involvement, ask parents to share their experiences of their own cultures with the children by taking part in cooking activities.

- Inspections by Environmental Health are carried out annually and the score is displayed on the front door of the premises.

Legal framework

- EYFS Statutory Framework 2024
- Ofsted Welfare Requirements 2024

Further guidance

- Food standards Agency: Safer Food, Better Business 2020)
- Healthy Eating Guidance for the Early Years Sector – GOV.UK 2024)
- Eat Better, Start Better 2021
- HENRY

Policy Name	Food and Drink
Version Number	V1
This policy was developed by	Early Years Alliance
These people were consulted/ involved in developing the policy	Catering Team Senior Leadership Team Governance Group
This Policy was adopted by	Trustee Board
Date	April 2024
Signed	<i>Bisi Oyekanmi</i>
Name	Bisi Oyekanmi
Role	Chairperson

Next Review Date	April 2025
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