



Eat better, start better guidelines

To make healthy choices in relation to food. For children to know the importance of a healthy diet and talk about ways to keep healthy.

Healthy Eating 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. We promote healthy eating. At snack and meal times, we aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs. Encouraging children to eat well and learn about food in their early years not only protects their health when they are young, but also sets the foundations for their future health and wellbeing.

We ask parents support with this by providing healthy options for snack, we offer children milk or water to drink at snack times and water at lunch. On our registration documents and during the settling in process, we obtain information from parents and carers on any special dietary requirements, allergies, intolerances and preferences. If a child has any special requirements, their information is detailed and displayed on a wall in the kitchen as well as a prompt card for the member of staff preparing and supervising snack.

We also bake and cook a variety of food with the children as part of their learning and development. At lunch-time, children have a packed lunch that their parents/carers have provided, we actively encourage parents/carers to provide a suitable healthy lunch. We maintain good hygiene standards regarding the purchase, storage, preparation and serving of food. We are registered as a food provider with the local authority Environmental Health Department and have a rating of 5.

Procedures

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

- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs in the kitchen and on the prompt card, 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.



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- We offer alternatives to dairy and gluten intolerant children.
- We offer a variety of foods at snack time to include a range of nutritional benefits, primarily fruit, vegetables, oat cakes, breadsticks and crackers.
- We encourage healthy packed lunches to be provided for children and provide information to parents through posters displayed and a 'Healthy Eating week'.
- We encourage packed lunches to contain a variety of foods from food groups Carbohydrates, Fruit & Vegetables, Proteins and Dairy/ Alternatives and to minimise on sugar filled foods.
- We bake with the children a variety of things, aiming to teach the children about healthy food, and improve mathematical skills, communication and language and motor skills.
- We include foods from different cultures, providing children with familiar foods and introducing new ones.
- We are vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts we are a nut free zone.
- We take into account dietary rules of religious groups to which children and their parents belong, of vegetarians, vegan food allergies/ intolerances and provide accordingly.
- All staff 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 use meal 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.
- Parents are requested to provide filled water bottles on a daily basis for their child. They have free access to their bottles and staff encourage the children to drink. We provide water for a child if they do not have their own water bottle.

For children who drink milk, we provide semi skimmed pasteurised milk as advised by Cool Milk (who provide our milk) as it contains the same amount of calcium as whole milk but less fat.



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Packed lunches

- Children who have lunch with us bring their own packed lunch. In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- We inform parents of our policy on healthy eating and signpost them to Eat Better, Start Better to help them make healthy choices. (We reserve the right to speak to the parents about the unsuitability of food types.) We provide children bringing packed lunches with plates, cups and cutlery if required.
- We ensure staff sit with children during lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.

Food Hygiene

- All staff are involved in the preparation and handling of food and have a sound knowledge of basic food hygiene. Staff have received Food hygiene training.
- The Early Years Manager carries out daily opening and closing checks on the kitchen to ensure standards are met consistently. We use reliable suppliers for the food we purchase.
- Food is stored at correct temperatures and is checked to ensure it is in-date and not subject to contamination by pests, rodents or mould. Fridge temperature is checked weekly and recorded.
- Packed lunches are stored outside and parents are advised to use ice packs in warmer weather.
- Food preparation areas are cleaned before use as well as after use.
- All surfaces are clean using different coloured cloths for different areas
- All utensils are clean and stored appropriately.
- Waste food is disposed of daily.
- Cleaning materials and other dangerous materials are stored out of children's reach.
- Children do not have unsupervised access to the kitchen.
- When children take part in cooking activities, they:



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- are supervised at all times
- understand the importance of hand washing and simple hygiene rules
- are kept away from hot surfaces and hot water
- do not have unsupervised access to electrical equipment such as blenders etc.
- We have a written risk assessment for children in the kitchen

Reporting Food Poisoning

Where children and/or adults have been diagnosed by a GP or hospital doctor to be suffering from food poisoning and where it seems possible that the source of the outbreak is within our setting, the management will contact the Environmental Health Department, The Health Protection Agency and Ofsted, to report the outbreak and will comply with any investigation. Ofsted must be informed within **14 days** of the reported incident.

Oral Health

We talk to the children about dental hygiene, teaching them about the importance of teeth brushing through the use of books, large tooth models and large toothbrushes and dental mirrors. We also invite a dental hygienist in to talk to the children about oral hygiene.

Further guidance:

Action for Children Eat Better, Start Better Campaign A Practical Guide

<https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/media/9750/eat-well-practical-guide-final-check.pdf>

This policy was created by the Early Years Manager: Debbie Arnett and adopted by Hartfield Playschool staff and Trustees in September 2018.

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