Food And Drink In The Setting (including Food Hygiene)

Policy statement

Our setting regards snack and lunch time as very important parts of the daily routine for the children. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating and why it is important to do so. We promote healthy eating using resources and materials throughout the session and discuss with the children regularly throughout the day. At snack time, 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 or intolerances. (See Illness, Infectious Disease and Allergies policy)
- Parents/Carers are asked to record any dietary needs their child has on the registration form. This can then be expanded on in the “All About Me” recorded on Tapestry.
- We regularly consult with parents to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs - including any allergies are up-to-date.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs on the back of their snack cards and on the Dietary requirement list in the snack preparation areas so that all staff and volunteers have easy access to the information.
- Children are monitored during snack and lunchtimes 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 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.
- In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another and explain this to the children and the reason for it.
- We give parents who provide food for their children information about suitable containers for food and advise them to label them.

- We inform parents who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in the setting and encourage parents to use ice packs in lunch bags to keep food stored at a safe temperature.
- We ask parents to clearly label any lunchboxes or food containers with the childs name to ensure that the right child received the correct food.
- 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 or help themselves to water at any time during the day. During snack children are offered Milk or water to support good oral hygiene.
- All staff must hold a Food Hygiene certificate before being entered onto the snack rota.
- Prior to any activity involving food including cooking and biscuit decoration we ensure that children and staff wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water and dry them on disposable paper towels.
- We consider cross-contamination in all food preparation areas in the setting and ensure that procedures are in place to stop this happening, ie) using separate knives and chopping boards, food storage as applicable. Consideration is also taken with food storage.

Snack

We display the foods/drinks which are being offered for snack on our snack table. This enables the children to see what is available for snack.

- We provide nutritious food for snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives, and colourings.
- We include a variety of foods
  - dairy foods;
  - grains, cereals and carbohydrates
  - fruit and vegetables.
- We include foods from the diet of each of the children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones. When celebrating festivals, we try to include food relevant to this or the country of origin.
- Our setting has a “no nut policy” and we take care not to provide any 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 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 into account when providing food and drinks to the children while in the setting.

- We organise snack time so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate. Snack is completed on a rolling basis in the morning session, this enables the children to have a choice when they are hungry/thirsty helping to increase their independence.
- We use snack time to help children to continue to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.
- We ensure that the food available is prepared in age-appropriate portion sizes to ensure safety and minimise the risk of choking.
- 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.
- For children who drink milk, we provide semi-skimmed milk, otherwise water is available.

Birthdays and other celebrations

We allow sweets/treats to be brought in for the children to share for their peers to celebrate birthdays or any other celebrations. If these are brought into preschool to share amongst the children we will give them out at the end of the session, and leave it to the discretion of the parent/carer. The sweets should be age appropriate such as a small sealed pack and not a lollipop.

Packed lunches

The pre-school will provide a clean place and adequate time for children to eat a packed lunch and ensure that fresh drinking water is readily available at all times. Staff sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion. Food and eating together can be a wonderful source of learning for children, and at preschool we aim to make our lunch time a positive experience.

As fridge space is not available in pre-school, you are advised to send packed lunches in insulated bags with freezer blocks, where possible, especially during Summer. A good substitute for a freezer block is a frozen drink which will defrost during the morning. The pre-school will encourage parents to consider the guidelines for a healthy packed lunch listed below. Please ensure that boxes, bottles etc are all labelled with your childs name.

The following are intended as guidelines, not rules. However, we feel as a pre-school that consideration of these guidelines will support the whole of the preschool community in developing healthy eating habits.

Packed lunches should include:

- At least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables each day e.g. carrot sticks, cucumber, small apple or orange, banana, dried fruit, mini tomatoes, mango cubes.
- Meat, fish, or vegetarian source of non-dairy protein e.g. chicken, turkey, ham, beef, pork, tuna, lentils, kidney beans, chickpeas, falafel, soya, tofu.
- A starchy food e.g. bread, pasta, rice, crackers, rice cakes, oat cakes, pitta bread, tortilla wraps.
- Dairy food e.g. milk, cheese, eggs, yoghurt, fromage frais.
- A drink of either water, fruit juice, milk, yoghurt drink, smoothie. (No fizzy drinks or glass bottles please.

***** Please do not include sweets including marshmallows or anything containing chocolate or chocolate covered in a lunchbox this also includes Oreos. We have a strict no-nut policy, please do not include nuts or any type or products containing nuts. Also Popcorn should not be included as this is a chocking hazzard*****

Children will be encouraged to eat their savoury food and fruit and vegetables first. Children should not swap food. Please encourage children to regard foods very high in sugar or fat as treats and not staple foods for a lunchbox. All small round items of food ie) grapes and tomatoes should be cut in half length-wise. Staff will check lunchboxes where possible to remove any items which do not fall in line with our policy.

Familiar Foods

Please put familiar foods prepared in their usual way in the childrens packed lunch. Pre-school lunch times are not a good time to introduce new foods to your child as it may be upsetting if they are hungry and don't like the food they have been given. Please put in the amount of food you would normally expect your child to eat and don’t not include additional choice without speaking to the setting first.

Special diets and allergies

We do not allow nuts or any foods containing nuts in your child's lunch box due nut allergies and also due to nuts being a choking hazard for children under the age of 5 years. We recognise that some children may require special diets that do not allow for the guidelines to be adhered to exactly. These need to be discussed with the setting manager asap. Parents will provide the appropriate diet for that child, another reason why children should not swap food items.

Staff are also encouraged to comply with this policy when bringing in packed lunches and eating with the children.

Monitoring

To promote healthy eating we will regularly monitor the content of packed lunches. We will talk to parents/carers where necessary and offer guidance on bringing healthy packed lunches and snack. If lunches are not deemed to meet nutritional standards parents will be advised on changes that need to be made. Anything included in a childs lunch box which doesn't meet our policy ie) products containing chocolate or chocolate covered, sweets or sugary drinks will be sent back home at the end of the day. Water and milk will be provided as an alternative if unsuitable drink is included. If a child's packed lunch continues not to follow the guidance then the parent/carer will be asked to come in for a consultation with the setting manager.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of	.The Hullbridge Preschool..... (name of setting)
Held on	……... (date)
Date to be reviewed	……..... date
Signed by	……
Name of Signatory	…Donna Thresher……..
Role of Signatory (ie manager)	…Manager…….