

## **Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Health**

Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, they must be healthy, balanced and nutritious.

### **6.5 Food and drink**

#### **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. To grow and stay healthy children need to eat a nutritionally well-balanced diet. Preschools are an influential setting and can contribute significantly to improving the health and wellbeing of children. Good nutrition in childhood can help to prevent a variety of health problems, both in the short term and later in life. There is increasing concerns that many children are consuming too much fat, sugar and salt and too little fibre, fruit and vegetables. Packed lunches can contribute to almost a third of a child's weekly food intake and therefore needs to be balanced and nutritious.

#### **Procedures**

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

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we ask their parents about their dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies. (See the Managing Children who are Sick, Infectious or with Allergies Policy.)
- We record information about each child's dietary needs in the Registration Form and parents sign the form to signify that it is correct.
- We regularly consult with parents to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs – including any allergies - are up-to-date. Parents sign the updated record 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, as well as their parents' wishes..
- Through discussion with parents and research reading, we obtain information about the dietary rules of the religious groups to which children and their parents belong, and of vegetarians and vegans, as well as about food allergies. We take account of this information in the provision of food and drinks.
- **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.**
- **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.**

- **We inform parents who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in our 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.**
- **ensure that adults sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.**

### *Packed lunches*

We

- inform parents of our policy on healthy eating;
- encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk-based deserts, such as yoghurt or crème fraiche. We discourage sweet drinks and can provide children with water or milk;
- discourage packed lunch contents that consist largely of crisps, processed foods, sweet drinks and sweet products such as cakes or biscuits. We reserve the right to return this food to the parent as a last resort;
- parents and carers are expected to provide their children with packed lunches that are consistent with the nutritional standard based on the eat well plate model and the Food Trust guidelines;
- FOR A HEALTHIER SNACK: replace cakes and pastries with fruit bread and teacakes, replace salted savoury snacks, such as crisps, with breadsticks, rice cakes, cheese and crackers, include dried fruit or fruit salad;
- We ask that parents/carers:
  - provide a packed lunch container where food items can be stored securely and appropriately until the lunch time period;
  - bring packed lunches in reusable plastic containers, rather than disposing of plastic bags and bottles
  - Waste and disposal - preschool will within reason, send any uneaten packed lunch food items back home. The rationale for this is that parents can also monitor what their child has consumed during the day and then raise any concerns over their child's food intake within preschool.

### **Legal framework**

- Regulation (EC) 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Hygiene of Foodstuffs.

### **Further guidance**

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

This policy was adopted by	St Bernadette's Bees preschool	<i>(name of provider)</i>
On	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2023	<i>(date)</i>
Date to be reviewed	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2024 or earlier if required	<i>(date)</i>
Signed on behalf of the provider		
Name of signatory	Matthew Rose	

Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)

Chair

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### **Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications**

- Nutritional Guidance for the Under Fives (Ed. 2010)
- The Early Years Essential Cookbook (2009)
- Healthy and Active Lifestyles for the Early Years (2012)