

Food and Drink Policy

Statement of intent

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 comply with food safety and hygiene regulations when storing and preparing food as assessed in Feb 2016 by Environmental Health.

Aim

At snack and meal times, we aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs and guidelines of the Food Standards Agency. We meet the full requirements within the Statutory Guidance of the Early Years Foundation Stage, Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

COVID UPDATE:

The nature of our 'normal' food service would compromise children and staff in being Covid secure. For the foreseeable future, food served at The Den will be adjusted to provide a more structured approach whilst trying to maintain our high standards of healthy eating. Fruit will always be available to children.

Method

We follow the procedures below to promote healthy eating in our setting:

- Before a child attends, we find out from parents their children's dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies.
- We record information about each child's dietary needs in his/her registration form and parents sign the record 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 up-dated record to signify that it is correct.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all staff and volunteers are fully informed about them.
- We follow the Food Standards Agency guidelines on Allergens by keeping records of the products used and making children and families aware of allergens in food products when asked.
- 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 plan menus in advance, involving children in the planning.
- We follow the lead of the school lunches menu so that children get a varied food experience during a day and food is not replicated.
- We display the menus of meals/snacks for the information of parents.
- We provide nutritious food at all meals and snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- We include a variety of food from the four main groups.
- 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.
- We take precautions not to provide 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 reading 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 in the provision of food and drinks.
- We provide a vegetarian alternative on days when meat or fish are offered.
- 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.
- We organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and staff 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 session/day.

