

6.5 Food and drink

Policy statement

Our provision regards 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 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 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 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 display menus for lunches provided by the Primary School.
- 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 snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- We include a variety of foods from
 - dairy foods;
 - grains, cereals and starch vegetables; and
 - fruit and vegetables.
- We provide children with familiar foods and introduce them to new ones. We include foods from the diet of each of the children's cultural backgrounds too.
- We take care 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, as well as about food allergies. We take account of this information in the provision of food and drinks. We provide a vegetarian alternative on days where fish and meat are offered, and make every effort to ensure Halal meat or Kosher food is available for children who require it.

- 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.
- Children bring their own bottle of water to pre-school which can be refilled with fresh water as needed. Extra bottles are available and the children have access to them throughout the day.
- In accordance with parents wishes, we offer children arriving early in the morning and/or staying late an appropriate meal or snack.
- We inform parents who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in the setting.
- In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- For children who drink milk, we provide semi-skimmed milk.

Packed lunches and hot meals

Children are required to bring packed lunches when staying for Lunch Club if they have not ordered a hot meal. 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 fromage frais, where we can only provide cold food from home. We discourage sweet drinks and can provide children with water;
- request that parents include an ice block in their child's packed lunch during very hot weather;
- 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;
- ensure staff sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.
- Information about healthy meals and healthy lunchboxes are provided in the foyer.

Our hot meals are provided by Downton Primary School. All meals are prepared fresh daily. Detailed allergy information is given to the school when meals are ordered. Temperatures of food are recorded and the school provide a servery diary sheet daily. Staff are required to complete some form of food handling training before dealing with hot dinners and there is a folder with relevant paperwork and guidance in, in the office. This is also where we keep all records relating to hot meals provided by the Primary School.

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 2011)

This policy was adopted at a meeting of	Downton Community Preschool	<i>(name of provider)</i>
Held on	September 2020	<i>(date)</i>
Date to be reviewed	September 2021	<i>(date)</i>
Signed on behalf of the provider	<i>M.Thelwell and S.Peacock</i>	
Name of signatory	Matt Thelwell and Sam Peacock	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	Co-Chairs	

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)