

## Healthy Eating Policy

### Statement of intent

This setting regards snack and meal-times as an important part of the setting's session/day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. The nutritional principles of this policy are based on current evidence based findings, including Department of Health guidance, Healthy Tots, and the Eatwell Guide being the agreed model for ensuring a healthy balanced diet.

### Aim

In accordance with The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, snacks provided are healthy, balanced, and nutritious. Where packed lunches are provided by parents, they are expected to follow healthy eating guidance in the playgroup prospectus. To provide healthy, balanced, and nutritious food/drink choices throughout the day (or time children are in the setting) and ensure any food brought in from home compliments this. To ensure that all aspects of food and drink promote the health and wellbeing of children, staff and visitors our setting. To ensure food is nutritionally appropriate to the age/stage of each child.

### Methods

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, 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 her/his registration record.
- We regularly consult with parents to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs - including any allergies - are up to date.
- We keep individual children's dietary needs recorded in the register, 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 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, and about food allergies. We take account of this information in the provision of food and drinks.
- 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. Staff also provide a good role model for healthy eating and have a key role in influencing children's knowledge, skills and attitudes about food.
- We use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves. Children are also given plenty of time to eat.
- 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. Children are expected to bring in their own water bottles which they can access independently throughout the day.
- 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 have rules about children sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- For children who drink milk, we provide semi-skimmed pasteurised milk.
- Parents/carers will be informed if their child is not eating well.
- Food prepared by our staff is healthy, balanced and nutritious and meets the guidance in the Nutrition for Healthy Tots guide.

- All staff are trained to Level 2 Food Hygiene standard.
- We do not encourage the regular eating of sweets or other foods high in sugar or fat, especially as a reward for good behaviour, or other achievement. Other methods of positive reinforcement are used. (See Behaviour policy). Equally withholding food will not be used as a punishment.
- Where children bring sweets in for their birthday, children are given them at the end of the day so parents can decide when/if they can have them.
- We encourage diversity around food and encourage everyone to share food customs at special occasions/festivals.

### *Packed lunches*

We are not able to provide cooked meals at lunchtime. Children are required to bring packed lunches daily. We:

- Inform parents of our policy on healthy eating. **See our Healthy Eating leaflet.**
- Encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk-based deserts such as yoghurt. 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.
- Provide children bringing packed lunches with plates and cups and cutlery where required.
- Ensure staff sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.

### *Breakfast Club*

Breakfast is an important meal that should provide 25% of a child's energy requirement and contributes significantly to their vitamin and mineral requirements.

*After School Club teas*

- A light tea will be provided at 5.00pm.
- A 3 week menu will be provided. This light tea will be prepared by practitioners with Basic Food Hygiene qualifications alongside the children who will be encouraged to prepare their own tea. See sample menu.
- All food will be stored correctly and prepared using the correct kitchen equipment.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Belton Playgroup Association:

Held on: 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023

Signed on behalf of committee: *EWood*

Name and role of signatory: Emma Wood, Chair of committee

Review date: April 2024