



Food and Drink

Policy Statement

We regard snack and mealtimes 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 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.
- We plan menus, involving children and parents in the planning.
- We display the menus of meals/snacks for parents to view.
- We provide nutritious food for all meals and snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives, and colourings.
- We include a variety of foods from the four main food groups:
 - Meat, and protein alternatives; dairy foods; grains, cereals and vegetables; and 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.
- We do not provide food containing nuts or nut products and we are especially vigilant where we have a child who has any known allergies.
- 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 provide a vegetarian alternative on days when meat is offered and make every effort to ensure Halal meat or Kosher food is available for children who require it.
- 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 participate. A member of staff will sit with the children to supervise and support them.
- 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.
- We provide fresh milk once a day, however, for children with a milk allergy we ask the parent to provide a suitable alternative.

Packed lunches

We cannot provide cooked meals so children are required to bring packed lunches. We:

- Encourage parents to provide an ice pack to keep food cool
- Inform parents of our policy on healthy eating
- Encourage parents to provide a healthy lunchbox which could include sandwiches with a healthy filling/savoury crackers/pasta, fruit, and a milk-based desert, such as a yoghurt. It would be helpful if the portion size was compatible with what the child is able to eat so as not to cause the child to become overwhelmed by the amount in their lunchbox. We discourage sweetened drinks and can provide children with water if necessary.
- Ensure that adults sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.

Legal framework

- Regulation (EC) 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Hygiene of Foodstuffs.

Further guidance

- Safer Food, Better Business (Food Standards Agency 2011)

Adoption and annual review of the policy

This policy was adopted at a meeting of	Tiddlywinks Pre-School Committee
held on	22nd April 2024
Signed on behalf of the management committee	
Name of signatory	Hilary Allen
Role of signatory	Chair