

21: Food and Drink Policy

Our Club is committed to providing healthy, nutritious, balanced and tasty food and drinks for children during our sessions. The manager and staff will make every effort to ensure that food and drink is safely prepared and sensitive to the dietary, religious and cultural requirements of all the children.

As part of a child's settling in period, the Club requires that the parents and carers complete the Admissions Form, including information about any special dietary requirements or allergies the child suffers from, along with their food and drink preferences. The Manager and staff will ensure that food and drink offered to children takes account of this information so as to safeguard their health and meet – as far as possible – their particular preferences.

The Manager and staff are mindful of their responsibilities and obligations under the Food Safety Act 1990. The club is registered with the local authority to provide food. At least one member of staff will have an up-to-date Food Handling Certificates and all staff who either handle or prepare food are fully trained in food storage, preparation, cooking and food safety as appropriate for the club.

Ingredients and Preparation

When preparing food and drink, staff will be mindful of the provisions of the Hygiene policy to ensure that the safety of staff and children is paramount. In addition to these provisions, staff will be careful to ensure both the safety of themselves and children when using sharp or dangerous equipment in food and drink preparation.

The club will ensure that the food provided for children agrees with the most recent nutritional guidelines. It is not enough to assume that food provided is 'healthy' – the club will make sure that the children are getting the essential nutrients they need to grow, and none of the excesses in salt, saturated fat, and sugar.

The club wants to make sure the best ingredients are used, ensuring they are fresh, locally sourced, and seasonal.

Staff are trained to understand the specific dietary requirements of children at different ages, and to help children learn about what is best for them.

Healthy Eating

The Club recognises the importance of healthy eating and a balanced and nutritious diet. Because of this, the club will endeavour to make a variety of foods available including vegetarian and vegan options, plenty of fruit and low fat and low sugary food. Sandwiches can be made with either brown or white bread, depending on a child's preferences.

Each child's dietary requirements are ascertained before the child starts attending the club. If a child has specific dietary requirements these are discussed with the parents/carers and the manager and menus prepared accordingly for the child. Any specific allergies or requirements will be displayed on a list on the staff notice board. It is the managers responsibility to ensure these lists are kept up-to-date. Food does not contain nuts, to protect children who may be allergic to nuts.



The Club will not regularly provide sweets for children and will avoid excessive amounts of fatty or sugary foods. The Club will provide a choice of non-sugary drinks and make sure that fresh drinking water is always available.

No child will ever be forced to eat or drink something against their will and the withholding or granting of food and drink will never be used as either a punishment or reward.

Snack times

The club realises that snack times should be a happy, social occasion for both children and staff, and aim to make sure that children's knowledge, experience, and relationships with food are always positive.

Care is taken to ensure that food is well presented, varied, and features different colours and textures to appeal to children and expand their palates. Children and adults will wash their hands before eating.

Everything needed for the snack is within reach of staff so that movement of staff is kept to a minimum during the service time. Staff will where possible eat with the children to set a good example.

Older children are encouraged to help set up snack and share out the food, encouraging independence and decision-making regarding quantities.

Learning with food

Food can be the basis of so many fun activities in settings, not just cooking. At our setting we have many food centred activities, which are a good way of introducing children to new types of food before they are presented to them. Food plays a part in counting and maths, science, dance, art and many more activities.

Children are educated about healthy eating, and children love to learn about the origins of the food that they eat. Children gain a sense of nature and learn about where food comes from; learning that food is grown in the ground rather than simply bought in plastic packets from the supermarket.

Cultural and Religious Diversity

The Club and its staff are committed to embracing the cultural and religious diversity of the families who use our services. The Manager and staff will work with parents/carers to ensure that any particular dietary requirements are met.

The club is also keen to help introduce children to different religious, cultural festivals, and events through different types of food/drink sessions.

Parental involvement and feedback

At our setting we realise that parental and family involvement is key to making sure that children have healthy and happy lifestyles. We display menus and listen to parents' view regarding menus. The setting actively welcomes parents' feedback.

Guidelines for Snack times

- Individual dietary requirements are respected
- Staff set an example of good table manners
- Cultural differences in eating habits are respected
- Children will be encouraged to say 'Please' and 'Thank you' and to sit down



- Children who are not on special diets will be encouraged to try new foods but should never be forced to eat them.
- Drinks are offered with the snack and the children should be allowed to choose when they want them
- Children will not be forced to eat snack or finish everything on their plate
- Menus will be displayed in the setting for parents/carers to see
- Food served does not contain nuts, to protect children who may be allergic to nuts.
- Food Information Regulation 2014 regarding the 14 major allergens will be identified in menus
- The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage requires providers to notify Ofsted of any food poisoning affecting two or more children looked after on the premises