

Name of setting:

EXAMPLE FOOD AND DRINK POLICY

Policy approved and adopted:

Aim of the policy:

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all food and drink provided by the setting and consumed at the setting (packed lunches brought from home) provide children with balanced and nutritious food that meets the *Early Years Eat Better Start Better Nutritional Guidelines* (2012) and the *School Food Standards* (2015) whilst adhering to the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework.

Research tells us that eating a balanced diet can positively affect children's concentration, energy levels and behaviour and impact on their overall physical health and wellbeing. We aim to create a positive food culture helping children to establish lifelong positive habits around food and eating.

What we will do:

- ✓ Provide snacks and meals (*you may wish to be specific here about which ones*) that are in line with the Eat Better Start Better Nutritional Guidelines for Early Years (Copy available on request). If not prepared on-site, we will explain who is providing meals e.g. Catering Services, Early Years Catering.
- ✓ Consider children's cultural backgrounds when planning menus
- ✓ Ensure that snacks/mealtimes are evenly spaced to ensure children regularly have the opportunity for something to eat and drink in line with the recommendation of 3 meals + 2 snacks a day
- ✓ Display all our menus in advance for you to see what is on offer
- ✓ Menus will provide information about which of the items contain any of the 14 allergens (which, by law, consumers must be informed about) or will signpost where this information can be found.
- ✓ Regularly seek feedback from you and the children on our menus
- ✓ Ensure appropriate portion sizes are prepared and served and that responsive feeding practices are followed by staff
- ✓ Ensure fresh drinking water is always available and that children are encouraged to drink regularly throughout the day
- ✓ Provide milk at snack time
- ✓ Create an attractive and relaxing dining environment that encourages a 'family' experience where children can enjoy eating together
- ✓ Ensure that bottle preparation, storage of expressed/formula milk and bottle feeding procedures meet the latest advice from the Department of Health

- ✓ Ensure that all staff responsible for food and drink preparation follow appropriate hygiene and safety practices and that training is provided where necessary
- ✓ *How you will inform families of their babies daily food/drink intake*
- ✓ *Add anything else here that is relevant to your setting's provision*

Key guidelines for snack and meals provided by the setting:

For a detailed overview of the guidance for snack and meal menus please see Eat Better Start Better Guidelines 'Breakfast at a glance', 'mid-morning and afternoon snack at a glance', 'lunch at a glance' and 'tea at a glance'. [*Delete as appropriate to what your setting offers*]

These show the recommendations from each of the 4 food groups that we follow whilst planning our menus. (Copies available/attached)

Key guidelines for packed lunches brought from home:

The Eat Better Start Better Guidelines also cover food brought in from home. When making packed lunch where possible please use the following recommendations to ensure children get the essential variety and balance needed:

- ✓ At least one portion of fruit **and** one portion of vegetables **every day** – provide a variety over the week, including sliced fruit, grated carrot in sandwiches, cucumber and pepper sticks
- ✓ One portion of starchy food such as any type of bread, cooked pasta, rice, couscous, noodles, potatoes **every day** (try to include a wholegrain variety regularly too)
- ✓ One portion of meat, fish or other non-dairy source of protein (e.g. sliced meat, sliced boiled egg; pulses such as lentils, beans or chickpeas as part of a salad or hummus for dipping vegetables in) **every day**
- ✓ Dairy food such as cheese cut into cubes or grated in a sandwich, small pot of yoghurt*, or fromage frais* **every day**
- ✓ Water (still or sparkling) **every day**

*These should be natural or low sugar where possible and not include chocolate or sweets

To ensure children are having the right balance of food and drink across the day, it is recommended that high sugar, fat and salt items are not included in packed lunches. As children have other opportunities to consume these items when not at the setting, we respectfully ask for the following items not to be included in packed lunches:

- X Crisps**
- ✓ Try savoury crackers/breadsticks if you wish to include another small starchy food item
- X Confectionery** e.g. chocolate, chocolate-coated biscuits/bars, sweets
- ✓ Try a small piece of homemade cake, flapjack or cookie, especially those with added fruit
- X Processed meat products** e.g. sausage rolls, pies, tinned meat, sausages, salami

sausages as these can be high in fat and salt

X Sugary drinks (especially fizzy)

- ✓ Try fruit juice diluted (half water half juice is best) but water is always available for children so additional drinks aren't necessary

This policy applies to all families providing packed lunches for their children within the setting and whilst on trips.

[Depending on your provision you may also need to include guidance on snack provision here too if families supply that for their children instead of the setting.]

- ✓ *Provide fruit and vegetables for most snacks, vary these across the week*
- X *Dried fruit should not be offered as part of snack due to the effects on dental health*
- ✓ *Provide one portion of starchy food for at least one snack per day, vary these across the week e.g. rice cake, low salt bread sticks, cooked pasta*
- ✓ *Dairy food such as cheese cut into cubes can be provided as part of a snack.
Milk is always on offer for children at snack times too.*
- ✓ *Meat, fish, eggs, beans and non-dairy sources of protein - these can be useful sources of protein and can be included in snacks once/twice a week e.g. hummus, boiled egg*
- ✓ *Water is always available for children at snack times*

Other food brought in from home:

So that we can ensure a balance across the day; manage allergy and dietary requirements and respect families own choices around giving their children 'treats' we ask that you do not bring in food as a gift to mark a special occasion. *[The setting will need to include here how they mark a child's birthday, hold a Christmas party, welcome postcards from holidays to show and talk to children about etc. How do you ensure special occasions do not go unmarked?]*

Individual dietary requirements and allergies:

Make clear here how you gather, store and update information about individual dietary requirements/allergies.

Be clear how you ensure that all staff and volunteers know about individual children's needs and how you ensure that preparation/serving systems are managed so that children only get food and drink consistent with their requirements.

Dining experience

We believe that snack and mealtimes are extremely valuable parts of the day with many learning opportunities. Children are supported to adopt a healthy relationship with food and eating and are encouraged to be independent, in an age appropriate way, in making choices, serving themselves, feeding themselves and clearing up. Where possible, we support children in the preparation of some of their own food and drink. We support children to become more familiar with different foods and more willing to try things they are unsure of.

Sitting together and sharing food also offers a great opportunity for social and language development a time when children are supported and encouraged to talk to their friends and

the adults sitting with them. Staff model healthy eating behaviours during snack and mealtimes, eating and drinking the same food on offer to the children.

We gently and positively encourage children to eat their snack/meal or to try new foods whilst respecting their hunger/fullness cues and preferences. Children will not be made to finish meals and we will not withhold dessert or use food as a reward or bribe.

Learning and development

We provide activities and experiences for children to learn where food comes from; how to prepare and cook it; the value of different food groups on our bodies; why we should eat lots of some foods often and a little of other foods not so regularly.

We help children understand the importance of looking after their teeth and the effects of food and activity on their bodies in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements.

We want children to be able to make informed choices about food and drink as they grow older.

We hope that you will support this policy so that we can continue to promote happy healthy mealtimes at [*setting's name here*]. We will regularly share useful information on what makes for a balanced diet for the under 5s. Please talk to us about your child's eating habits and preferences and how we can best support them.

Dissemination of the policy

The setting will write to all new and existing parents/carers to inform them of the policy.

The policy will be available on the setting's website and will be incorporated into induction meetings for new families.

Named person responsible for Food and Drink:

Review Date:

Signed: