**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 and meal times, 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 find out from parents their children's 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 her/his registration record 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. Photo poster in kitchen area.
* 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 display the snacks information for the parents.
* 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 foods from the diet of each of the children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.
* 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 snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate.
* We use snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, preparing & 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.
* 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*

* ensure perishable contents of packed lunches contain an ice pack to keep food cool;
* 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 crème fraîche. We discourage sweet drinks and can provide children with water.
* discourage packed lunch contents that consist largely of crisps, processed foods, sweet drinks and sweet products such as cakes or biscuits.
* If we have concerns about the contents of a child’s lunch we will sensitively have that conversation with the Parents/Carers.
* ensure staff sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.

**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)  
  www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/regulation/hygleg/hyglegresources/sfbb/

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| This policy was adopted at a meeting of | NBU5s Preschool | name of setting |
| Held on | June 6th 2023 | (date) |
| Date to be reviewed | June 6th 2024 | (date) |
| Signed on behalf of the management committee |  | |
| Name of signatory | Marie Whiting | |
| Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner) | Setting Lead | |

**Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications:**

* The Early Years Essential Cookbook (2009)
* Healthy and Active Lifestyles for the Early Years (2012)
* Nutritional Guidance for the Under Fives (Ed. 2010)