



6.5 Food and drink

Policy statement

We regard 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. A meal is also available for each staff member, which encourages staff to be involved in this social time. It opens up conversations to food topics linked to healthy eating, colours, size, volume, numbers, where fruit/ veg/ meat comes from, how it grows, how you can cook it etc.

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 on their registration and transition forms. (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.
- If the child has dietary requirements a Health care plan is carried out by the child's key worker or room leader if key worker requires support or is unavailable.
- 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 on the Health care plan to signify that it is correct.
- A risk assessment is carried out for each individual if a Healthcare plan is in place and all staff sign they have read this important document.
- We display current information on the allergy poster- about individual children's dietary needs so that all our staff and volunteers are fully informed about them on their induction.
- 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 implement these systems and staff ensure they are following risk assessments and healthcare plans. Due to other children needing to access some allergens (for example babies milk) we cannot guarantee 100% your child will not come into contact with these foods. All measures are in place while children are eating with an adult sitting close and all other preventative measures throughout the day however there is always a small possibility of all our measures failing which parents should be aware of when placing their child in ANY childcare setting. If you have any other questions or queries on this please speak to management.

- We plan menus in advance, involving children and parents in the planning.
- We display the menus of meals/snacks for parents to view on our family app.
- 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, fish and protein alternatives;
 - dairy foods;
 - grains, cereals and starch 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 take care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products and we are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts.
- 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 or fish are 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 and adults participate.
- We use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving their own 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 encourage the older children to access the water themselves.
- In accordance with parents' wishes, we offer children arriving early in the morning, and/or staying late, an appropriate meal or snack.
- 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 or allowing them to store this in their bag.
- For young children who drink milk, we provide whole pasteurised milk. Although we slowly introduce semi-skimmed milk from the age of two years; firstly into meals and dishes, such as on cereal or in white sauces, before offering it as a drink, so that the transition is gradual.
- For each child under two, we provide parents with daily information on our family app about feeding routines, intake and preferences.

Packed lunches

children may require to bring packed lunches, we:

- 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, where we can only provide cold food from home. We do not allow sweet drinks and provide all 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 and offer the child a healthy alternative. If the child refuses the different healthy options we will allow the child to eat the contents of the lunch box this once and remind the parent of our policy for their next session.
- If the parent needs support with information of healthy foods/ cooking at home we can help with this.
- provide children bringing packed lunches with plates, cups and cutlery; and
- ensure that adults sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion and all eating is safe.

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)

This policy was adopted by	Sandy Bears Nursery + Pre school
On	November 2020
Date to be reviewed	November 2021
Signed on behalf of the provider	Laura Yates
Name of signatory	Laura Yates
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	Owner

Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications

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