

Safer Feeding Policy

Guidelines for Safe and Responsible Nutrition Practices

Policy statement

We are committed to following guidelines and procedures designed to ensure that all individuals receive safe, hygienic, and appropriate nutrition. The aim is to minimise risks associated with feeding, such as foodborne illnesses, allergies, choking, and nutritional imbalances, while promoting overall health and well-being and developing positive eating habits early on.

Objectives

- To establish clear standards for the preparation, serving, and storage of food
- To ensure all staff are adequately trained in safe feeding practices.
- To reduce the risk of foodborne illness and allergic reactions.
- To promote age-appropriate, safe eating environments.

Key Principles of Safer Feeding

1. Hygiene and Food Safety

- Wash hands thoroughly before and after handling food.
- Ensure that all surfaces and utensils are clean and sanitised.
- Wash all fruit and vegetables thoroughly before preparation. Use separate, clean boards and knives for different foods and prevent cross-contamination.
- Store perishable foods at appropriate temperatures (below 5°C for refrigeration).
- Use safe water sources for drinking and preparing food.
- Check expiry dates and avoid using expired or spoiled ingredients.
- Follow established protocols for cleaning equipment and utensils.
- Child's lunchboxes should be clearly labelled with their name and should contain foods that can be kept safely at room temperature, or contain an ice pack.
- Provide constant supervision whilst children are eating.

2. Allergen Management

- Obtain comprehensive, written information about each child's allergies and intolerances before their first day.

- Develop and follow specific action plans for children with severe allergies, including training staff to respond to anaphylaxis.
- Update records of individual allergies and dietary restrictions regularly.
- Food coming in from home should be checked for potential allergens.
- Train staff on recognising symptoms of allergic reactions and responding appropriately (e.g. administering epi- pen, calling emergency services).

3. Age and Developmentally Appropriate Feeding

- Offer foods and textures suitable for age and developmental stage (e.g. bite-sized pieces for toddlers).
- Closely supervise young children and those with swallowing difficulties during meals.
- Encourage self-feeding skills in a safe and supportive environment, whilst helping as needed.
- Ensure all feeding equipment, chairs, and tables are age-appropriate and in good repair.

4. Choking Prevention

- Cut all foods into narrow strips or pieces, avoiding small, round, or firm items that are choking hazards (e.g. grapes , popcorn)
- Cut food into appropriate sizes and shapes for the individual's age and ability.
- Encourage eating while seated and discourage talking, laughing, or playing with food in the mouth.
- Have a clear, well-communicated emergency procedure for choking incidents

5. Nutrition and Meal Planning

- Balanced nutritious snacks will be provided that meet individual dietary needs. This will be based on foods from the four main food groups (fruit and vegetables, starchy carbohydrates, dairy or dairy alternatives and proteins)
- Consult with registered dietitians or nutritionists for complex cases or therapeutic diets.
- Ensure hydration with appropriate fluids offered regularly.
- Respect cultural, religious, and personal food choices wherever possible.
- Food coming into the setting from home should be healthy, balanced and nutritious.

6. Communication and Record-Keeping

- Maintain up-to-date records of feeding plans, allergies, and special requirements for individual children.
- Encourage open communication between all parents and staff.

7. Training and Education

- Provide regular training for all staff on current safe feeding practices, hygiene, and emergency response protocols.
- Update training in response to new guidelines or after any incident involving feeding safety.
- A staff member with a valid paediatric first aid certificate must be present during mealtimes.

Implementation

Roles and Responsibilities

- Management must ensure all aspects of the policy are implemented and monitored. The policy shall be reviewed annually or following any significant incident or changes in guidelines.
- All staff are responsible for adhering to and promoting safe feeding practices.

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Next review due: 18th September 2026