Promoting health and hygiene

Food and Drink

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Health

Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, they must be healthy, balanced and nutritious.

Policy statement

This setting regards snack and meal times as an important part of the setting's 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 snacks which meet 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.
- Parents record information about each child's dietary needs on her/his registration form and parents sign the record 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.
- We display relevant, current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all staff and volunteers are fully informed about them.
- 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 provide nutritious food for 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 meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate.
- We use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, 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 whole pasteurised milk.

Packed lunches

Parkfield Montessori Pre-school does not provide cooked meals and children are required to bring packed lunches, we:

- are unable to refrigerate the packed lunches, parents need to include ice packs in lunchboxes that contain perishable foods.
- inform parents of our policy on healthy eating;
- seek parental consent to microwave cooked food brought from home (we will not reheat rice)
- encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk-based deserts such as yoghurt or crème fraiche. We discourage sweet drinks preferring fresh fruit juice 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. We reserve the right to return this food to the parent as a last resort.
- provide children, bringing packed lunches, with plates, cups and cutlery; and
- 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

Safer Food, Better Business (Food Standards Agency 2011)

This policy is reviewed annually, or as deemed necessary.

Policy reviewed and updated……..(date)

Signed……