



HEALTH

Food and Drink Policy

Policy statement

We regard snack and lunchtime as an important part of our day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults, and helps children to learn about healthy eating.



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 any known allergies (See the Managing Children who are Sick, Infectious or with Allergies Policy.)
- We record information about each child's dietary needs on the Enrolment Form.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all our staff and volunteers are fully informed about them. This is displayed on children's 'snack mats'.
- 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 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 at times, 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.
- 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 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 food and drink and feeding themselves.
- 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 inform parents who provide a packed lunch for their children about the storage facilities available in our setting.
- In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- We provide semi-skimmed milk at snack times for a drink.

Packed lunches

We:

- ensure parents provide 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 fraiche. 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. We reserve the right to return this food to the parent as a last resort;
- ensure that adults sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.

Vegetable and fruits Advice:

Pips or stones in fruit Always check beforehand and remove hard pips or stones from fruit.

Small fruits Cut small round fruits like grapes, cherries, berries, strawberries and cherry tomatoes, into small pieces: cut lengthways and then again cut them in halves (quarters).

Large fruits and firm fruits - cut large fruits like melon and firm fruits like apple into slices instead of small chunks. For very young children, consider grating or mashing firm fruits, or softening them up by steaming or simmering.

Vegetables Cut vegetables like carrots, cucumber and celery into narrow batons.

For very young children consider grating or mashing firm vegetables and legumes like butter beans, chickpeas and tofu, or softening them up by steaming or simmering.

Skin on fruit and vegetables Consider removing the skin from fruit and vegetables, especially for very young children.

Peeled fruit and vegetables can be swallowed more easily. Cooking fruit and vegetables Consider softening firm fruit and vegetables (such as carrots, broccoli, yam and apples) by steaming or simmering until soft. Serve cut into slices or narrow batons.

Meat and fish Advice:

Sausages and hot dogs Cut sausages and hot dogs into short strips. Cut them in half and then lengthways or as thinly as possible. Peeling the skin off the sausages helps them to be swallowed more easily.

Cheese Advice:

Grate or cut cheese Grate or cut cheese into short strips. Cut lumps of cheese as narrow as possible.

Bread Advice:

White bread and other breads White bread can form a ball shape with a dough-like texture at the back of a child's throat, if not chewed properly. Brown bread or toasted white bread are good alternatives. Cut bread, chapatis, naan bread and other breads into narrow strips.

Snacks and other foods Advice:

Popcorn Do not give young children popcorn or marshmallows; these can be a choking hazard.

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)

Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications

- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6839b752210698b3364e86fc/Early_years_founda_tion_stage_nutrition_guidance.pdf
- Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (2025)
- file:///C:/Users/User/My%20Drive/Early-Years-Choking-Hazards-Table_FINAL_21-Sept-2021.pdf

This policy was updated and adopted by the Trustees of Pembury School House Nursery on:

Date: Signed on behalf of the Trustees:

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