Food and Drink Policy

Policy statement

Binfield Preschool regards snack and mealtimes 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 using resources and materials from the Early Years Alliance. At snack 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 attends the setting, we ask their parents about their dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies (See the Managing Children who are Sick, Infectious or with Allergies Policy)
- Parents are asked to record information about their child's dietary needs on their Registration forms and sign them to confirm their validity
- All staff are informed of the individual dietary needs or allergies of each child and a list is kept in the kitchen, so all staff and volunteers are aware
- Each child uses their photograph as a means of registering when they have had food and/or drink at snack time. For those children with an allergy or special dietary need, their photo is backed in red paper and their particular allergy/dietary requirement is written in black pen
- We provide nutritious food for snacks that is consistent with all children’s dietary needs and preferences, keeping in mind parents’ wishes and avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt, artificial additives, preservatives and colourings
- We provide children with familiar foods and try to introduce 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 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 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.

**Packed lunches**

Where children are required to bring packed lunches, we:

- Provide parents with a guide to what to include in packed lunches.
- Encourage parents to 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 fraîche.
- 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.
- Provide children bringing packed lunches with plates, cups, and cutlery.
- Ensure that adults sit with children to eat their lunch, so that the mealtime is a social occasion.

**Legal framework**


**Further guidance**

Safer Food, Better Business (Food Standards Agency 2011)

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<td>Adrian Hone</td>
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Other useful Early Years 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)