**6.5 Food and drink**

**Policy statement**

Our provision regards 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. At snack times, we aim to offer 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 starts to attend the setting, we ask parents about their dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies. (See the Managing Children with Allergies Policy.)
* Information about each child's dietary needs is recorded in the Registration Form which parents sign.
* 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 up-dated record to signify that it is correct.
* We display 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 offer 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 aim 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, as well as 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 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 session.
* We inform parents who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in the setting.
* In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
* For young children who drink milk, we provide semi skimmed pasteurised milk.
* We ensure food brought from home for snack time is in its original packaging and we check use by dates.
* Parents who come in to cook with the children are made aware of the setting's procedures with regard to food.

*Packed lunches*

we:

* ensure perishable contents of packed lunches are refrigerated; unless parents request otherwise
* 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. 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.
* 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.

**Further guidance**

* Safer Food, Better Business (Food Standards Agency 2011)

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| This policy was adopted at a meeting of | Little Fishes Pre-school | *(name of provider)* |
| Held on | 9 January 2023 | *(date)* |
| Date to be reviewed | Spring 2024 | *(date)* |
| Signed on behalf of the provider |  | |
| Name of signatory | Sue Wharton | |
| Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner) | Operations Manager | |

**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) 6.5 Pg 2