FOOD, DRINK & SAFER EATING POLICY

Statement of intent

This playgroup regards gathering for snack times as an important part of the playgroup's session. It represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating.

Children bring in their own healthy snacks from home: at induction we advise parents on a selection of healthy items to put in snack pots. We also advise them of items to avoid and guidance on how to prepare (cut up) some of the foods that could be a choking hazard. We have sessions where the children experience food tasting, and opportunities for them to use cutlery. We provide activities that use foods in imaginary play and creative activities.

Aim

At snack times we teach the children about healthy eating, and use this as a good time to teach social behaviours and good manners.

At inductions we find out about all children's individual dietary needs for when we are using food in our activities. We aim to meet the full requirements of The Welfare Standards on Food and Drink and make reference to the Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance.

Methods

- Before a child starts to attend the playgroup, we find out from parents their child's dietary needs, including any allergies. Parents will be reminded to keep us informed of all allergies as they develop. **(See our Allergies and Food Intolerance Policy)**
- We record information about each child's dietary needs in her/his registration record and parents sign the record to confirm that it is correct.
- We regularly consult with parents to ensure that our records of their child's dietary needs including any allergies, are up-to-date. **(See our Medication Policy)**
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all staff and volunteers are fully informed about them.
- Those responsible for the preparation and handling of food must be competent to do so. Jellytots staff have completed Food Hygiene courses and the certificates are on display in the kitchen area.
- Staff have allergy /choking awareness training within our Paediatric First Aid training.
- We implement systems to ensure that children receive only food and drink which is consistent with their dietary needs and their parents' wishes.
- When having food tasting sessions, we avoid large quantities of fat, sugar, salt, artificial additives, preservatives and colourings. When exploring different foods we take into consideration foods from children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods, and introducing them to new ones where possible.
- 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, of vegetarians and vegans, and about food allergies. We take account of this information when offering activities that include food and drinks.

- All packaging will be checked for allergens by staff and be available for parents to check if they wish to.
- 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 snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate.
- We use snack times to help children to develop independence through opening their own pots, packets and drink bottles along with closing them and clearing away their rubbish.
- We provide children with utensils which are appropriate for their ages and stages of development, and which take account of the eating practices in their cultures.
- We ensure children have fresh drinking water, by means of their own water bottles. 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 playgroup.
- We discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another in order to protect children with food allergies.
- For children who drink milk, we provide semi-skimmed milk.
- We **do not** offer squash cordials as a drink option during snack times. However, this is offered (very weak/watered down) as a choice when we hold discos after session.
- We are aware that Ofsted must be notified of any food poisoning affecting two or more children within 14 days of the incident.

Further Guidance

https://benedictblythe.com/benedicts-law/
https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/food-allergy/
https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/anaphylaxis/
https://www.nhs.uk/baby/weaning-and-feeding/foods-to-avoid-giving-babies-and-young-children/
https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/2021/09/food-safety-advice-on-choking-hazards-in-settings/

Policy Amended 1st September 2026 – R Cockbill Chairperson