

## **Food Policy**

### **Policy statement**

Natural Nurture Nursery regards snack and meal times as an important part of the nursery day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and mealtimes are opportunities for children to learn about healthy eating. We promote healthy eating at snack and meal times and we aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs.

### **Procedures**

We follow these procedures to promote healthy and safe eating in our nursery:

- Before a child starts at the nursery, we find out from parents their dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies.
- We record information about each child's dietary needs in their Admission Information and parents sign to say 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. Parents sign the updated record to say 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.

### **A Healthy and Balanced Diet**

- We display menus of meals/snacks for the information of parents.
- 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 a variety of foods from the four main food groups:
  - Meat, fish and protein alternatives
  - Dairy foods
  - Grains, cereals and starch vegetables
  - Fruit and vegetables.
- 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 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 bring drinking water with us when we move around the setting where water points aren't accessible.

### **Mealtimes**

- We organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which all 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 help children to use utensils safely and politely.

### **Allergies and Special Dietary Requirements**

- 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.
- We record detailed information about severe food allergies and inform parents/carers that there is a child in the setting with an allergy/allergies and which food/s will cause a reaction.
- We kindly request that if their child has eaten that particular food prior to arrival at nursery, parents carefully wash faces and hands to minimise the risk of the food being brought into contact with the child who is allergic to it.
- 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 provide a vegetarian alternative to children who do not eat meat or fish.
- 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.
- In accordance with parents' wishes, we offer children appropriate meals or snacks throughout the day. In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.

### **Storage and Preparation of Food**

- Food is stored and prepared in accordance with guidelines set out by Environmental Health.
- A designated staff member trained in the safe storage, preparation and cooking of food is responsible for the provision of meals and snacks in the nursery.
- Where children help with food preparation, hands are washed thoroughly, hair is tied back and aprons are worn.
- Children are allowed to help in small groups and are supervised closely in their use of kitchen tools.

### **Packed lunches**

We provide a range of healthy, nutritious foods for children and in the quantities that they need. However for those on Free Entitlement who decide to bring in HEALTHY packed lunches (see Packed Lunch Policy);

- We provide children bringing packed lunches, with plates, cups and cutlery.
- We ensure children sit with others to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion for all.



### **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 2008)

Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications:

Nutritional Guidance for the Under Fives (2009)

The Early Years Essential Cookbook (2009)

### **Other Policies of Use:**

Healthy Eating Policy

Packed Lunch Policy

This policy was adopted at a meeting of The Natural Nurture Nursery Management Committee held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2016.