



*Rebecca Cheetham Nursery
and Children's Centre*

HEALTHY EATING POLICY

Compiled by: RC SLT

Amended: RC Senior Leadership Team

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Ratified by governors: Yes

Governor's signature: _____

1. PURPOSE

We aim to...

- Ensure that all aspects of food and nutrition in the setting work to promote the health and well being of children, families, visitors and staff.
- Encourage children to make healthy choices about what they eat and drink and to adopt healthy eating habits that will lead to lifelong health and well-being.
- Promote to parents and staff the fact that healthier children learn more effectively.
- Have an impact on health related issues such as childhood obesity.

2. SCOPE

- We provide for a wide range of families from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds.
- We provide health awareness for all users starting from birth.
- We provide healthy meals that are cooked on our premises.
- We promote breast feeding by providing facilities and support. (*See breast feeding policy*).

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of all members of staff to follow the healthy eating guidelines when in view of the children. Nursery based and children's centre staff are expected to include healthy eating teaching to both children and their families in their planning. All staff have an obligation to provide the best food and healthy lifestyle for the children in our care at all times.

4. PROCEDURES

Planning –

Provision of food

Tables are set out for children to enjoy their meals in a comfortable and suitable environment with appropriate cutlery and utensils to encourage them to be independent. After the tables have been used for any activity such as play or meal times they are cleaned and made ready to use again.

A designated snack area is available which all children are aware of and encouraged to use. The snack provided will always meet healthy eating guidelines and water will always be on offer.

At meal times adults sit alongside the children, modelling appropriate meal time etiquette ; encouraging children to eat their food and behave appropriately. Children are served by the adults at the table and given the opportunities, when appropriate, for them to serve themselves. All children's needs are provided for and reviewed when necessary; if at any point the eating environment needs to be adapted to support an individual then this is done.

Healthy eating awareness is encouraged throughout the nursery using displays and resources for the children and families to use.

Meals

Children are given a choice of varied foods, but encouraged to try all that is on offer. It is essential for main course and dessert to be treated equally, e.g. dessert is not 'special' it is part of their meal. Therefore children are still offered a dessert even if they have not eaten their main meal. However, it is not encouraged that children who haven't eaten their main meal to be given extra helpings of their dessert. It is the adult's job to encourage children to eat and try foods by making this a sociable and fun time, e.g. encouraging them to smell, lick, taste and bite their food. Adults and children talk about the food, e.g. which foods they have at home, what they like and don't like. A useful and

encouraging phrase that adult's should use is, "OK you didn't try it today, but maybe another day you will." We know that children respond well to praise; rather than focusing on a child who isn't eating, we offer lots of praise to the children that are. All meals on offer provide each of the food groups and adults control portion size. We work on the premise that a child may have to try a food 10 or more times before they make a decision on whether they like or dislike it, and that a smaller portion may be much more tempting to a child in order to allow them to have seconds if wanted. Children are always encouraged to taste/ eat all varieties of salad/ vegetables and when appropriate they serve themselves.

Children's awareness of when they are full up is respected; allowing them to feed and make choices for themselves helps to develop this. However, it is important for staff to monitor how much food children have on their plate and how much they have eaten. Whenever possible, staff are consistent on each table; allowing adults to become familiar with individual needs and to develop strategies to help particular children progress at meal times.

The procedures in place for a child who has 'difficulties' at meal times are:

- The child will be observed and discussions will be engaged in with other members of staff and parents. Questions like: "How do they eat at home?" "What are their eating habits at nursery?" "Is this unusual?" Strategies are then in place and shared with the relevant people. For example, if necessary, children could have food diaries to be used at nursery and home.
- The nursery will generally only report to parents if a child has eaten nothing at all, even after a familiar alternative has been offered and refused by the child.

Halal meat will only be served. The meals that are provided will cover a wide range of cultural backgrounds and we will have meals, provided by the centre, to celebrate certain festivals, such as, Eid, Diwali and Christmas.

It is not encouraged for children to be allowed to bring in packed lunch, snacks or any other food for them to eat throughout their time at nursery.

Breakfast is provided for extended day children. Members of staff ask the parents of those who come in later whether they have had breakfast or not, and breakfast given if they haven't already had it at home.

Curriculum

Healthy eating is an integral part of the curriculum; every day at meal and snack times and whenever possible we encourage discussion with the children about what is good for our bodies and why.

Adult focus activities are included in the long term curriculum plan and then presented to the children when relevant. Cooking activities are based on teaching the children about healthy eating and nutrition.

Displays, posters and pictures are presented around the centre to provide information to children and parents about what is and isn't good for you.

Through the curriculum we aim to encourage positive attitudes and dispositions towards healthy eating and being active. This is encouraged by having daily access to the garden, during all weathers and through the provision of active educational visits. We actively promote an outdoor policy.

Some of the activities that the centre carries out are: – Cooking, food tasting, growing, shopping trips, sports day, etc.

Health and safety

If a child has **special dietary requirements** the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and the cook are informed. The same applies for those children with an allergy care plan and those who have a dietary requirement based on religious/cultural belief. All information relating to children with dietary requirements is provided with the child's photo in a discrete place in the dining area and in the cook's preparation area. It is important for children to be taught about their diets and needs, e.g. children are encouraged to know they can't eat meat/dairy, etc.

We strongly encourage children to eat at their own pace and for those who may be slightly slower a member of staff will sit with them until they're finished whenever possible.

Special occasions

Parents are not encouraged to bring in any food for birthdays or special occasions. However, if they feel it is necessary then they are permitted to bring in fruit/vegetables. Cakes, sweets, crisps, etc are not allowed to be given out in the centre. If there is an occasion when food has been brought in from home, then the food will be laid out and clearly signed (brought in from home, ingredients, etc) for parents to decide whether they would like their child to have it. This food will not be given out by staff during the day.

Provision for staff

A separate staff room is available for staff to use before and after their working day and during their lunch break. Facilities in the staff room are available for all staff to use, such as microwave, toaster, kettle, fridge, hand washing facilities and dining equipment such as cutlery, plates, tables and chairs. Staff are allowed to purchase a school lunch, this needs to be ordered before the working day starts or 10am if you are on the tea shift and payment received via the School Money app. The staff room is the responsibility of all staff members and after a piece of equipment has been used it should be cleaned or put into the dishwasher by the person using it.

Staff are strongly encouraged to eat alongside the children at meal times and when necessary, snack times. However, it is not permitted (unless a staff member has a special requirement) for staff to take their own food into the classrooms to snack on during children's time.

Drinking water is available for staff to access throughout the day, in several rooms around the centre.

All staff are welcome to join in with celebrations, such as Christmas

Parents

Parents and users of the centre have access to our healthy eating policy and menus through our website.

When applicable, healthy eating displays are prominently displayed around the centre.

Parents are encouraged to join us at meal times with their child and when requested, recipes are given to encourage healthy eating at home.

If and when necessary a child and their family will be informed of Extended Services community nutrition services and the support they offer. We will refer families when needed.

Other issues

- Rewarding children with food is not permitted throughout the centre.

- If a child is presenting eating issues then their key person will communicate with the parents to find out as much information as possible. Positive healthy eating strategies will then be put in place and any information will be shared with the relevant people.

Strategies -Food diaries - visual prompts, e.g. pictures of amount of spoonfuls they need to eat - setting clear and consistent expectations - making meal times fun and enjoyable - children are encouraged to lick, taste and bite food - small portions are given -Children with severe eating issues will be referred to Extended Services community nutrition services.

5. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Food hygiene policy