# HEALTHY DIET POLICY AND PRACTICE

The sharing of refreshments plays an important part in developing children’s understanding of the importance of healthy eating and their social skills. We will ensure that we fulfil the requirements of the registering authority and that:

* All meals and snacks provided are nutritious, avoiding large quantities of fat, sugar, salt, additives, preservatives and colourings
* As part of a child’s initial settling-in session practitioners discuss with parents the child’s dietary needs, including allergies, religious requirements and parental preferences, ensuring this is shared with the rest of the staff ream.
* All dietary requirements for children and adults are detailed on a care plan, which practitioners must check before every meal time.
* Menus are planned in advance and food offered is fresh, wholesome and balanced.
* Children who attend nursery on the fully-funded sessions will bring in their own snacks, following our snack menus and lunch box precautions for the safe storage of foods. Alternatively, they can pay a small charge per session and we will provide the child’s snacks.
* We offer foods from a range of cultures giving children the opportunity to try unfamiliar foods.
* A cooking activity will be provided at least once a week and there are opportunities for food play, giving children the opportunity to use a range of senses to explore foods.
* When eggs are used within a cooking activity, we will only use those which have the ‘lion’ safety mark.
* Water jugs are constantly available. Children may bring in drinks bottles with water in them if they choose to do so. We do not promote the drinking of anything other than milk or water, where children bring different drinks into nursery they will be asked to take them home, and provided with water.
* In the under 2 years room we only use water which has been boiled and cooled.
* Children are offered food at least every 3 hours, and where possible staff will sit with the children during snack times.
* Children are given time to eat at their own pace and are not rushed.
* Children are not expected to eat everything on their plate, but can have seconds if they are still hungry.
* Food will never be withheld, for example a child being told they cannot have pudding if they haven’t eaten their dinner.
* Menus of meals/snacks are displayed for the information of parents. Children’s preferences are taken into consideration when our menus are reviewed and children are encouraged to tell us things they like, or dislike.
* For children under three, families have the option of written information on the things they have eaten when they collect their child.
* For children over three snack and hot dinner menus are displayed for parents, the quantity of hot dinner eaten by each child is displayed.
* Milk provided for children is whole and pasteurised.
* Food areas (including tables) are cleaned with anti-bacterial spray before and after use.
* Hot lunches are provided by an outside catering company. Meals arrive in a closed, insulated box.
* Food temperatures are checked before being served to the children to ensure they comply with current guidance (detailed in the Better Food, Better Business pack, stored in the kitchen).
* Any families wanting advice on healthy eating or packed lunch advice can speak to a member of staff, who will access this for them.
* Allergen information is available for each food item we serve.
* All staff will be trained on the ‘Better Food, Better Business’ information and complete food hygiene training as part of their induction.
* Children who may be reluctant to eat, or to try new foods, will never be pressured. Practitioners will model to the children trying new things, eating with the children where possible. Foods will still be offered to all children and praise will be given to children for trying new foods.

Where families choose to provide their child with a packed lunch, they should include:

* An ice-pack.
* A minimum of one portion of fruit or vegetables per day
* A source of protein, such as meat, fish, lentils, kidney beans, chickpeas, hummus, falafel
* A source of dairy, such as milk, cheese, yogurt, fromage frais, custard
* A source of carbohydrate such as pasta, rice, noodles, couscous, bread, pitta, potatoes

Unless there is a special occasion, such as a religious celebration, we do not promote children eating crisps or confectionary such as biscuits, chocolate bars, chocolate coated cereal bars or sweets as these are not a requirement of a healthy diet. If these items are provided in a lunchbox the children will be asked to take them home and a slip will be put into the child’s box to explain to the parent/carer why this has been left unopened.

We recognise that children’s needs vary, where medical advice has been given about a child’s diet we will always seek to meet these needs.

Policy revised December 2018 Lisa Gray