



Healthy Eating Policy

Statement of intent

This setting regards snack and mealtimes as an important part of the setting's session/day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating.

Aim

At mealtimes, we aim to create a social occasion and to encourage children to develop healthy eating habits. We promote healthy eating through providing fresh fruit, vegetables, milk and water for snacks, in adequate quantities for children's needs. Food and drink are properly prepared and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

Procedures

We follow these procedures to promote healthy eating in our setting.

- Before a child starts to attend Pre-School, we find out from parents whether their child has any specific dietary needs or allergies.
- We record this information in each child's registration record/care plan and parents sign the record to signify that it is correct. These records are updated when we are advised of any additional information and parents sign the up-dated record to signify that it is correct.
- We display current information about individual children's requirements on the kitchenette wall in the Butterfly room so that all staff and volunteers are fully informed. We check the displayed information to ensure that children aren't exposed to food to which they are allergic.
- 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 require staff to show sensitivity regarding children's diets and allergies. Staff do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child or to make a child feel singled out.
- We organise mealtimes so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate.
- A staff member must be sat at the table/mat whilst a child is eating
- We use meal and snack times to help children develop independence, children are encouraged to cut their own fruit (with specially developed safety knives) and pour their own drinks.
- We have fresh drinking water constantly available for the children. We inform the children about how to obtain the water and that they can access this at any time during the day.
- Children are encouraged to bring in their own water bottles from home – these can only contain water.
- To protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- Grapes and cherry tomatoes must be cut lengthways before giving to a child as they can be a choking hazard

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- We promote healthy eating by growing our own fruit/veg with the children and using within our cookery sessions.

Breakfast club

Children attending breakfast club are offered cereal, wholemeal toast, fruit and milk. We will only offer cereal with low levels of salt and sugar.

Snack

During each session, fresh fruit, vegetables, etc are available for the children to eat as snacks. Children will be offered at least one portion of their 5 a day during snack time. Children are not permitted to walk around with food. Children are not permitted bottles of milk during pre-school sessions.

Packed lunches

We cannot provide cooked meals and children are required to bring their own packed lunch.

We:

- Encourage parents to include an ice pack to keep food cool.
- 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 fresh (Petit Filous);
- discourage sweet drinks and provide children with water or milk.
- discourage packed lunch contents that consist largely of crisps, processed foods, sweet drinks and sweet products such as cakes or biscuits. We reserve the right to return this food to the parent as a last resort;
- provide parents with a 'Healthier Packed Lunches for Your Children' leaflet created by us with useful tips and ideas.
- provide children, bringing packed lunches, with plates and cups and cutlery if necessary; and
- ensure staff sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.
- ensure staff eat a healthy snack alongside the children to encourage the children to eat their packed lunch
- Grapes and cherry tomatoes must be cut lengthways before putting into the lunchbox as they can be a choking hazard
- No nuts or nut products allowed in lunch boxes

Celebrations

Many families like to celebrate their child's birthday and other special events by bringing in a cake or sweets to the setting to share. We will encourage families to swap sweet treats for healthier options or non-edible options such as bubbles or stickers. Food brought in from home will not be shared within the setting and will be sent home with parents.

This policy was agreed by the staff of Playhouse Pre-School Broadwater.

Adapted on 23rd April 2015 and will be reviewed annually.

Reviewed on 7th November 2025 by Z. Munford