



HEALTHY EATING, SAFER EATING & WEANING POLICY

Commitment to Healthy Food Provision

I take pride in offering a healthy, nutritious and safe food and drink service for all children in my care.

In line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), all meals, snacks and drinks provided are healthy, balanced, nutritious and appropriate to each child's individual needs.

I have regard to the Department for Education's Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance when providing food and drink.

Meals and Snacks

- All food is freshly prepared using high-quality ingredients whenever possible.
- Portion sizes and food textures are appropriate to each child's age, stage of development and individual needs.
- Children are not encouraged to "clear their plates", helping them to develop positive and healthy relationships with food.
- I respect individual dietary requirements as advised by parents/carers, including allergies, intolerances, medical requirements, religious or cultural needs and personal preferences.
- Fresh drinking water is always available and accessible to children in age-appropriate cups.
- Food is prepared, stored and served hygienically.
- Food is prepared in a way that reduces the risk of choking and is appropriate to the individual child's developmental needs.

Safer Weaning and Introducing Solid Foods

I recognise that children progress through weaning at different rates.

I will have ongoing discussions with parents/carers about:

- the stage their child has reached in introducing solid foods;
- the textures the child is already familiar with;
- foods and textures currently being offered at home;
- any difficulties the child has experienced with eating; and
- the child's individual developmental needs.

I will not make assumptions about what a child can safely eat based solely on their age.

Food will be prepared in a way that is suitable for each child's individual developmental needs. I will work with parents/carers to support children to progress to new textures and foods at a pace that is right for the individual child.



Preventing Choking

Babies and young children are at increased risk of choking, so appropriate precautions will always be taken.

Food will be prepared in a way that reduces choking risk. This includes considering the size, shape, hardness and texture of food before it is offered.

Examples of safer preparation include:

- cutting grapes, cherry tomatoes and similar small round foods lengthways and into quarters;
- cutting large or hard fruit and vegetables into appropriate slices;
- removing stones, pips and bones;
- avoiding whole nuts and whole seeds for children under five;
- avoiding popcorn, hard sweets and raw jelly cubes;
- preparing sausages appropriately and considering their high salt content; and
- adapting foods to the individual developmental stage of babies and young children.

Babies and young children will be seated safely in an appropriately sized highchair or low chair while eating.

Where possible, distractions will be minimised and a designated eating space will be used.

Children must always remain within sight and hearing of Melissa or an assistant while eating. Where possible, the adult supervising will sit facing the children.

Children will never be left alone while eating.

Paediatric First Aid During Mealtimes

There will always be a person in the room while children are eating who holds a valid paediatric first aid certificate for a full course that meets the EYFS requirements.

The person responsible for supervising the meal will be alert to choking and unexpected allergic reactions.

Choking Incidents

If a child experiences a choking incident requiring intervention:

1. Appropriate paediatric first aid will be provided immediately.
2. Emergency medical assistance will be obtained where necessary.
3. Parents/carers will be informed.
4. The incident will be recorded, including where and how the child choked.
5. The circumstances will be reviewed to identify whether any changes to food preparation, supervision or practice are required.

Records of choking incidents will be reviewed periodically to identify any patterns or common features, and appropriate action will be taken where necessary.



Allergies and Intolerances

Before a child is admitted to the setting, I obtain information about:

- special dietary requirements;
- food preferences;
- food allergies;
- food intolerances; and
- relevant health requirements.

This information is kept up to date through ongoing discussions with parents/carers.

Where appropriate, I will work with parents/carers and health professionals to develop an allergy action plan.

All relevant adults involved in preparing or handling food will be made aware of individual children's dietary requirements and allergies.

At each mealtime and snack time, responsibility will be clear for checking that the food and drink provided is suitable for each child.

I will ensure that those responsible for food preparation and handling understand the symptoms and treatment of allergies and anaphylaxis and the difference between allergies and intolerances.

Supporting Healthy Choices

Children are taught about healthy eating and drinking through everyday routines and experiences.

They are encouraged to take part in:

- food shopping;
- food preparation;
- cooking;
- growing or exploring food where appropriate; and
- conversations about healthy choices.

Risk assessments are in place for children's safety during food-related activities, including activities involving cooking or the kitchen.

Celebrations and Occasional Treats

Food may be used to mark special occasions such as birthdays, festivals or cultural events.

Occasional treats may be offered as part of these celebrations while continuing to promote a healthy, balanced approach to food.

Parents/carers are encouraged to discuss any dietary concerns or restrictions with me in advance.



Working with Parents and Carers

During the induction process, I gather detailed information about each child's dietary needs.

This information is reviewed regularly and whenever a child's circumstances change.

Parents/carers are encouraged to tell me promptly about:

- new allergies or intolerances;
- changes to dietary requirements;
- changes in the child's stage of weaning;
- new foods or textures being introduced;
- difficulties with eating; and
- any choking incident occurring at home that may be relevant to the child's care.

I will make reasonable accommodations for children who require meals at different times or food different from the standard provision because of their individual, medical, dietary, cultural or religious needs.

Food Safety and Hygiene

I am registered as a food provider with the Local Authority Environmental Health Department.

I follow appropriate food-safety and hygiene procedures, including the Food Standards Agency's Safer Food, Better Business guidance for childminders.

I hold a Level 2 Food Hygiene Certificate.

Food will be stored, prepared and served hygienically.

Children will be encouraged to wash their hands before meals and snacks and after using the toilet or taking part in activities where handwashing is required.

Baby feeding equipment will be appropriately cleaned and sterilised.

Where infant formula is prepared, appropriate hygiene and preparation procedures will be followed.

Food Poisoning

Where food poisoning affects two or more children cared for on the premises, I will notify Ofsted or my childminder agency where required by the EYFS.

The notification will be made as soon as reasonably practicable and, in any event, within 14 days of the incident.

The incident will also be recorded and appropriate action taken to protect the health and safety of the children.

Review - This policy will be updated as required to reflect current best practices in early years.

