**6.5 Food and drink**

**Policy statement**

We regard snack and meal times as an important part of our day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults, and helps children to learn about healthy eating. At snack and meal times, we aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs.

**Procedures**

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

* Before a child starts to attend the setting, we ask their parents about their dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies. (See the Managing Children who are Sick, Infectious or with Allergies Policy.)
* We record information about each child's dietary needs in the Registration Form and parents sign the form to signify 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 signify that it is correct.
* We display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all our 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.
* Due to the COVID –19 outbreak we will be asking parents to supply a morning snack, and a packed lunch as required
* We organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and adults participate at a safe distance.
* We use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through children feeding themselves.
* Parents should 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.
* All children should bring in their own water bottle, this can be refilled throughout the day, 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 inform parents who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in our setting.
* We give parents who provide food for their children information about suitable containers for food.
* In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.

*Packed lunches*

We cannot provide cooked meals and children are required to bring packed lunches, we:

* ensure perishable contents of packed lunches contain 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 fraîche. We discourage sweet drinks and can provide children with water;
* 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;
* parents should provide children bringing packed lunches with plates, cups and cutlery as required; and
* ensure that adults sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.

**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 2011)
* Nutritional Guidance for the Under Fives (Pre-school Learning Alliance 2009)
* The Early Years Essential Cookbook (Pre-school Learning Alliance 2009)
* Healthy and Active Lifestyles for the Early Years (Pre-school Learning Alliance 2012)

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| This policy was adopted by | Stepping Stones Pre-school |  |
| On | May 2020 |  |
| Date to be reviewed | May 2021 |  |
| Signed on behalf of the provider |  |
| Name of signatory | Carly Jeanneret |
| Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner) | Chair |