



Food and drink

Policy statement

At Little Squirts 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.

Our intention

At snack and meal times, we intend to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs whilst promoting a positive experience for the children. Staff also have their food and drink in the room.

Procedures

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 also obtain information about the dietary rules of the religious groups to which children and their parents belong, and of vegetarians and vegans. We record information about each child's dietary needs in the Registration Form and parents sign the form to signify that it is correct and 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 show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. We do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child, or make a child feel singled out because of her/his diet or allergy. Our cook is informed of any allergies and/ or preferences and will offer alternatives as needed and all staff are made aware. If a child does have an allergy we have an allergies board which is moveable which has a photo of the child on red card and their allergy information written underneath.

Our cook aims to include a variety of vegetables into our home cooked meals, using prepared items as little as possible and making things fresh. We have a 3 week rolling menu to ensure a variety in meals for the children. We take care not to provide food containing nuts and parents are made aware of our no nut policy in the instance that they are providing a packed lunch.

We organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and adults participate, using these times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves. A member of staff will sit at each meal table and encourage discussions about their meal, talking about where the food comes from, is it healthy etc. We 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.

We have fresh drinking water constantly available for the children and we inform the children about how to obtain the water and that they can ask for water at any time during the day. We encourage children to bring in their own water bottle for drinking throughout the day and encourage parents to fill these with water rather than juice, however there are cups and a jug at the drinking station as well. We discourage the water bottles at meal times so as to encourage the skill of drinking from a cup.

We provide full fat and semi skimmed pasteurised milk and we would opt to give the children full fat milk to drink, using semi skimmed in meals, unless there is health reason to do otherwise.

Packed lunches

Some children over the age of 2 may opt to bring a packed lunch, in this instance we ensure perishable contents of packed lunches are refrigerated or contain an ice pack to keep food cool. We inform parents of our policy on healthy eating, encouraging them to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk based deserts, such as yoghurt or crème fraîche. We do allow a sweet treat such as a small chocolate bar or cereal bar, however, do reserve the right to limit these if a child has several unhealthy snacks in their lunch box. In this instance the child will be given a choice from the treats they have to promote their independence and decision making and the parents will be told of the situation and the reasons behind this when we return the food items.

At Little Squirts we do not warm up pack lunches as we provide a hot meal daily for any children who require this.

This policy was adopted by Little Squirts Preschool on 29th July 2019 (review date 1st July 2020)

Signed.....

Name.....

Role.....