



## Food and Nutrition Policy

### Aim of Policy

This policy is in place to inform parents and staff members about nutrition and snack/mealtimes at Beckside Preschool & Nursery. It is in place to help identify and cater for individual food requirements and to promote healthy eating in a relaxed atmosphere. It aims to promote consistency between packed lunches brought from home, and food provided by Beckside Preschool & Nursery.

We are committed to ensuring that the food provided supports the development of healthy eating practices. We understand that early food experiences have an important effect on adult eating patterns and may influence attitudes to eating. Snack and mealtimes are enjoyable social occasions which provide an opportunity to encourage good communication skills and language development.

Snack and mealtimes are also when children's natural curiosity for exploring new concepts will be extended to introduce new tastes and textures.

### We will ensure that:

- A balanced and healthy breakfast, lunch (if requested by parents/carers) and one daily snack is provided for children attending a full day at the setting.
- Menus will be planned in advance, rotated regularly and reflect cultural diversity
- These will be displayed for parents to read on our website and notice board.
- We provide nutritious food at all snack and meal times, avoiding large quantities of fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings
- Menus will include servings of fresh fruit and vegetables
- Fresh drinking water will be constantly available and frequently offered to children
- Individual dietary requirements required for medical or cultural reasons will be respected and where possible catered for.
- We will gather information from parents regarding their children's dietary needs including any allergies.
- Where appropriate we will carry out a risk assessment in the case of allergies and work alongside parents to put into place an individual diet plan for their child
- We provide children with familiar foods and introduce them to new ones
- We use meals and snack times to help children develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.

- The setting provides children with utensils that are appropriate for their ages and stages of development.
- Promote healthy eating using resources within the nursery
- Oral health is promoted.

**Team members providing meals and snacks for the children will:**

- Be offered opportunities for relevant training and development
- Under the Food Safety Act, 1990, persons preparing food will hold a food hygiene certificate or have been given training in the food hygiene procedures of the setting
- Make mealtimes an enjoyable, social occasion.
- Use meal and snack times to help promote children to develop independence through participation in the preparation of a meal when appropriate, making choices, serving food and drink, and feeding themselves
- Encourage children to try a bit of everything, but not make a fuss if they don't want to
- Encourage children to eat the 'healthy' components of their meal before any 'treats'.
- Praise a child when they try something new
- Model good eating habits by sitting and eating meals with the children.
- Encourage lots of conversation, table manners, and use of words such as 'please' and 'thank you'
- Encourage the children to stay sat at the table until most of the children have finished
- Not rush children if they are slow eaters
- Encourage the older children's independence by letting them take turns to hand out plates, cups, cutlery etc., then wash up, dry up and wipe the table after the meal if appropriate to their age and development.

**Food and Nutrition Information and Record Keeping**

- The setting follows these procedures to promote healthy eating:
- Before a child starts at the setting, parents provide details about their child's dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies.
- Information is added to the setting's record keeping system.
- Parents are regularly consulted to ensure that the records of their children's dietary needs are up-to-date.
- The setting displays current dietary information about individual children so that all staff are fully informed of them.
- The setting implements systems to ensure that children only receive food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and preferences, as well as their parents' wishes.

**Packed Lunches**

As fridge space is limited, parents are advised to bring packed lunches in insulated bags with freezer blocks where possible to stop the food spoiling. There are a number of ways to keep packed lunches cold:

commercial gel packs - water frozen in a rigid, leak proof plastic container - ice cubes in a leak proof container - A frozen juice carton (not a fizzy drink) – freeze the juice carton in the freezer and use the frozen carton (wrapped in kitchen roll to prevent dripping) in the lunch box to keep the other foods cool. The carton will have defrosted by lunchtime.

### **Parents Guidance for what to include in a packed lunch**

Lunchtimes at Beckside Preschool & Nursery can be both exciting and daunting! We want your child's first experience of lunchtime to be positive, so below are some ideas which might help ease any anxieties for lunch times in the setting.

Please do not include any sweets or chocolates.

Portion sizes should initially be kept small-about the size of your child's fist- (we will tell you if we think they need increasing) and should include:

- A portion of starchy food eg small sandwiches (preferably on wholemeal bread) cut into quarters or triangles (if you know your child will not eat the crusts please cut them off); a small wholemeal bread bun; a wrap or pitta bread, small pot of pasta or rice salad.
- A portion of protein, which could be the sandwich filling, eg ham, chicken, beef, tuna, egg, or hummus.
- A portion of dairy food, eg an individual cheese portion (eg a mini Babybel or cheese triangle are easy to open) or small pot of yogurt (we suggest sending a plastic spoon which won't matter too much if it gets mis-placed). The yogurt/fromage frais tubes are very difficult for the children to open (as are some of the yogurt drinks because of the plastic seal), more often than not they squirt everywhere, and some of the content gets left behind in the tube!
- A portion of fruit or veg (e.g. a SMALL apple, banana, bunch seedless grapes, carrot), or provide chopped fruit or veg (such as melon, kiwi, strawberries, cucumber or carrot sticks or cherry tomatoes), or dried fruit (such as a small box of raisins), in a small named container.
- Water or milk are the most suitable drinks for young children as they are less likely to cause dental decay. We don't recommend the small cartons of juice as apart from them not being kind to teeth, very often the children only take a few sips of their drink and the rest goes to waste.
- **TOP TIP 1:** Part-fill a small drink bottle with water, freeze it overnight, top up with more cold water in the morning and pop into the lunchbox. It not only provides a cold drink but keeps the lunch fresh too.
- Alternatively, include a SMALL named ice-pack (masking tape sticks well & is easy to write on) in your child's lunch box to keep food cool & fresh; this is especially advisable in warmer weather. Small ice packs are obtainable from most supermarkets.

*This policy has been adopted by Beckside Pre-School & Nursery*

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