

Healthy food & Drink Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements: Health

Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, they must be healthy, balanced and nutritious.

Policy statement

The health and safety of the children and adults at St Teath Pre-school is of paramount importance. It is our intention to create an ethos of 'thinking healthy' for children and adults, working in partnership with parents, whilst ensuring that the food provision in the setting reflects any ethical and medical requirements. We maintain the highest possible food hygiene standards with regard to the purchase, storage, preparation and serving of food.

Aims

We aim to develop a coherent approach to healthy food and drink in the setting, to provide nutritious snacks that meet the individual dietary/cultural needs of the children. We aim to raise awareness of healthy foods through promotion of clear and consistent messages, in conjunction with parents/carers, about food and drink nutrition, thus enabling children to make healthy informed choices through increasing knowledge, changing attitudes and enhancing skill. We regularly review the curriculum to ensure that information provide is up-to-date and in accordance with current Government thinking. We ensure that a cross-curricular approach is adopted and utilised as a vehicle for delivering messages about 'thinking healthy'.

Methods

When a child enrolls at the setting, we ensure we gain information from parents about their children's dietary needs and preferences, including any details of allergies (For more information, please refer to the setting's Illness, Allergies, Medication and First Aid Policy). Information in relation to dietary needs and allergies is recorded and kept securely in the child's personal file. Parents are regularly consulted to ensure that records are up-to-date.

Information related to children's individual particular dietary needs and preferences, including allergies, is prominently displayed in the kitchen and all members of staff and volunteers are fully informed.

We provide a broad range of foods to incorporate diverse cultural backgrounds, thus providing the children with familiar foods and providing opportunities to explore new food. Care is taken not to provide food containing nuts, and adults are especially vigilant if a child is known to have a nut allergy. Staff are sensitive to providing for children's special dietary requirements and allergies; such children are not 'labelled' or made to feel 'different' because of their diet or allergy. We understand and respect diverse cultural eating practices

Information about vegetarians, vegans, food allergies and religious dietary needs is obtained through discussions with parents and research by staff. Account is taken of this information when making provision for food and drink

Snack-times and lunch-times are deemed as social occasions where adults sit with the children and promote discussions. Independence is promoted through provision of opportunities for the children to help prepare and serve food, such as peeling and chopping vegetables to make soup. They are also actively encouraged to wash their hands before preparing or handling food, to pour their own drinks, to set the table, to select what to eat from the food provided, to use utensils appropriate to the child's age and stage of development, and to help to clear away once finished. Children are discouraged from sharing food to prevent cross-contamination, and as protection from food allergies.

Lunch boxes are stored in the fridge at an appropriate temperature once the children have arrived. We provide fresh pasteurised whole milk or water as drinks at snack-time. We do not provide fruit juice or squash. Children are only provided with cakes and sweets as part of some cookery activities, or on special occasion, such as a parent bringing them to the setting in celebration of their child's birthday or at a Christmas party.

Parents are made aware of our healthy food and drink policy and, on request, we provide information for healthy lunch boxes. We discourage the use of fizzy drinks, sweets, chocolate and foods high in salt or fat content in lunch boxes. We reserve the right to return such food and drink to the parent. Children are gradually encouraged to try new and different foods through use of their senses. They are never forced to eat something they do not like. Staff attend food and hygiene training.

Partnership with Parents & Carers

St Teath Pre-school recognises the role of parents & carers as being their child's first and foremost educator. Therefore, we aim to build and maintain relationships based on mutual trust, respect, and co-operation by seeking the views of parents with regard to suggestions for healthy snacks, and by keeping parents informed of recent research related to 'healthy living'.

What Constitutes a Healthy Packed Lunch?

It is recommended that a child attending a whole day at the pre-school should have a third of their daily nutrient requirements at lunch-time. Ideally, a healthy lunch box should contain at least one of the following:

- complex carbohydrates for slow-releasing energy (wholemeal bread, pasta, rice, tortilla wraps, pitta bread, bagels)
- A source of protein, iron and zinc to keep children alert (chicken, turkey, tinned tuna, egg, cheese)
- Calcium for growth, healthy bones and teeth (cheese, fromage frais, yoghurt drinks, smoothies)
- Fruit and vegetable for vitamins and minerals (vegetable sticks, pieces of fruit, dried fruit such as raisins or apricots)

Food Hygiene

The Manager, Natalie Beal, understands the principles of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) as it applies to the setting. This set out in 'Safer Food Better Business' and forms the basis of a risk assessment for the purchase, storage, preparation and serving of food to prevent growth of bacteria and food contamination. All staff are made aware of, and follow, the guidelines of 'Safer Food Better Business'. At least one member of staff in attendance holds a current Food Hygiene certificate.

Opening and closing checks are carried out daily in accordance with 'Safer Food Better Business' to ensure standards are consistently met. Food is stored at correct temperature and is checked to ensure it is within the best before date shown on the packaging.

Packed lunches are stored in a cool place; un-refrigerated food is served to children within 4 hours of preparation at home. Food preparation areas are cleaned before use as well as after use. All surfaces are clean and non-porous. All utensils, crockery etc. are clean and stored appropriately. Waste food is disposed of daily.

Children do not have unsupervised access to the kitchen. When children take part in cooking activities, they:

- Are supervised at all times
- Understand the importance of hand washing and simple hygiene rules
- Are kept away from hot surfaces and hot water
- Do not have unsupervised access to electrical equipment such as blenders etc.

Reporting Food Poisoning

Food poisoning can occur for a number of reasons; not all cases of sickness or diarrhoea are as a result of food poisoning and not all cases of sickness or diarrhoea are reportable. Where children and/or adults have been diagnosed by a GP or hospital doctor to be suffering from food poisoning and where it seems possible that the source of the outbreak is within the setting, the Manager will contact the Environmental Health Department and the Health Protection Agency, to report the outbreak and will comply with any investigation.

If the food poisoning is identified as a notifiable disease under the Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 1988 the setting will report the matter to Ofsted.