

Food safety and nutrition

Statement of intent

South Milford preschool regards snack and lunch times as important parts of the session. The sharing of refreshments represents a social time for children and adults as well as reinforcing the importance of healthy eating.

Aim

At snack times we aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs. We also aim to teach children about the food they are preparing/ eating, where it comes from and the importance of a healthy, balanced diet. At lunchtimes, parents/ carers provide packed lunches for their own child. We give guidance on providing healthy and safe packed lunches.

Objectives and Procedures

1. We gain information about a child's dietary needs, including any allergies.

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we find out from parents their children's dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies. These are recorded in their registration record and parents sign the record to signify it is correct. Parents also fill out a Risk assessment form for admission of a child with a specific food allergy. (Please refer to allergy policy)
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all 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.

2. We provide nutritious snacks for the children:

- The cost of a snack is included in the cost of a paid session. The cost of snacks is not included in the government funding and therefore this is invoiced to you separately.
- Children's medical, religious and personal dietary requirements are respected.
- Hygiene procedures are adhered to in food preparation areas and all tables/ chairs are wiped down before and after use.
- The snack offered is varied to ensure children get to experience a wide range of tastes, new foods and textures.
- We take care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products and are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts. We provide snacks that do not contain any added sugar.
- In line with our oral health policy we only provide water or milk at snack times/ lunch times and encourage parents only to send water in their water bottles. We provide fresh, whole, pasteurised milk.
- 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 session/day. In hot weather, we also ensure drinking water is available for the children outdoors.

- The manager and a second member of staff have certificated training on food safety. This training is cascaded to all staff during staff meetings. Clear procedures are in place for the preparation and storage of food for our snacks.

3. We organise snack times as social occasions:

- Staff and children participate in snack times together in order to develop a social occasion.
- We use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.
- Children are actively encouraged to wash their hands and to use antibacterial gel before having a snack.
- Children are consulted about the snacks they would like to have.

4. The children bring their own packed lunch for lunch clubs and afternoon sessions:

- Parents are requested to bring a packed lunch for children if they are staying for lunchclub or the afternoon session.
- If a child does not bring a packed lunch, firstly the pre-school staff will try to contact the parent to remind them to bring the packed lunch. If the parent is unable to bring lunch, the preschool staff will provide a sandwich, fruit and drink for the child. The parents will be charged £5.00 for the lunch provided.
- In order to promote healthy eating, parents are requested to not include sweets or chocolate in their child's packed lunch.
- South Milford Preschool is a nut free zone, and therefore we request that whole nuts or nut products eg peanut butter, are not sent in packed lunches.
- Parents are requested to bring a drink for their child, although water and milk will always be readily available. Glass bottles and fizzy drinks are not allowed at pre-school.
- Parents are given advice on the sorts of foods to include in their child's packed lunch and are directed to the following websites for more information on making a healthy packed lunch: www.healthylunch.org.uk/ and www.schoolfoodtrust.org.
- Parents are told that the packed lunches will be stored in the hall at room temperature and are advised to add a cool bag to their child's packed lunch.
- Children are supervised in washing their hands thoroughly before lunch. The children use antibacterial gel after eating their lunch.
- Staff are also expected to wash and gel their hands before helping children with their lunches.
- Children are expected to sit down whilst eating their lunch. Children are gently encouraged to eat as much as they can.
- Staff sit with the children during lunchtime and have their own lunch in order to develop a social occasion.
- Parents are informed regarding safe finger foods e.g. to cut tomatoes and grapes in half to prevent a risk of choking.
- If parents do not adhere to our policies, then we speak to them in order for policies to be followed e.g. reminders about no nuts; no sweets/ chocolate; cutting up grapes/ tomatoes.
- Rubbish from the children's packed lunches is sent home.

5. Food for play and cooking activities

Some parents and staff may have strong views about food being used for play. It is important to be sensitive to these issues. For example, children who are Muslim, Jewish, Rastafarian, or who are vegetarian, should not be given any food to play with that contains animal products (Gelatine). Parents' views should be sought on this. In some cases, it is not appropriate to use food for play at all, particularly in times of austerity.

- ❑ Food for play may include dough, corn flour, pasta, rice, food colourings/flavourings.
- ❑ Food for play is risk assessed against the 14 allergens referred to and is included in the written risk assessment undertaken for children with specific allergies.
- ❑ Staff are constantly alert to the potential hazards of food play, in particular choking hazards and signs of previously undetected allergies.
- ❑ Pulses are not recommended as they can be poisonous when raw or may choke.
- ❑ Foods that are cooked and used for play, such as dough, have a limited shelf life.
- ❑ Cornflour is always mixed with water before being given for play.
- ❑ Cornflower and cooked pasta are discarded after an activity; high risk of bacteria forming.
- ❑ Utensils used for play food are washed thoroughly after use.
- ❑ Food play activities are suspended during outbreaks of illness.

6. Children's cooking activities

- ❑ Before undertaking any cooking activity with children, members of staff should check for allergies and intolerances by checking children's records.
- ❑ Children are taught basic hygiene skills such as the need to wash hands thoroughly before handling food, and again after going to the toilet, blowing their nose or coughing.
- ❑ The area to be used for cooking is cleaned
- ❑ Children should wear aprons that are used just for cooking.
- ❑ Utensils provided are for children to use only when cooking, including chopping/rolling boards, bowls, wooden spoons, jugs, and are stored in the kitchen.
- ❑ Members of staff encourage children to handle food in a hygienic manner.
- ❑ Food ready for cooking or cooling is not left uncovered.

Trudy Saunders holds a Level 2 food and Hygiene qualification.

M Riches - July 2023

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