

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Health

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

Food and Drink

Policy statement

Our provision regards 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. We promote healthy eating using various resources. 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 at the setting, we ask their parents about their dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies. (See our policy - Managing Children who are Sick, Infectious or with Allergies.)
- 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 up-dated record to signify that it is correct.
- 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.
- We display the menus of meals/snacks for parents to view.
- We provide nutritious food for all meals and snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- We include a variety of foods from the four main food groups:
 - Meat, fish and protein alternatives;
 - Dairy foods;
 - Grains, cereals and starch vegetables
 - Fruit and vegetables.
- We include foods from the diet of each of the children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.
- 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.
- Through discussion with parents and research reading by staff, we obtain information about the dietary rules of the religious groups, to which children and their parents belong, and of vegetarians and vegans, as well as about food allergies. We take account of this information in the provision of food and drinks.

- We provide a vegetarian alternative on days when meat or fish are offered.
- We require staff to show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. Staff 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.
- We organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which staff and children participate.
- We use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.
- 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. We inform the children about how to obtain the water and that they can ask for water at any time during the day.
- In accordance with parents' wishes, we offer children arriving early in the morning, and /or staying late, an appropriate meal or snack.
- We inform parents who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in the setting, i.e. we do not have the facility to refrigerate lunch boxes and ask that parents include an ice pack. There is a trolley near the main entrance to store lunch boxes.
- We give parents who provide food for their children information about suitable containers for food.
- In order to protect children with food allergies, we do not allow children to share or swap their food with one another.
- For young children who drink milk, we provide semi-skimmed milk.
- For each child under two, we provide parents with daily written information about feeding routines, intake and preferences.

Packed lunches

For children who bring packed lunches, we:

- Ask the parents to 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 desserts, such as yoghurt or crème fraiche, where we can only provide cold food from home. 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.
- Provide children bringing packed lunch with plates, cups and cutlery if required.
- Ensure staff sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.

Legal framework

- Regulation (EC) 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Hygiene of Foodstuffs.

Further guidance

- Safer Food, Better Business (Food Standards Agency 2011).

This policy was adopted by Blackberry Lane Pre-School *(name of provider)*
 On 21 July 2017 *(date)*
 Date to be reviewed July 2018 *(date)*
 Signed on behalf of the provider
 Name of signatory

Mrs Kirsty Clements	Mrs Debbie Gibson
Company Secretary	Manager

 Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)
 On _____ *(date)*

Other useful Pre-School Learning Alliance publications

- Nutritional Guidance for the Under Fives.
- The Early Years Essential Cookbook.
- Healthy and Active Lifestyles for the Early Years.