**Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Health**

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

**Background Information**

We are a pack away setting in a community hall in Bitterne with a very large outside area. We offer full day care and/or sessional within the hours of 8.30am – 4pm Monday to Friday, term time only.

The named person responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented, monitored and evaluated is the setting Healthy Eating and Nutrition lead and setting Manager.

This policy links to the Physical area of learning and development in the EYFS; in particular Health and Self-care.This policy forms part of the Healthy Early Years Award (HEYA) in Southampton

<https://www.southampton.gov.uk/children-families/early-years-and-childcare/childcare-providers/improving-early-years-practice/heya/>

and has been developed through consultation with parents of the setting, immediate staff and our Board of Directors. This has been shared through an information letter setting out the rationale behind the HEYA award and then a draft of the proposed policy, we welcomed any contributions.

**Rationale and Aims:** This policy is important because it will help establish good eating habits early on in life, will help reduce nutrient deficiencies, reducing the chance of becoming overweight or obese, and contributing towards gaining the Healthy Early Years Award.

We will aim to ensure all food and drink within our setting promotes health and well-being to the children, staff and visitors. This award and policy will help improve the nutrition of under 5s and to ensure we are meeting the statutory requirements of the EYFS.

**This policy applies to the following people;**

\*Staff when they are eating snack or lunch with the children.

\*Parents/carers when they are providing their child’s lunch box.

\*The Healthy Eating Lead when she is checking the food to create our weekly snack menu.

\*Lunch time staff when they check the children’s lunches to ensure they meet our healthy eating checklist.

**Objectives:**

As a setting we aim to;

* deliver a consistent approach to nutrition.
* Meet the recommended Food Based Standards.
* Ensure that our food provision reflects the ethical, cultural, legal and medical requirements of the children.

We want our staff to be effective role models to the children and families in regard to nutrition and healthy eating and we will further their knowledge with relevant training.

In addition we will work with parents to ensure packed lunches provided have a variety of foods from food groups to ensure they are of better quality and quantity. We have a handy guide to help parents make these choices and as a setting we reserve the right to send home certain food items (chocolates, sweets, fizzy drinks etc) with suggestions for alternatives.

**Our settings roles and responsibilities around nutrition and healthy eating are;**

* The food and drink we provide for snack meet the Health Early Years Award healthy eating checklist by ensuring we have a starchy option once a day, a portion of fruit/vegetable once a day, a portion of vitamin C rich fruit 3 times a week.
* At times we will provide dairy products as part of a snack, any spreads we use will be rich in mono-unsaturated and poly-unsaturated fats, all tinned fruit will be in natural juices and we will not be providing dried fruit.
* Our setting provides fresh water drinking stations that the children freely access; the adults promote the use of this throughout the day. The water is regularly topped up and changed to ensure it remains fresh. We provide milk and water at snack time and lunch.

**At Ladybirds Parkside** our weekly snack menu will be available to parents on arrival at each session and updated regularly. Children will be shown pictures of the snack products on offer that day, or shown the actual products at Welcome Time so they understand what they can eat if they wish to.

If a child is a “fussy” eater we will try and encourage them to come to snack and try a small amount, we will feedback to parents what they have/have not tried. We ask parents to keep their child’s key person informed if they struggle with food and/or need any additional support.

At snack time we provide a variety of options during the week**.** During some of our weekly activities we plan food themed events to encourage children to try new food and explore tastes and textures.

All practitioners promote positive social and hygiene skills at eating times; we support children to wash their hands and explain the reasons for this, we ensure our table set-up is small enough to engage in meaningful conversation with peers and adults, we use this opportunity to talk about the food choices they have made, to encourage sitting on their chair, waiting their turn, to ensure they have a drink and support them in using any cutlery needed. We recognise that this time provides many positive learning opportunities.

**Commitment we require from parents and families:**

We ask parents to inform the setting of any cultural, religious and medical/dietary needs for their child. This information is collected before starting at preschool and we ask that it is regularly updated to ensure that as a setting we are meeting your child’s individual needs.

We would like parents to be aware that we are a healthy eating setting and follow the guidance we provide in regard to providing packed lunches. If parents require any advice or support to help their child eat healthier food we are happy to help. This can be through the child’s key person or the setting Healthy Eating and Nutrition lead practitioner.

**Lunches**

Lunches are provided by parents. During lunch times we aim to provide a high quality standard of care, with a sociable atmosphere during which children can eat and socialises after which they can play and join in with stories.

**Healthy Packed Lunch**

* We regard lunch time as an important part of the preschool’s session, as it represents a social time for the children and adults and helps children learn about healthy eating.
* **We actively promote healthy eating, and ask that the lunches provided for children reflect this. We respectfully ask that lunch contents DO NOT include any fizzy drinks, sweets, or chocolate bars or bags of crisps.**
* We provide milk and water at lunch times with cups, we advise parents that it is not necessary to provide a drinks bottle as children are encouraged to develop independence by pouring into and drinking out of a cup.
* We also are aware of any dietary and/or allergies for individual children and to ensure these are catered for, **we ask that NO NUTS are put into lunch boxes. This includes nut snack boxes, peanut butter sandwiches**, **and nutella sandwiches.**
* To ensure safety and prevent the possibility of choking, we request that small food items that may present a choking risk e.g. grapes, sausages, are cut into quarters.
* We reserve the right to send home any of these unwanted food items with a note explaining why.

**Celebrations**

Celebrations such as birthdays and cultural events are lovely opportunities to share joy and learning with children. However, our aim is to do this in a healthy way. For this reason we do not encourage birthday cakes or sweets to be brought into the setting to hand out to other children. This approach also protects children that may have significant allergies. We celebrate birthdays by singing Happy Birthday and counting age in claps, and we give a small gift and a card. We encourage parents to swap the giving of sweets and cakes for small bottles of bubbles or similar, if they wish to give a gift to be handed out to other children.

**Evaluation and review**

Our policies are all reviewed annually by the Directors, Staff and parents. Our Food Hygiene certificates have a validation date and are updated accordingly..

Signed on behalf of preschool on behalf of the setting and Ladybirds Directors.

Director/Setting Manager Reviewed Zoe Marler-Hausen

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