  **Diet**

**1. Introduction**

* **Purpose**: To provide a balanced, nutritious diet that supports the health, growth, and development of children in the preschool setting.
* **Scope**: This policy applies to all children enrolled in the preschool, staff, and any external catering services or food suppliers.

**2. Legal and Regulatory Compliance**

* **Ofsted Standards**: We ensure the preschool complies with Ofsted requirements for healthy eating in early years setting.
* **The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**: We follow the EYFS statutory framework, which outlines the importance of healthy eating and nutritional needs.
* **Food Safety**: Compliance with **Food Safety Act 1990** and **Regulation (EC) No. 852/2004** on the hygiene of foodstuffs.
* **The Children’s Food Trust Guidelines**: Adherence to recommendations about balanced diets for young children.

**3. Nutrition and Meal Planning**

* **Balanced Diet**: The sharing of refreshments can play an important part in the social life of the preschool as well as reinforcing children’s understanding of the importance of healthy eating. Snacks provided meet the nutritional needs of children aged 2-5 years, including:
	+ **Variety**: Offering a variety of foods from all food groups: vegetables, fruits, grains, protein, and dairy.
	+ **Portion Sizes**: Age-appropriate portion sizes to support healthy growth and development.
	+ **Allergy Considerations**: Special attention to food allergies and intolerances, with appropriate alternatives available. Staff are trained to deal with food allergies.
	+ **Cultural Sensitivity**: Respect for cultural or religious dietary requirements (e.g., vegetarian, halal, kosher diets).
	+ **No Sugary Snacks**: Avoidance of sugary foods and drinks, promoting healthy alternatives.

**4. Meal Times and Supervision**

* **Meal Times**: Children are offered snacks at appropriate times throughout the day to meet their energy and nutritional needs. Lunch is provided by parents/carers and healthy eating options are promoted by the preschool.
* **Supervision**: Staff will supervise meal times to ensure children are eating appropriately and to support children with eating challenges if necessary.
* **Water**: Access to drinking water will be available throughout the day.
* **Teeth Cleaning**. All children who stay for lunch are encouraged to clean their teeth after eating, under staff supervision.

**5. Allergies and Dietary Restrictions**

* **Identification**: Parents/carers must inform the preschool of any known food allergies, intolerances, or special dietary needs.
* **Procedures**: The preschool will maintain an up-to-date list of children’s dietary needs and allergies, ensuring all staff are aware of this information.
* **Risk Assessment**: Risk assessments will be conducted to ensure safe practices when managing food allergies.

**6. Food Hygiene and Safety**

* **Food Preparation**: All food will be prepared and stored according to food safety regulations.
* **Storage**: All foods will be stored at the correct temperature to prevent contamination or spoilage.
* **Cleaning**: Regular cleaning of kitchen and eating areas to maintain a hygienic environment.

**7. Staff Training and Awareness**

* **Training**: Staff will receive training in food safety, handling allergies, and providing appropriate dietary support.
* **Communication**: Clear communication with parents regarding dietary needs and food policies.
* **Consultation**: Regular consultation with a local dentist to talk to the children with regards to oral health and hygiene and to promote healthy eating.

**8. Involvement of Parents and Carers**

* **Parental Input**: Encourage feedback from parents on the diet and nutrition provided.
* **Information Sharing**: Provide parents with information on healthy eating, allergy management, and ways to support children’s diet at home.

**9. Monitoring and Review**

* **Regular Reviews**: The diet policy will be reviewed regularly

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