

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Health

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

6.5 Food and drink

Policy statement

East Leake Pre-School Playgroup 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. Playgroup promotes healthy eating using resources and materials from the Pre-school Learning Alliance. At snack times, we aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs.

Procedures

Playgroup follows these procedures to promote healthy eating in the setting.

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we ask their parents/carers about their dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies. (See the Managing Children who are Sick, Infectious or with Allergies Policy.)
- We record information about each child's dietary needs in the Registration Form and parents/carers sign the form to signify that it is correct.
- We regularly consult with parents/carers to ensure that playgroup's records of their children's dietary needs, including any allergies, are up-to-date. Parents/carers sign the updated record to signify that it is correct.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all the 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 plan menus in advance, involving children and parents in the planning.
- We display the snack menus for parents to view.
- We provide nutritious food for all snacks e.g. fruit, vegetables and dairy foods, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- 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 we are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts.

- Through discussion with parents and research reading, 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 and make every effort to ensure Halal meat or Kosher food is available for children who require it.
- We show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. We 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 children and staff/volunteers 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.
- We inform parents/carers who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in the setting.
- We give parents who provide food for their children information about suitable containers for food.
- In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- We have food allergen information available for parents/carers to view for food that we provide. All staff are trained in food allergen awareness.

Packed lunches

Playgroup does not provide cooked meals and children are required to bring packed lunches from home.

We:

- ensure that packed lunches are stored in a cool place.
- inform parents/carers of our policy on healthy eating.
- inform parents/carers of whether we have facilities to microwave cooked food brought from home.
- encourage parents/carers to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk based deserts, such as yoghurt or crème fraîche. 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 lunches with plates, cups and cutlery.
- ensure that adults sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.

Legal framework

- Regulation (EC) 852/2004 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	East Leake Pre-School Playgroup			<i>(name of provider)</i>
On	16/01/2018			<i>(date)</i>
Date to be reviewed	January 2019			<i>(date)</i>
Signed on behalf of the provider	<hr/>			
Name of signatory	Sara Last	Tamsin Wisher	Debbie Porter	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	Manager	Co- Chair	Co – Chair	

Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications

- Nutritional Guidance for the Under Fives (Ed. 2010)
- The Early Years Essential Cookbook (2009)
- Healthy and Active Lifestyles for the Early Years (2012)