

FOOD AND DRINK POLICY

Statement of intent

Impstone and Cherry Trees Preschool regard snack and mealtimes as an important part of the setting's session/day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating and lifestyle.

Aim

At snack and lunchtime, we aim to work in partnership with parents to ensure lunches are nutritionally balanced and healthy. We aim to meet the full requirements of the Early Years Code of Practice for Food & Drink and use the government's 'Safer Food, Better Business' guide to comply with food safety and hygiene regulations.

Methods

Communication with children & families

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we find out from parents their children's dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies.
- We record information about each child's dietary needs in their registration form and parents sign this 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 and all staff and volunteers are kept fully informed. This information is added to Tapestry and is kept in our kitchen and on our First Aid cabinet.
- 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 ask parents/carers to provide healthy, nutritious and balanced snacks and lunches and we offer them a range of ideas and support to help.
- We provide snacks that are nutritious and healthy, including the occasional treat!

Eating environment and social aspects of snacks and meals

- We organise snack and mealtimes so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate, talking to each other about healthy eating, with adults acting as positive role models.
- We use snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves. The children pick up their own snack from the table near where they will sit, which has their picture card that they may have put down when they arrived that morning.
- We ensure each child is given enough time to finish their food and we have an agreed approach to fussy eating which is discussed with parents where necessary.
- The area where children eat is clean, warm and bright. We provide children with utensils needed that are appropriate for their ages and stages of development and that take account of the eating practices in their cultures.

- Children bring in their own water bottle, which is accessible throughout the day. We inform them about how to access their drink and that they can ask for water or milk at any time during the session/day.
- We inform parents 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 and to minimise cross contamination, we do not allow children to share or swap their food with one another.
- For children who drink milk, we offer semi-skimmed milk at snack and lunchtime.
- Both snack and lunch times are appropriately supervised, and children are not allowed to walk around with food and/or drink at any time during a session.
- Adults are also encouraged to have snacks and lunch as expected of the children, acting as role models with the food they eat and their specific table behaviours at this time.
- We welcome occasional treats bought in by parents to celebrate birthdays and other special occasions and ensure that they are free from any ingredients that a child in the setting may have an allergy to.

Packed lunches

As we cannot provide cooked meals and children are required to bring packed lunches, we:

- encourage parents to include an ice pack in their child's lunch box to keep it cool till lunchtime
- inform parents of our policy on healthy eating
- inform parents of our facilities eg whether we can microwave cooked food brought from home, whether we can keep food refrigerated where this is needed
- encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit and milk-based desserts such as yoghurt or creme fraiche (petit filous). We do not allow foods that contain nuts, sweets, chocolate or fizzy drinks, but can provide children with water and milk
- discourage packed lunch contents that consist largely of crisps, processed foods and sweet products such as cakes or biscuits. We reserve the right to return this food to the parent
- can provide children with a plate and cutlery if needed
- ensure staff eat their snack/lunch with the children so that the mealtime is a social occasion

Training

- We ensure that those responsible for handling food and drink are competent to do so, and to that end we ensure that staff have completed a food hygiene course
- We ensure that all staff and volunteers understand the importance of providing the children with appropriate and nutritious food and drink

General Information

- Adults do not carry hot drinks through the setting unless it is in a secure Thermos Cup with a lid and never left unsupervised
- Other adult drinks are within a plastic bottle and not left unsupervised anywhere within the setting or within the reach of children
- We notify Ofsted of any food poisoning affecting two or more children