



Food and Drink Policy

St. Mary's Playgroup believes mealtimes should be happy, social occasions for children, helping children to learn about healthy eating with shared and enjoyed positive experiences. At snack time we aim to provide nutritious food and we encourage parents/guardians of children who stay for lunch to pack a healthy lunch.

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, we must:

- Obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies that your child has, and any special health requirements, before the child starts at the setting.
- Record and act on information from you about your child's dietary needs. Parents are asked to complete and sign this as part of the registration form. This information is also recorded in the staff book and all staff and volunteers are informed about individual children's requirements.
- Make sure fresh drinking water is available and accessible at all times. The children are made aware of this and that they can ask for water at any time during the session/day.
- Promote children's independence where possible.
- Notify Ofsted of any food poisoning affecting two or more children looked after on the premises within 14 days.

Procedures:

We provide a snack every morning session. We provide a variety of snacks across the week and try to include fruit or vegetables every day.

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 children and staff participate.

We use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through serving food and drink and feeding themselves.

We have rules about children sharing and swapping their food with one another in order to protect children with food allergies.

For children who drink milk, we provide semi-skimmed pasteurised milk.

We offer drinks (milk or water) in open cups or can provide a lidded sip cup if required.

We take care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products and are especially vigilant when we have a child with a known nut allergy.

Food preparation/ storage

Staff who prepare and handle food receive appropriate training and show an understanding of and comply with food safety and hygiene regulations.

All food and drink is stored appropriately.

Temperature controls are in place and monitored to reduce the risks of food hazards.



Lunch time

The Food Standards Agency survey of packed lunch boxes showed that many children's lunch boxes contained too much sugar, salt and fat and little fruit and vegetables. St. Mary's Playgroup is committed to encouraging parents/guardians to provide healthier lunch boxes for children.

Children who stay for lunch are asked to bring a named lunchbox with a healthy lunch and drink.

We encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk based desserts such as a yoghurt or cheese.

We discourage packed lunches that consist largely of crisps, processed foods, and sweet products such as cakes or biscuits.

We ask that all children bring at least one piece of fruit and/or vegetable in their lunch every day.

We do not allow children to eat bars of chocolate, sweets or fizzy drinks, so please do not pack these items.

In hot weather, please put ice packs inside your child's lunchbox to keep them fresh and cool.

Please do not send food that requires preparation or heating at Playgroup.

We ask that you do not send nuts, nut products, peanut butter or Nutella into Playgroup.

Please provide your child with a spoon or fork if needed.

Cooking

We encourage children to take part in cooking activities throughout the year.

When planning cooking activities, we will display a list of ALL ingredients we will be using on the board at the entrance to Playgroup before the activity.

Please inform a member of staff as soon as possible if your child is allergic to any of the ingredients or if you do not want them to participate.

Approved date: September 2024

Review date: December 2025