



Food and Drink Policy

Arrangements for Review:

Joy Grice is responsible for the implementation of this policy and conducting regular reviews. This policy was adopted in July 2010 and **will be reviewed in July 2011.**

Policy Context:

Snack and meal times are regarded as an important part of the centre's activities. These times represent a social time for children and adults as well as helping children to learn about healthy eating and to copy good habits from staff and parents.

Seashells and Sheerness Neighbourhood Nursery aim to encourage staff, parents/carers and children to enjoy healthier meals and snacks through a variety of food related activities and events.

Healthy eating and physical activity are essential for proper growth and development in childhood. Healthy eating for toddlers can be achieved by eating regular meals, breakfast, lunch and dinner complemented by healthy snacks, and by offering a variety of foods to achieve a balanced diet. It is recognised that exposing children to food and healthier eating patterns will promote a positive attitude to food from an early age and help to prevent fussy eating.

Policy Links and further information

This policy supports the Food Standards Agency '**Safer Food, Better Business**' toolkit, available at www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/sfbbfullpack.pdf. This resource is free and can be requested at the link above, or from any district/borough council. All centres should ensure they have a copy of this toolkit.

This policy is also linked to our policies on Hygiene, SEN and Inclusion, Infant Feeding, Outings, Health and Safety, Partnership with Parents, Medication and Sickness.

Aim

When Seashells and Sheerness Neighbourhood Nursery provides either snacks, meals and drinks as part of an activity, we aim to provide safe healthy, nutritious food, which meets the children's developmental needs and is sensitive to different cultural and health needs of individual children and families.

We will always aim to work with children, parents and carers using the centre in developing and reviewing our policies to ensure that they address local needs and are clear and simple to understand.

Methods

- We provide a variety of nutritious snacks and drinks. We aim to avoid foods which contain large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings but are aware of the specific nutritional needs of different aged infants and toddlers.

- Sugary snacks and drinks, including fruit juices, should be confined to meal times only. In between meals snacks and drinks should be free from added sugar.
- Acidic drinks such as squashes and carbonated drinks should be avoided to help prevent erosion of tooth enamel
- We organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children, parents, carers and staff participate.
- We use meal and snack times to help children when age appropriate 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.
- Visitors to the centre are requested not to consume their own inappropriate food and drinks on the premises.
- There should be no eating in the reception area of Seashells.

Food Handling and Preparation:

Seashells and Sheerness Neighbourhood Nursery are registered with Swale Borough Council for food handling, under the Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2006.

For further information on food hygiene practices, please refer to ‘Safer Foods, Better Business’ (at: www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/sfbbfullpack.pdf) and our policy on Hygiene. Advice is also available from KCC Client Services on 01622 696050.

Buying Food to serve in Children’s Centres

- Food supplies should always be bought from reputable suppliers (e.g. trusted supermarket)
- Care should be taken when buying perishable, ready to eat food to ensure it is well within date and has been stored appropriately
- For further guidance, please see ‘Safer Food, Better Business’ (link above).

Cultural and Religious Practices

Whenever possible Seashells will include foods which are representative of the families' cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.

Through discussion with parents, and accurate nutritional guidelines (from a health professional such as a Dietician or Health Promotion Nutritionist), we obtain information about the dietary rules of particular religious practices which are adhered to by families who attend the centre. We also consider those families who choose to restrict certain foods such as vegetarians and vegans. We take account of this information in the provision of food and drinks. Where parents or carers have concerns about any aspect of food provision or preparation, they are welcome to discuss these with a member of staff and wherever possible we will work with them to make alternative arrangements.

Allergies

We will ensure we have an adequate management plan in place to deal with any child who has a known allergy. In order to protect children with food allergies, we have rules about children sharing and swapping their food with one another.

We take care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products and are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts. Whole nuts must not be given to the under 5s as there is risk of choking. We require staff to show sensitivity in providing for both children's and adults' diets and allergies. Staff do not use a diet or allergy as a label for the individual or make that person feel singled out because of her/his diet or allergy.

Drinks

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 session/day.

For children who drink milk, we provide whole pasteurised milk (for children under the age of 2) and either semi-skimmed or whole milk for children aged between 2 and 5 years according to the preferences of the child or their parents/carers. Children under 5 should not be given skimmed milk.

Packed lunches

Where the Children's Centre is not providing snacks and families are required to bring packed lunches or snacks (for example on a trip away from the children's centre) we will:

- Inform parents of our recommendations regarding healthy eating
- Encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk based deserts such as yoghurt or fromage frais.
- Encourage parents to include an ice pack to keep foods cool
- Discourage packed lunch contents that consist largely of crisps, processed

- foods, sweet drinks and sweet products such as cakes or biscuits
- Discourage fizzy drinks, diluted squash drinks and flavoured waters and can provide children with water
 - Promote the “Eatwell plate” model aiming to achieve this balance by 5 years of age. Display a copy of the “Eatwell Plate” on a notice board within the centre (these can be ordered free of charge from www.food.gov.uk/publications)

Examples of good practice for snacks

Drinks

- Water or Milk

Snacks

- Vegetable sticks e.g. carrot, cucumber, sweet pepper, celery; on their own or with a dip
- Cheese
- Cheese on toast
- Cream crackers
- Muffins, crumpets, bagels, tortillas
- Non sugared cereal e.g. puffed wheat
- Plain popcorn
- Fingers of toast
- Cream cheese with breadsticks
- Rice cakes, oat cakes
- Crispbread
- Mini sandwiches with marmite, egg or ham
- Mini pitta pockets filled with tuna & salad
- Fresh fruit

Arrangements for complaint

These are defined in the Children’s Centres Complaints Policy

All staff are made aware of this policy as part of their induction, reviews, and training.

All staff will be made aware of the current guidelines on eating well for under 5s in childcare, available at: www.cwt.org.uk/publications.html#under5