



Starlings Preschool Food and Drink Policy

Policy statement

Our provision regards snack and lunch time as an important part of the settings day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. We promote 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

We follow these procedures to promote healthy eating in our setting.

- 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 her/his registration record and parents sign the record 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. Parents sign the up-dated record to signify that it is correct.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all staff and volunteers are fully informed about them. (in First aid cupboard)
- 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 display the menus of snacks for the information of parents.
- We provide nutritious food for all snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- We include a variety of foods from the four main food groups:
 - dairy foods;
 - grains, cereals and starch vegetables; and
 - fruit and vegetables.
- 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 are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts.
- Through discussion with parents and research reading by staff, we obtain information about the dietary rules of the religious groups to which children and their parents belong, and of vegetarians and vegans, and about food allergies. We take account of this information in the provision of food and drinks.
- 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.
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- We organise lunch and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate.
- We use lunch 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 who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in the setting.
- In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- For children who drink milk, we provide pasteurised milk.

Packed lunches

Children are required to bring packed lunches, we:

- ensure perishable contents of packed lunches are kept in a cool place and we advise parents to place an ice pack in lunch boxes to maintain temperature
- inform parents of our policy on healthy eating;
- Encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk based desserts such as yoghurt or crème fraîche where we can only provide cold food from home. 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.
- NO NUTS are to be contained in any packed lunches.
- Provide children, bringing packed lunches, with plates, cups and cutlery.
- Ensure staff 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)*

Other Useful preschool learning alliance publication

- *Nutritional guidance for the under fives (edition 2010)*
- *The essential early years cookbook (2009)*
- *Health and Active lifestyles for the early years (2012)*

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Starlings Pre-school (name of provider)
Held on _____ (date)
Date to be reviewed _____ (date)
Signed on behalf of the provider _____
Name of signatory _____

Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner) _____