

Safe & Healthy Eating Policy

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Purpose of the Policy

At Little Wildflowers Childcare, I am committed to promoting children's health and well-being by offering nutritious food that meets each child's individual dietary and developmental needs. I work closely with parents and carers to ensure children's food is prepared and served in a way that supports their growth, safety, and enjoyment. This policy outlines procedures to encourage healthy eating habits, ensure food safety and hygiene, minimise choking risks, and manage dietary needs including allergies and intolerances.

Procedures

Dietary Needs and Preferences:

Prior to a child starting at my setting, I obtain detailed information from parents about their child's dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies. This information is recorded in the child's record and regularly updated in consultation with parents. All records are maintained with strict confidentiality.

Storage of Meals:

I provide chilled storage for packed lunches and appropriate storage for other foodstuffs brought from home.

Encouraging Healthy Eating:

Parents are informed of my Food and Drink policy and encouraged to provide healthy packed lunches, including sandwiches with nutritious fillings, fruit, and dairy or plant-based desserts such as yogurt or crème fraîche.

I actively discourage packed lunch boxes containing unhealthy foods like crisps, sweets and chocolate. I reserve the right to return such food to parents.

Provision of Utensils:

I provide children with clean, age-appropriate crockery and eating utensils and respect diverse mealtime practices, such as the use of chopsticks or eating with fingers.

Food for Infants:

Parents provide all food for children under two or those who are weaning. I provide parents with daily information about their child's feeding routines, intake, and preferences.

Water

Fresh drinking water is available at all times, both indoors and outdoors. Water is provided in a plastic cup or the child's school water bottle, which they can refill as needed. Children drink only from their own bottle/cup.

Fizzy or sugary drinks are not allowed, though cordial or fruit juice can be offered at mealtimes based on parental preference.

Teaching children

I incorporate healthy eating and drinking education into our daily routine. Children participate in buying, preparing, and cooking food, helping them learn about nutrition and food safety.

Continuous risk assessments are conducted to ensure children's safety while they help in the kitchen.

Special Occasions

Occasionally, food that might not be considered healthy, such as cakes, is offered during festivals, birthdays, or celebrations. Parents are encouraged to express any concerns regarding this practice.

Reducing cross contamination

As a provider of meals and snacks I am aware of my responsibilities under food hygiene legislation. This includes, if necessary, registration with the relevant Local Authority Environmental Health Department. If this is the case then I am happy to have my premises inspected by a food safety officer.

Baby changing facilities will not be near food preparation areas.

I will ensure that I, and everyone caring for children, as well as the children themselves, are aware of good hand washing procedures and how these are carried out.

I will not undertake laundry during times of food preparation and I will ensure that any soiled clothing or detergents will not come into contact with food preparation areas.

Food Poisoning

Registered providers must notify Ofsted of any food poisoning affecting two or more children within 14 days of the incident. Failure to comply without reasonable excuse is an offence.

I comply with the Public Health (Infection Diseases) Regulations 1988 and inform Ofsted based on advice from the Health Protection Agency.

If an incident occurs, a detailed incident record will be completed.

Understanding Allergies and Intolerances

I recognise that children can develop allergies at any time, particularly during the introduction of solid foods (also known as weaning or complementary feeding), and remain alert to signs of emerging food sensitivities.

I understand the differences between allergies and intolerances and I am trained to respond appropriately to allergic reactions. Children are closely monitored for any new signs of allergy, especially during weaning stages.

Preventing Choking

Food is prepared in a developmentally appropriate way for each child, with textures and sizes adjusted as needed to minimise choking risk. I avoid foods that present choking hazards unless appropriately prepared (e.g., cutting grapes lengthways).

Children are always within sight and hearing of a responsible adult while eating. Choking can be silent; therefore, I remain highly vigilant during mealtimes.

Incidents at Mealtimes

To reduce the risk of an incident taking place at meal times, I endeavour to sit facing children at the table to monitor eating habits, prevent food sharing, and quickly identify signs of choking or allergic reactions.

Any choking or allergy incident's requiring intervention will be handled appropriately under the Accident and Incident Policy.