FOOD SAFETY, NUTRITION AND DIETARY NEEDS POLICY

Introduction

The Centre regards snack and meal times as an important part of the day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children learn about healthy eating.

Stepping Stones Pre-school is a suitable, clean, and safe place for children to be cared for, where they can grow and learn. We meet all statutory requirements for food safety and fulfil the criteria for meeting the relevant Early Years Foundation Stage Safeguarding and Welfare requirements.

Policy

Children will have access to drinking water throughout the day as well as milk.

Stepping Stones will provide a mid-morning snack during Playgroup, Rising 3's, Preschool and Holiday Club sessions, and an evening meal at our onsite Afterschool Club or a light snack in our extended provision based at Bracken Leas.

We do not provide lunch and this must be provided by the parent in the means of a lunch box. We advise parents to use a cool box with cool bars, if possible, to keep food safe. We do not refrigerate children's food. We recommend that lunchboxes contain healthy foods and guidance for this is share in our induction pack for each room.

Some children have life threatening allergies to nuts, therefore we request that NO NUT products are brought in. This includes peanut butter, and chocolate nut spreads such as Nutella, humous and pesto

If we find out of date food in a child's lunch box we will dispose of it, and try to replace it with a similar or same item. We will only do this if the child has no notifiable food allergies. Parent will be informed of this at the end of the day.

Food safety and nutrition policy

Objectives

- We recognise that we have a corporate responsibility and duty of care for those who work in and receive a service from Stepping Stones Pre-school, but individual employees

and service users also have responsibility for ensuring their own safety as well as that of others. Risk assessment is the key means through which this is achieved.

- We provide nutritionally sound meals and snacks which promote health and reduce the risk of obesity and heart disease that may begin in childhood.
- We ensure that children are supervised at mealtimes and that children are within sight and hearing of a member of staff at all times and where possible staff are sat facing children when eating to ensure they are eating in a way that prevents choking and so they can prevent food sharing and be aware of any unexpected allergic reactions.
- We follow the main advice on dietary guidelines and the legal requirements for identifying food allergens when planning menus based on the four food groups:
  - meat, fish, and protein alternatives
  - milk and dairy products
  - cereals and grains
  - fresh fruit and vegetables.
- Following dietary guidelines to promote health also means taking account of guidelines to reduce risk of disease caused by unhealthy eating.
- Parents/carers share information about their children's particular dietary needs and allergies with staff when they enrol their children and on an on-going basis with their key person and in writing to the office. This information is shared with all staff who are involved in the care of the child.
- Stepping Stones Pre-school ensures that all staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis and the differences between allergies and intolerances which may develop at any time.
- Care is taken to ensure that children with food allergies and intolerances do not have contact with food products that they are allergic to.
- We notify Ofsted of any food poisoning affecting two or more children in our care as soon as possible and at least within 14 days.
- If a child chokes at mealtime and intervention is given. We record details of the incident and ensure that parents/carers are informed.

Meeting dietary requirements

We aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs and preferences.

- Staff discuss and record children's dietary needs, allergies and any ethnic or cultural food preferences with their parents/carers. A child's special dietary requirements are recorded on the Parent contract and information is shared with all staff. This continues as an ongoing dialogue with all parents throughout their time at Stepping Stones. If a change happens to the requirements of the child this has to be emailed to the office so our documentation can be updated and this is then shared with the staff.
- If a child has a known food allergy, procedure Allergies and food intolerance is followed.
- Staff record information about each child's dietary needs in the individual child's parent contract form; parents/carers sign the form to signify that it is correct.
- Up-to-date information about individual children's dietary needs is displayed so that all staff and volunteers are fully informed.
- Staff ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and cultural or ethnic preferences, as well as their parent/carer's wishes. At each mealtime, a member of staff is responsible for checking that the food provided meets the dietary requirements for each child.
- The menus of meal and snacks are displayed on the notice board for parents/carers to view.
- Through on-going discussion with parents/carers and research by staff, staff obtain information about the dietary rules of religious groups to which children and their parents belong, and of vegetarians and vegans, as well as food allergies. Staff take account of this information when providing food and drink.
- Staff provide a vegetarian alternative when meat and fish are offered.
- All staff show sensitivity in providing for children's diets, allergies and cultural or ethnic food preferences. A child's diet or allergy is never used as a label for the child, they are not made to feel 'singled out' because of their diet, allergy or cultural/ethnic food preferences.

- Fresh drinking water is available throughout the day. Staff inform children how to obtain the drinking water and that they can ask for water at any time during the day.
- Meal and snack times are organised as social occasions.

Fussy/faddy eating

- Children who are showing signs of 'strong food preferences, or aversions to food ' are not forced to eat anything they do not want to.
- Staff recognise the signs that a child has had enough and remove uneaten food without comment.
- Children are not made to stay at the table after others have left if they refuse to eat certain items of food.
- Staff work in partnership with parents/carers to support them with children who are showing signs of 'food preference or aversion' and sign post them to further advice, for example, How to Manage Simple Faddy Eating in Toddlers (Infant & Toddler Forum) https://infantandtoddlerforum.org/health-and-childcare-professionals/factsheets/