



Registered Charity No 1035670

## **Beckley Preschool's Food Policy**

### **Overall aim of the Policy**

- To promote the health and wellbeing of the children and their families through food within the setting
- To establish good food habits and help reduce obesity
- To help children and parents gain the knowledge of how to keep themselves healthy

### **Mission statement/ rationale**

Our overall aims link with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), particularly the welfare requirements for food and drink and other policies eg The Healthy Child programme

### **Development and Implementation of the Food policy**

- to ensure that all staff, parents, carers and children are aware of the setting's approach to food and drink provision and learning about food
- to ensure that parents and carers are provided with the knowledge and information they require about the food and drink provision at the setting
- to ensure children receive consistent messages about healthy eating
- to ensure parents are aware of the timings of these meal times. Timings of food should be between 1.5 and 3 hours.

### **When and who the Policy applies to**

- to food provided by the setting, to food brought in from home, food provided at events or on trips
- to all staff within the setting, including those planning menus, cooking, preparing and serving food and to parents who bring food into the setting from home
- to ensure that everyone who it applies to is aware of our food policy. There will be display boards on Healthy eating in the setting to give parent/carers information.
- All staff will receive training at staff meetings and/or courses

### **Food and Drink Provision**

- Fresh water is freely available at all times
- Snack is provided by parents/carers within the children's lunchbox and is given during the morning session about 10am. Snack can sometimes be provided by the setting for an

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activity and all food and drink provided follows the Healthy eating guidelines, taking into account the dietary needs of the cohort of children. This includes a variety of seasonal fruit and vegetables, low salt/ low sugar carbohydrate snacks such as crackers and dairy spread and yogurts/ fromage frais. Other healthy snacks are introduced to provide the children with the opportunity to learn about and try new foods. Milk or water are provided as a drink at snack times

- Lunch is at 12pm and provided by parents. Children's lunchboxes are monitored as the staff help the children to eat their lunch and on occasions parents may be advised on ways to include more healthy food in their child's packed lunch.
- **No nuts** in lunchboxes or snackboxes, this includes peanut butter. Items with traces of nuts or may contain nuts are fine. The Preschool does not have an Epi pen to use on a child that has a reaction, who maybe previously undiagnosed.
- No chocolate / sweets in lunchboxes.
- An ice-pack should be added to childrens lunchboxes
- We will provide a drink for you children at snack time of milk or water to promote good oral health and encourage water in the childrens bottles at lunchtime.

### **Communicating with children and Families**

Snack times and lunch times are an ideal opportunity when everyone is gathered around the table to discuss healthy eating and why it is important. Healthy eating is also talked about through play, with role play and play foods being an obvious vehicle for good discussion and learning.

Cooking is a regular activity within the setting and provides an ideal environment to discuss food and healthy eating.

We share recipes to take home and encourage feedback from families.

Parents are kept informed about how well and what their child is eating in the setting either at the end of the session when parents pick up their child or through their on-line journal (Tapestry) which parents have constant access to. Parents are also encouraged to contribute to and attend special events and celebrations, particularly multicultural events.

### **The eating environment and social aspects of meal times**

All children and staff wash their hands before eating meals and snacks.

Children are required to sit at the table to eat as this provides a sociable environment where they can talk to their friends, and a safe place to eat. They are always accompanied by an adult. The tableware is colourful and appropriately sized to encourage independence. Children are always given a choice of the foods provided and encouraged to try new foods. We involve the children as much as possible in the setting up and clearing away of snack time.

At lunchtimes the staff always sit with the children whilst they eat. Children eat at different rates so therefore they are given as much time as they need to eat in comfort and children never eat alone. Food areas (including tables) are cleaned with anti-bacterial spray before and after use. Children's independence is encouraged during food routines. The children are encouraged to help set up for meals and snacks, pour their own drinks and chop fruit and vegetables using safe tools in accordance with their age and stage of development.

### **Celebrations and special Occasions**

When our setting has children from diverse ethnic backgrounds we consider their needs in relation

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to food. If they have different dietary needs this is discussed with the parents when the children start to ensure that we can cater for them whenever possible.

Even if there are no children from minority ethnic or religious groups attending, it is still important to introduce all children to a variety of foods so they can learn to appreciate the diets of different cultures.

We work closely with the families from ethnic minorities so that we can share in and learn about their festivals and celebrations.

We do permit parents to contribute a cake or similar treat to celebrate a child's birthday if they wish, staff will remind parents to consider ingredients with regards to allergies.

## **Providing food for all**

It is important that settings provide food for children following special, cultural or religious diets, including children with food allergies, and manage this appropriately and effectively. We talk to the family when the child starts Preschool to find out about all their needs including dietary. We ensure that all staff are made aware of these needs by details on the Registration forms and on the Snack list with all allergies written in bold. Either the setting, or parents if they wish, provide alternatives. No child is ever made to feel different from the others because of their dietary needs.

Allergen information is available for each food item we serve.

## **Encouraging fussy eaters to eat well**

Fussy eating and fear of new foods are part of early childhood development and can affect between 10% and 20% of children under 5. A child who appears fussy about their food but is growing well is probably eating a sufficient balance of foods and getting enough energy and nutrition. Severe selective eating is rare and generally starts from early feeding difficulties or significant health problems. In cases like these we would be guided by other health professionals.

But for the majority of children who are fussy eaters we ensure that they are seated with non fussy eaters who provide good peer modelling and we encourage positive discussion about the foods eaten. Children are never forced to eat something new but are always encouraged to try a small bit. Praise is always given for trying new foods.

## **Food brought in from home**

Lunch is always provided by the parents at Beckley Preschool.

We advise parents in any way we can and this does include suggestions for healthier lunchboxes within our regular feedback to parents and courses. We respect parents' economic circumstances but aim to support parents to make healthier lunchboxes. But we do stipulate no chocolate or sweets in the lunchboxes.

## **Learning about and through Food**

Learning about and through food is relevant through all 7 areas of the Early Years Foundation stage curriculum.

- **Personal, social and emotional development** – Mealtimes offer children experiences to taste different foods, overcome dislikes and learn how to share. Cooking activities offer opportunities for learning through working with others and increasing self-esteem
- **Physical development** – Fine and gross motor skills can be developed through activities such as gardening, using knives and forks, preparing food and washing up. Mealtimes can be used to help children make healthy choices
- **Literacy** – Many stories involve food. They can be used to teach about ingredients, where

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food comes from and about food for special occasions and from different cultures. Language can be developed and senses explored through discussing and describing the taste , texture, size, look and smell of food.

- **Mathematics** – Activities such as counting out spoons or pieces of fruit when setting the table at snack time can be used to support numeracy skills. Sorting and matching foods into different types can help promote organisational skills and reasoning.
- **Communication and Language** -sitting around the table eating food together is a good way to teach conversation and social skills such as looking after neighbours.
- **Understanding the World** – food tasting activities teach children about ingredients, the seasons, and where food comes from, including food from different cultures. Growing fruit and vegetables teaches children about where food comes from, about life cycles, about gardening and how to look after plants. It is also a good form of physical activity.
- **Expressive Arts and design** – Art activities can engage children with food and alert them to colours and shapes.

We plant and grow our fruit and veg to enjoy at snack time and for the children to take home and share with their family.

### **Cooking with children**

Cooking with children is both an enjoyable activity in its own right and an effective way of encouraging all children to try and eat a wide range of foods. We ensure that all children have the opportunity to cook regularly and involve them in measuring, mixing, cutting and chopping (including safe handling of tools) and stirring to make a variety of recipes. We work in small groups with adult supervision at all times. We discuss the changes that have occurred when foods have been heated. We share recipes to take home and encourage feed back from families.

### **Food Safety and Hygiene**

All those who are involved in preparing and handling food are trained to do so.

Food is stored appropriately

We make sure that the children understand why it is important to always wash their hands before they take part in cooking activities or eating and why it is not safe to eat food that has been dropped on the floor.

### **Sustainability**

We endeavour to be as sustainable as possible, limiting our food waste by buying and preparing only the amount of food we need. We try to limit packaging and buy as local when possible.

We also try to grow some foods to supplement the foods provided.

### **Protecting Children's health**

Everyone working in the settings has a responsibility to protect children's health. This includes helping children to maintain a healthy weight as they grow. We also encourage good dental practices. If we have concerns we will talk to the child's parents and /or other health professionals.

### **Evaluation and Review of the setting's approach to Food and Drink provision**

It is important to evaluate and reflect on everything we do in the settings. To do this we will

- Get feedback from parents,carers and children

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- look at the ways other settings approach food and drink provision
- keep up to date with current good practice on meeting the welfare requirements for food and drink.
- Regularly review staff training and development plans for food safety, hygiene and nutrition
- review the food policy once a year.
- We aim to protect children's health including helping children to maintain a healthy weight as they grow, and encouraging breastfeeding and good dental practices.
- You are welcome to feed your baby at Preschool. If you would like us to provide somewhere comfortable or private please ask.

This policy was adopted by the Management Committee of Beckley Preschool on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

Signed on behalf of the management committee:

Role of signatory:

Date: