

# Food and Nutrition Policy

## **Aim of Policy**

This policy is in place to inform parents and team members about nutrition and meal-times at Muddy Boots Nursery. It is in place to help identify and cater for individual food requirements and to promote healthy eating in a relaxed atmosphere. It aims to promote consistency between packed lunches brought from home, and food provided by nursery.

Muddy Boots Nursery is committed to ensuring that the food provided supports the development of healthy eating practices. We understand that early food experiences have an important effect on adult eating patterns and may influence attitudes to eating. Meal times are enjoyable social occasions which provide an opportunity to encourage good communication skills and language development. Mealtimes are also when children's natural curiosity for exploring new concepts will be extended to introduce new tastes and textures.

**National guidance:** The policy was drawn up using a range of national documents including a toolkit and a draft policy from the Children's Food Trust and Food policy in schools – a strategic policy framework for governing bodies (National Governors' Council, (NGC) 2005).

## **We will ensure that:**

- A balanced and healthy breakfast, evening meal and two daily snacks are provided for children attending a full day at the nursery
- Menus will be planned in advance, rotated regularly and reflect cultural diversity and variation. These will be displayed for parents to read
- We provide nutritious food at all snack and meal times, avoiding large quantities of fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings
- Menus will include servings of fresh fruit and vegetables
- Fresh drinking water will be constantly available and frequently offered to children
- Individual dietary requirements required for medical or cultural reasons will be respected and where possible catered for. We will gather information from parents regarding their children's dietary needs including any allergies. Where appropriate we will carry out a risk assessment in the case of allergies and work alongside parents to put into place an individual diet plan for their child
- We provide foods from the diet of each of the children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones
- Food for babies through the weaning stages will be provided. Team members/key person will discuss with parents the individual needs for their child
- The nursery will prepare formula milk and endeavor to follow baby's home feeding routines. The Baby Room has a dedicated milk preparation area and we can also store and prepare bottles of expressed milk if you're breastfeeding
- When your child is ready to start weaning, the team will allow them to experiment with different flavours and textures, based on their nutritional needs
- Promote healthy eating using resources within the nursery
- Oral health will also be promoted.

## **Team members providing meals and snacks for the children will:**

- Be offered opportunities for relevant training and development
- Under the Food Safety Act, 1990, persons preparing food will hold a food hygiene certificate or have been given training in the food hygiene procedures of the nursery

## **During meals, the nursery team will:**

- Make meal times an enjoyable, social occasion.

- Use meal and snack times to help promote children to develop independence through participate in the preparation of meal when appropriate, making choices, serving food and drink, and feeding themselves
- Encourage children to try a bit of everything, but not make a fuss if they don't want to
- Encourage children to eat the 'healthy' components of their meal before any 'treats'.
- Praise a child when they try something new
- Model good eating habits by sitting and eating meals with the children.
- Encourage lots of conversation, table manners, and use of words such as 'please' and 'thank you'.
- Encourage the children to stay sat at the table until most of the children have finished
- Not rush children if they are slow eaters
- Encourage the older children's independence by letting them take turns to hand out plates, cups, cutlery etc., then wash up, dry up and wipe the table after the meal if appropriate to their age and development.

## Packed Lunches

- As fridge space is limited in nursery, parents are advised to bring packed lunches in insulated bags with freezer blocks where possible to stop the food spoiling. There are a number of ways to keep packed lunches cold:
  - commercial gel packs
  - water frozen in a rigid, leak proof plastic container
  - ice cubes in a leak proof container
  - A frozen juice carton (not a fizzy drink) – freeze the juice carton in the freezer and use the frozen carton (wrapped in kitchen roll to prevent dripping) in the lunch box to keep the other foods cool. The carton will have defrosted by lunchtime.

### Guidance for what to include:

#### Every day:

- At least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables
- Meat, fish or other source of non-dairy protein (e.g. lentils, kidney beans, hummus, falafel)
- A starchy food (e.g. bread, pasta, rice, couscous, noodles, potatoes or other types of cereals)
- Dairy food (e.g. milk, yoghurt, cheese, fromage frais or custard)

It is recommended that an oily fish (e.g. salmon) is included around once every three weeks.

Drinks: Only water (still or sparkling), fruit juice, milk, yoghurt or milk drinks and smoothies. Fruit cordials or 'squash' should be weakly diluted.

### Guidance for what not to include:

- Snacks, such as crisps. Instead, include seeds, savory crackers or breadsticks. Fruit and vegetables or dairy food are also a good choice
- Confectionery such as chocolate bars and especially sweets. Cakes and biscuits are allowed but encourage your child to eat these only as part of a balanced meal
- Meat products such as sausage rolls, individual pies, corned meat and sausages/chipolatas should be included only occasionally
- Fizzy drinks
- **Please be aware that we do have children and team members with severe allergies to nuts – thank you for not including them in your child's packed lunches.**

The nursery recognises that some children may require special diets that do not allow for the standards to be met exactly. In this case parents are urged to be responsible in ensuring that packed lunches are as healthy as possible.