

# FOOD AND NUTRITION POLICY

Early Years Foundation Stage links:

**Statutory framework:** Food and drink (3.47, 3.48, 3.49)

**Development matters:** N/A

**This is a statutory policy**

Legislation links: Childcare Act 2006, Food Safety Act 1990

## Statement of intent

At Boughton Monchelsea Playgroup we are committed to supporting children's health and wellbeing by promoting a positive and consistent approach to food and nutrition. This policy sets out our approach to:

- Snacks
- Packed lunches
- Birthdays and celebrations
- Food safety, allergies and cultural/religious needs

## Aims and principles

At snack and mealtimes, we aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs. We aim to meet the full requirements as stated in the EYFS. All children are entitled to a healthy, balanced diet that supports growth, development and learning. Mealtimes are social, relaxed and inclusive. Food is never used as a reward or punishment. Staff should act as positive role models by modelling healthy food choices.

We aim to create a positive food culture, supporting children to develop healthy eating habits for life.

## Methods

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we find out from parents their child'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 child's dietary needs - including any allergies - are up to date.
- We display current information about individual child's dietary needs so that all staff and volunteers are fully informed about them. If a child has an allergy then their name that they use to self-register for snack will be printed in red to ensure the staff are aware that the child has an allergy and to check the allergy list.
- 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.
- Where possible we will inform parents what their children have been offered at snack time.

- We provide nutritious food at all meals and snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- We aim to provide snacks that are low in saturated fats, sugar and salt. If a product is higher in any of these then we will limit the amount the children can have.
- We include foods from the various cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.
- 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.
- We organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate.
- We use meal 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 session/day.
- For children who drink milk, we provide pasteurised milk.
- Children are never left unattended to eat, there is always an adult present and a maximum of 6 children at the snack table.

### **Snacktime**

We provide a healthy snack for the children to enjoy, these include one carbohydrate item such as a biscuit, cracker, breadstick etc and a choice of 2 fruit or vegetable items. The carbohydrate item is limited to one per child but they can have more of the fruit and vegetables. We provide a drink of either milk or water – no squash, juice or fizzy drinks are provided by us. We encourage children to try new foods but never pressurise them to eat.

### **Packed lunches**

Parents are encouraged to provide a balanced lunchbox for their child to enjoy and recommend it contains items such as:

- Fruit and vegetable (cut up appropriately if needed)

- A starchy option (Bread, rice, pasta, potatoes)
- Protein (meat, fish, eggs, beans, pulses)
- Dairy or alternatives (yoghurt, cheese, milk, fortified alternatives)

Foods we ask parents to avoid providing:

- Sweets, chocolate bars, sugary yoghurts
- Fizzy or sweetened drinks
- Food items that may be a choking hazard (whole grapes, whole cherry tomatoes, cheese cubes)

If a child's lunch regularly contains unsuitable items initially we will send a traffic light note home in the lunchbox, if following this there is no improvement to the contents of the child's lunchbox we will discuss this privately with the parents away from the children. The only exception to this would be if a child had a limited diet and would only eat certain items, then we would have a discussion with the parents and come to an agreement on an individual basis specific to their child.

### **Birthdays and celebrations**

We celebrate birthdays in fun, inclusive ways (singing to the birthday child and providing a wooden cake for them to blow the candles out on and taking special photos)

Although we are fully supportive of healthy eating we are also aware of the need to allow children to enjoy a treat occasionally so we allow parents to provide a cake or biscuits for the children to enjoy a small piece of at snack. If they provide sweets or party bags these are not allowed to be consumed at the playgroup but are sent home with the children at the end of the day.

Cultural and religious food traditions will be respected and included where safe and appropriate.

### **Safeguarding and equality**

All children have the right to safe, appropriate food that respects their health, culture and family preferences.

We do not allow food-based teasing or comparisons between lunchboxes. Staff never comment negatively on a child's food in front of them.

This Policy was adopted at the Annual General Meeting of Boughton Monchelsea Playgroup Association held on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2026

Signed on behalf of the Playgroup \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

**To be reviewed and re-adopted by March 2027**

This Policy was readopted at the Annual General Meeting of Boughton Monchelsea Playgroup Association held on

Signed on behalf of the Playgroup \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

**To be reviewed and re-adopted by March 2028**

This Policy was readopted at the Annual General Meeting of Boughton Monchelsea Playgroup Association held on

Signed on behalf of the Playgroup \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

**To be reviewed and re-adopted by March 2029**