



11. HEALTHY EATING [INCORPORATING FOOD HYGIENE]

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This policy has been communicated to parents/guardians.

Relevant staff know the requirements and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to this policy.

Relevant staff have received training on this policy.

Statement of Intent: The Service promotes healthy nutritional choices for our children. We feel it is important at this young age to introduce and educate our children about good nutrition and the health benefits of eating well. Allergens in food we provide will be listed as under Food Information for Consumers (FIC) Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 (S.I. No. 489 of 2014). It is also our intention to ensure that good food hygiene practices are in place in line with relevant legislation.

Policy and Procedure: It is the policy of the Service to support parents/guardians' choices e.g. bottle feeding / dietary restrictions/requirements

Adults always sit with the children and supervise them when eating and drinking snacks or meals.

- We do not allow fizzy drinks, sweets, chocolate, crisps, popcorn, nuts or nut spreads. This is communicated to parents.
- Some children are allergic to peanuts/nuts. We request that parents/guardians do not include these in their child's snack.
- We provide healthy meals freshly cooked on the premises by our cook/chef. We are currently ordering in our food from an outside company called Early Days.
- Where food is cooked on the premises: Our kitchen is HACCP compliant and our meals are cooked by a qualified and experienced cook. Our menu has been developed to ensure that each meal is nutritionally balanced for growing children.

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- Children bring in their own healthy lunch. Parents should be advised to have the lunches fully labelled with the child's name in containers suitable for refrigeration.
- If a child attends the service and has not had a breakfast (morning session) or lunch (afternoon session) a breakfast or lunch is provided in addition to the regular snack.
- Babies bottles must be made up and provided to the service in bottles suitable for refrigeration clearly labelled with the child's name.
- Our staff keep a written record of what a child has eaten during the day. This allows us to ensure that a child's nutritional needs are being met on an on-going basis.
- Food is appropriate to the ages, development and needs of children.
- Food portions will be age and stage appropriate.
- Meal/snack times are used as an opportunity to encourage good social habits.
- Whenever possible children and staff eat together.
- Good table manners will be encouraged.
- Children will also be engaged in conversation if they wish.
- Children that are slow eaters will be given time to eat and not rushed.
- Children are encouraged to feed themselves as appropriate to their age and stage of development.
- Children will be encouraged to sit down when eating and/or drinking.
- Age and stage appropriate feeding equipment such as feeder cups, knives, forks spoons etc. are always available.
- Allergens in food we provide will be listed as under Food Information for Consumers (FIC) Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 (S.I. No. 489 of 2014)
- Children with allergies and special diets will be carefully supervised. Staff are fully aware of all allergies within the setting.
- Children will be encouraged to help tidy up after snack time.
- Cultural and religious dietary habits are respected. Parents/guardians are requested to provide details of foods that children can or cannot eat.
- Healthy eating is promoted through our curriculum.
- Drinking water, milk and small snacks are available throughout the day (in between scheduled meals).

Important Note:

- If a child expresses that they are hungry, we will ensure they have a snack.
- Staff are required to inform parents of what the child has eaten during the day and especially if their child has not eaten well.
- Parents are advised on safety and nutrition in relation to healthy lunches and snacks.
- Meal/snack time should be engaged with in a positive way with the children. Staff must not use any negative association with food at any time with the children.

Meals: Well-balanced and nutritious meals are provided for the children. A variety of foods is selected from each of the four main food groups every day:

- Bread, cereals, rice, pasta and potatoes
 - Fruit and vegetables
 - Milk and dairy foods
 - Meat, fish and alternatives
- Menus are reviewed and changed weekly to ensure a varied range of food choices for the children.
 - Fresh fruit is always available

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- Processed meat products such as sausages, burgers, chicken nuggets and fish bites are kept to a minimum. If these are provided, healthier cooking methods are used, e.g. they are oven cooked or grilled. No food is fried.
- Special therapeutic dietary needs are respected. Parents/guardians are requested to give us a copy of the diet sheet provided by their dietician.

Food Labelling and Allergen Information:

Food Information for Consumers (FIC) Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 (S.I. No. 489 of 2014) stipulates that food allergen information for non-prepacked food must, as a minimum, be provided in written format.

The allergens in **any** meals, snacks and any food consumed in activities such as baking will be listed and parents/guardians made aware of before the food is consumed. Each meal or snack will indicate if any of the 14 (required) allergens **are** present.

Where food is prepared on the premises: Our weekly/daily menu plans contain the allergen information and they are displayed on the parent's notice board and are available to parents/guardians.

Rewards and Special Occasions: Praise and attention are used to help develop children's self-esteem and to act as a positive reward for good behaviour. Food, e.g. sweets, should not be used as reward.

Parents/guardians may send in birthday cakes. Cakes should be bought at a shop or HSE inspected and approved restaurant to avoid the possibility of gastrointestinal illness. The cake should not contain nuts, as some children are allergic to nuts.

Food Hygiene: The Management shall ensure that there are:

- Adequate and suitable facilities for the storage, of food.
- Adequate and suitable eating utensils, hand washing, wash-up and sterilising facilities are provided.
- All waste and other refuse must be stored hygienically and disposed of frequently and hygienically and in such a manner as not to cause a nuisance.
- The Service will follow the food hygiene standards required under the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 throughout the Service as 'best practice'.

Policy and Procedure: The Service supplies all the hot meals given to children attending the Service.

Our kitchen is HACCP compliant and our meals are cooked by a qualified and experienced cook. Our menu has been developed to ensure that each meal is nutritionally balanced for growing children

Those responsible for preparation of food fully comply with hygiene, storage and waste disposal regulations. Our chef has completed HACCP training and a number of staff have completed food handling training.

Food Preparation: The Service uses separate chopping boards for raw meat and fish, for cooked foods and for raw fruit and vegetables.

- Fruit and vegetables are washed well and peeled. Root vegetables such as carrots and parsnips are always be peeled and topped and tailed.
- Skins and cuttings from food preparation are discarded to prevent contamination of the prepared product.
- Food is not left uncovered in the kitchen.
- Eggs given to toddlers are cooked until both the yolk and the white are solid.

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- The Service does not use unpasteurised milk or milk-based products, such as cheese and yogurt, made from unpasteurised milk.
- If a parent brings in goat's/sheep's milk for their child, the Service will check with the parent if the milk needs to be boiled.
- If food is being served from a can or a jar and the child is unlikely to eat all the contents, a portion will be spooned into a separate dish or container before serving it to a child. Any unused portions will be stored according to the manufacturer's instructions. If food is served straight from the jar and the child does not finish it, the remainder will be thrown away.
- Frozen food will be thawed completely before cooking unless instructions state "cook from frozen". Food is thawed in the fridge rather than at room temperature.

Reheating:

- If food is to be eaten warm, it will be re-heated until piping hot and then cooled down before serving. The Service will only reheat food once.
- Food will not keep food hot for long periods.
- During reheating food is stirred to ensure all parts are heated.
- Where children bring in a pre-cooked meal to be re-heated, staff will ensure that any perishable foodstuffs are delivered, refrigerated and re-heated in a safe manner.

Menus: The weekly menu is displayed in the Service and includes a wide variety of healthy foods to include servings of protein, starch, dairy, vegetable and iron. Any changes in the menu are noted and any foods that are substituted are of equal nutrient value.

Kitchen Hygiene:

- Work surfaces should be thoroughly cleaned with disinfectant after each meal preparation whether meals are prepared on the premises or provided by an outside company.
- People who are unwell should not prepare food for others.
- Cover cuts and sores with waterproof dressings.
- Tea towels and dishcloths should be boil-washed daily.
- Staff should always wash their hands with soap and water before preparing food, between handling raw and cooked foods, before helping children to eat and after toileting children or changing nappies or blowing their nose.
- It is also important that children are taught basic hygiene themselves, for example, not eating food that has fallen on the floor, washing their hands with soap and water before meals and after going to the toilet.
- Uneaten food should be removed from the table and disposed of.
- Any milk remaining in a baby's bottle after one hour should be disposed of.

Food Storage:

- Perishable food must not be left at room temperature for more than two hours. Perishable food brought from home, including sandwiches, should be kept in a fridge or cool place below 5°C.
- Leftovers will be cooled as quickly as possible and should be covered and, when steam has evaporated, put into the fridge. Staff will avoid putting large quantities of warm food in the fridge as it raises the temperature of the whole fridge.
- Foods in the fridge are covered.
- Raw meat and raw fish is stored on a different and a lower refrigerator shelf to other foods and checked to ensure that it is not dripping.
- Food stocks are rotated and food beyond its 'use by' date discarded.

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- Food is not left in cans and packaging once opened. It is always emptied into another container for storage.
- Foods are not refrozen.
- The fridge is washed frequently.

Mealtime Practises:

- There is flexibility around meal and snack times (e.g. where a child is deeply immersed in play) Meals and snacks should be appetising and healthy for children.
- The atmosphere during mealtimes is relaxed with pleasant social interaction among the children and adults
- Staff sit with children during mealtimes to give examples of positive social skills.
- Children are encouraged to feed themselves independently according to their age and development.
- The crockery, cutlery and drinking utensils used are suitable for the children's ages and stage of development.
- *Enough time is allowed for bottle-feeding and mealtimes.-*
- *Infants younger than 12 months are held while bottle-feeding.*
- Healthy meals and snacks are served no more than 3 hours apart.
- Each child is given enough time to eat and enjoy their bottle, snack or meal without being rushed.
- Children who have not eaten or who are hungry are offered:
 - food at times outside routine meal and snack times;
 - an alternative food option)
- Children are seated at the table **or** in a highchair **or** low chair during snack and mealtimes when their food is ready.
- The table and chairs are suitable to their age and stage of development.
- Children are encouraged to try different food tastes, textures, colours and so forth.
- Children are supported to develop knowledge and skills to make nutritious food choices.
- Learning materials and experiences are available to reinforce nutritious food choices.
- Activities are available for children who have finished their food before others.
- Children with allergies and special diets will be carefully supervised. Staff are fully informed about allergies and religious dietary requirements within the setting.
- Ensure that staff and children wash their hands before meals.
- Use disposable gloves when serving the children food including snacks.
- Children are put to sit at the table in highchairs as meals are brought to the rooms. Children are not left sitting at a table or in highchairs for too long before the meals are served.
- Bibs are worn by the younger children or any child who needs it.
- Staff **never** blow on or taste the children's food.
- Staff never give the children food that is too hot. Food is let cool before serving it to the children.
- Staff help and encourage the children to eat their meals. Staff do not force or demand that a child eats their food but use positive encouragement in a relaxed manner.
- Staff ensure that mealtimes are enjoyable experiences for the children.
- Infants younger than 12 months are held while bottle-feeding.
- The children are taught table manners and etiquette and shown how to use cutlery correctly.
- Staff will never let one child eat another child's food to prevent allergies or cross contamination.
- Eating areas are cleaned up after each meal. The table is cleaned down etc with a clean cloth, using the anti-bacterial spray.
- The children are cleaned after each meal.

HACCP stands for 'Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point'. It is an internationally recognised and recommended system of food safety management. It focuses on identifying the 'critical points' in a process

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where food safety problems (or 'hazards') could arise and putting steps in place to prevent things going wrong. This is sometimes referred to as 'controlling hazards'. Keeping records is also an important part of HACCP systems.



FOOD INGREDIENTS THAT MUST BE DECLARED AS ALLERGENS

Substances or products causing allergies or intolerances as listed in Annex II of Food Information for Consumers (FIC) Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 (S.I. No. 489 of 2014)

ALLERGEN:	CONTAINED IN: (this list is not exhaustive and is meant to be a guide)
Cereals containing gluten:	Flour and products made with wheat (such as spelt and khorasan wheat), rye, barley, oats or their hybridised strains, and products thereof, except: (a) wheat based glucose syrups including dextrose (b) wheat based maltodextrins (c) glucose syrups based on barley (d) cereals used for making alcoholic distillates including ethyl alcohol of agricultural origin
Crustaceans and products thereof:	Lobsters, crabs, shrimp, prawns etc.
Eggs and products thereof:	Mayonnaise, cakes, biscuits, ice cream
Fish and products thereof:	Fish cakes, fish fingers except: a) fish gelatine used as carrier for vitamin or carotenoid preparations (b) fish gelatine or Isinglass used as fining agent in beer and wine
Peanuts and products thereof:	Peanut butter, Arachis oil Arachis, some cakes, biscuits and chocolate
Soybeans and products thereof:	Soy sauce, Tofu, soya milk, meat substitute products, except: (a) fully refined soybean oil and fat (b) natural mixed tocopherols (E306), natural D-alpha tocopherol, natural D-alpha tocopherol acetate, and natural D-alpha tocopherol succinate from soybean sources (c) vegetable oils derived phytosterols and phytosterol esters from soybean sources (d) plant stanol ester produced from vegetable oil sterols from soybean sources
Milk and products thereof (including lactose):	Yogurt, cheese, fromage frais, ice cream except: a) whey used for making alcoholic distillates including ethyl alcohol of agricultural origin (b) lactitol
Nuts:	Cakes, biscuits, almonds (<i>Amygdalus communis</i> L.), hazelnuts (<i>Corylus avellana</i>), walnuts (<i>Juglans regia</i>), cashews (<i>Anacardium occidentale</i>), pecan nuts (<i>Carya illinoensis</i> (Wangenh.) K. Koch), Brazil nuts (<i>Bertholletia</i>

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	<i>excelsa</i>), pistachio nuts (<i>Pistacia vera</i>), macadamia or Queensland nuts (<i>Macadamia ternifolia</i>), and products thereof, except for nuts used for making alcoholic distillates including ethyl alcohol of agricultural origin
Celery and products thereof:	Soups, stews, stocks, bouillons and seasonings.
Mustard and products thereof:	Mayonnaise, soups, stews, stocks, bouillons and seasonings.
Sesame seeds and products thereof:	Cakes, biscuits
Sulphur dioxide and sulphites at concentrations of more than 10 mg/kg or 10 mg/litre in terms of the total SO₂ which are to be calculated for products as proposed ready for consumption or as reconstituted according to the instructions of the manufacturers:	Bakery goods, soups, jams, canned veg, pickled foods, vinegar, gravies, dried fruit, potato crisps, vegetable juices, sparkling grape juice, beer, wine cider, bottled lemon/lime juice, tea, many sauces (tomato ketchup etc.) molasses, fresh and frozen prawns, guacamole, maraschino cherries, dehydrated, pre-cut or peeled potatoes.
Lupin and products thereof:	A legume belonging to the same plant family as peanuts used in gluten-free products
Molluscs and products thereof:	Shellfish e.g. clams, scallops, oysters, octopus, squid

Signed: 

Date: 8th May 2024

Name: Stuart Buchanan

Person responsible for approving the Policy