Food and Drink
Policy and Procedures

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Revised February 2025

- **Food and Drink Policy**

To maintain healthy development and growth, children need to eat a nutritionally well balanced diet.

As an Early Years setting we are in a strong position to influence and can contribute significantly to improving the health and well-being of children. Good nutrition in early childhood can help to prevent a variety of health problems, both in the short term and later in life. There is increasing concern that many children are consuming too much fat, sugar and salt and too little fibre, fruit and vegetables.

Butterflies hope to positively promote the health and wellbeing of every child. We aim to support children to foster a healthy attitude to food and work with parents to ensure your child benefits from a balanced diet. Every child requires a balanced diet that includes daily intake of food groups;

- carbohydrates,
- fruit and vegetables,
- protein,
- dairy
- Good fats

A balanced diet should be low in sugar, salt and excess fat.

Nursery Provided Meals and Snacks

At meal and snack times, we aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs. We aim to meet the full requirements of The Early Years Foundation Stage related to healthy eating. The emphasis of the setting is on home-made food produced on the premises. All food will be prepared daily by our experienced and trained cooks.

Methods

- Before a child starts at the setting we find out from parents / carers their children's dietary needs, including any allergies.
- Parents/carers will be asked to supply food for children with severe allergies, to ensure they are fully protected.
- We record information about each child's dietary needs on their registration record and parents/carers sign the record to confirm that it is correct.
- We regularly consult with parents/carers to ensure that our records are up to date. Parents/carers can use their nursery online account to update their child's details. Parents/Carers must also write to us to inform the nursery of any significant changes to their care needs.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all staff are fully informed.

- We implement systems to ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and parents'/carers' wishes.
- We provide food and snacks that avoid large quantities of fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- 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 develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.
- We provide children with utensils that are appropriate for their age and stage of development and that take into account cultural eating practices.
- We have fresh drinking water available at all times for the children
- We inform the children about how to obtain water and that they can ask for water at any time during the day. In addition, we explain why drinking water keeps them hydrated.
- We have rules about children sharing and swapping their food with one another in order to protect children with food allergies.
- For children who drink milk, we provide whole and pasteurised milk.
- We record the food intake of all children via our nursery management system, which families have access to via their App.
- At the setting we endeavour to ensure that there are no nuts or nut traces in any of our food.

Packed Lunches

Butterflies recognise that some families may wish to provide their own food from home. The content of lunch boxes brought from home needs to reflect the requirement to meet minimum food and nutrition standards and to encourage healthy eating habits from an early age. Thus improving the overall nutrition of children.

Children's packed lunches should include items from the five main food groups:

- Bread, rice, potatoes and pasta These starchy foods are a healthy source of energy. Packed lunches should include two or more portions of this food type, for example pasta salad or sandwiches.
- Fruits and vegetables These foods provide vitamins, minerals and fibre. Packed lunches should include at least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables/ salad, or more, for example carrot or cucumber sticks, cherry tomatoes, a piece of fruit.
- Milk and dairy foods These foods provide calcium for healthy bones and teeth. Include one portion at lunch, for example a yoghurt, fromage frais or milk.
- Meat, fish, eggs and beans These foods provide protein for growth. Packed lunches should include one portion of these foods, for example boiled egg as a filling in a sandwich or a mixed bean salad.

Drinks

The nursery will provide fresh drinking water to all children. The nursery provides cups for this purpose and we encourage the use of a named water bottle from home that can be refilled throughout the day.

Please support the Nursery by not providing the following items in your child's packed lunch:

- Foods which are high in fat and/ or sugar It is important not to fill up on too many foods that are high in fat and/ or sugar at the expense of other more nutritious foods. e.g. fizzy/ sugary drinks in cartons, bottles or cans chocolate-coated products, sweets or confectionary, chocolate spread as a filling for sandwiches, sugared, toffee or salted popcorn, crisps or any packet of savoury snacks which are high in salt and fat, any products containing nuts, energy drinks, chips and fried foods (such as chicken nuggets)
- **Packed lunches should never contain nuts or nut-based products. Products containing nuts include, but are not limited to: peanut butter chocolate spreads, including Nutella cereal bars cakes and biscuits.**

Waste and disposal

The Nursery will, within reason, send any uneaten packed lunch items back home. The rationale for this is that parents and carers can also monitor what their child has consumed during the day and then raise any concerns over their child's food intake with the nursery.

Packed lunch containers

It is the responsibility of parents and carers to provide an appropriate packed lunch container where food items can be stored securely and appropriately until the lunchtime period. Parents and carers are advised to include an ice pack. Food products prepared and stored in ambient temperatures after a period of time can have increased levels of bacteria in them. The nursery will provide a storage area for packed lunch boxes and bags in the most convenient and appropriate place possible. However, the nursery cannot provide cooled storage areas and, therefore, cannot take responsibility for foods prepared at home and then brought into the nursery.

Dining facilities for children who bring packed lunch from home

The nursery will provide an appropriate area where pupils can eat their packed lunch.

Monitoring and evaluation

The Nursery will carry out regular monitoring of packed lunch provision. Where there may be concerns over a child's food and nutritional intake and/ or the content of their packed lunches, this will be dealt with timely and sensitively.

Preparation of Packed Lunches

Butterflies will not heat up the food for children that is brought from home.

Provision of children's lunches.

If a child arrives to nursery without a packed lunch after a family has opted out of nursery hot lunches, then the following procedure will be followed:

- We will call families to ask for a packed lunch to be brought into nursery.
- If a packed lunch is not brought into the nursery then a charge will be levied on families accounts in accordance with the current fee policy for the provision of lunch that day.

Allegies

Allergies in children can be serious and sometimes even fatal; therefore dietary requirements must always be adhered to. Additionally all staff must also ensure that where no allergies exist and restrictions are due to religion/ culture or lifestyle we must still ensure that the wishes of the parent/carer are followed.

Every care must be taken to ensure that dietary requirements are met. We will do this by:

1. Collecting written information regarding diet and allergies from the parent on starting nursery and sharing this information with the child's Keyworker, other room staff and catering staff.

2. Requesting written updates from parents should there be any changes to the information submitted during the initial child induction.

3. Displaying this information in rooms so that all staff have direct access to this information.

4. Communicating needs between rooms and staff where children are visiting and/ or move to a new room. A room transfer form should be used to ensure that this information is received and to give parents an opportunity to comment or update our records.

If you suspect that a child has been given a food that they are known to react to you must;

1. Make a note of exactly what they were given, when and in what quantities, preferably on an incident form which can be signed by a parent and/ or given to medical professionals.

2. Where a child has a care plan in place, this must be referred to and the instructions within it followed. Where a child does not have a care plan but you suspect a serious reaction has occurred, an ambulance may need to be called.
3. Make direct contact the with the child's parent immediately following the incident to explain what has happened and to determine whether further medical advice needs to be obtained.
4. Make written observations of the child in order to recognise and record any reactions they may have for the remainder of the session, as not all reactions happen immediately.

If you are working with children whose dietary requirements are not known to you, it is your responsibility to ensure you obtain information regarding dietary requirements prior to giving any food or drinks. If you are working in a room with staff who may not know the dietary requirements of the children in the group, please ensure that this information is passed on prior to meals or snacks.